

## Meyer's Management Models

# 24. Followership Cycle

*How can I be a more effective follower?*

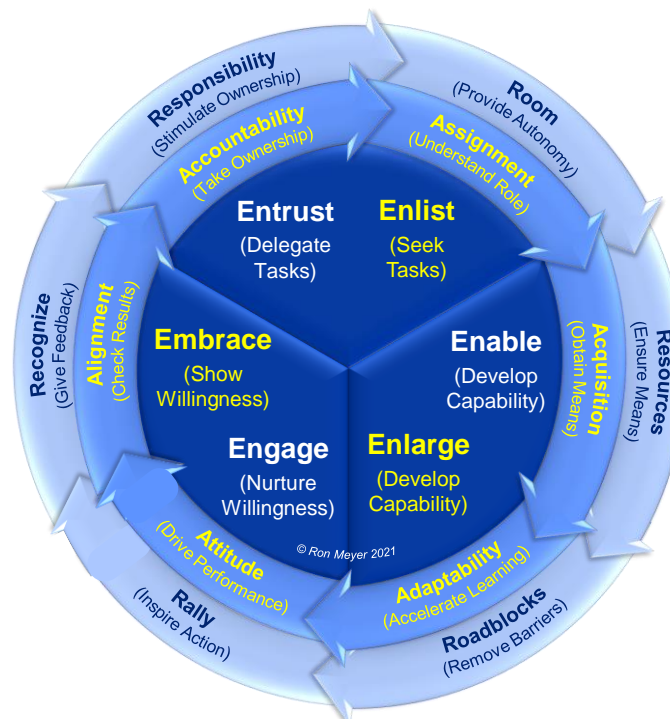
### Key Definitions

Leadership is about getting others to follow. Conversely, followership is about accepting someone else's lead. In the leader-follower interaction, followership can be *compliant* and *absolute*, with people obediently doing exactly as they are told. But followership can also be *voluntary* and *considered*, with people willingly going along while still thinking for themselves.

Managers need to delegate tasks to their direct reports, while typically wanting to stay in the lead. Direct reports can follow compliantly but will be more effective if they follow willingly and intelligently, seeking *empowerment* to take more of their own decisions and actions.

### Conceptual Model

In Meyer's Management Models #21, the *Empowerment Cycle* described six leadership actions (in the light blue arrows) that could be used to gradually increase the empowerment of direct reports. The *Followership Cycle* extends this model, adding six matching followership actions (in yellow font in the darker blue arrows) that direct reports can take themselves to earn increased empowerment. The underlying thinking is that empowerment is built up gradually and jointly, in interaction between leader and follower, with the leader facilitating and the follower actively showing how their increased power is used wisely.



### Key Elements

The three main categories of followership actions that warrant more empowerment are:

1. **Enlist.** All empowerment starts with tasks being delegated. Managers need to consider which tasks they feel comfortable entrusting to direct reports, but in turn direct reports can

step forward and seek out tasks to take on board. They can actively 'enlist' by winning managers' confidence, showing they are eager to accept:

- a. *Accountability*. Followers need to make clear that they are willing and able to take full ownership of tasks, accepting responsibility for achieving results, ready to deal with the challenges involved and prepared to be held to account if things go wrong.
  - b. *Assignment*. While asking for room to determine their own choices, followers need to signal that they realize that their autonomy is not absolute, but that they are playing a role in a larger game, requiring them to coordinate their actions with others.
2. **Enlarge**. More tasks can only be delegated if direct reports are able to carry them out. Managers can fuel this enablement by creating supportive conditions, but effective followers can seek to enlarge their capabilities themselves by focusing on:
- a. *Acquisition*. Instead of waiting for managers to provide the necessary resources such as time, information, money and connections, followers can actively seek to acquire them. Likewise, building up the right skills and experience can be driven by the follower.
  - b. *Adaptability*. At the same time, there are certain to be challenging issues new to the follower that need to be dealt with on the spot. The more the follower is willing and able to learn and adapt, the less the manager will need to step in to clear the roadblocks.
3. **Embrace**. Managers need to feel confident that direct reports have bought into the overall direction, before letting them decide things themselves. But instead of waiting to be engaged, effective followers can actively embrace the direction by showing:
- a. *Attitude*. While managers can explain the big picture and rally followers to realize the organization's objectives, followers themselves can bring in their own eagerness to achieve performance and exhibit their commitment to overcome any obstacles.
  - b. *Alignment*. While managers can give constructive feedback on how followers are performing to keep them motivated and on track, followers themselves can actively solicit feedback, checking whether their results are in line with expectations.

## Key Insights

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- **Followership is important**. Libraries are full of books on leadership, but followership enjoys no such popularity. But without followership, nothing in organizations would get done. Hence, it is crucial to organizational success to pay attention to effective followership.
- **Followership should be intelligent**. Followership carries a connotation of passiveness and submissiveness. But while some people follow blindly, others sensibly accept another person's lead, throwing their weight behind someone else's initiative and/or joining a team effort, while considering how they can best contribute to the realization of a shared goal.
- **Empowerment is achieved together**. To be effective followers, direct reports need to have sufficient power to get things done. Managers can stay in the overall lead but need to create empowering conditions so that direct reports can take impactful decisions and actions. At the same time, direct reports needn't passively wait to have empowerment thrust upon them but can take actions making it easier for managers to give more power.
- **Six followership actions to earn empowerment**. Followers can speed up empowerment by accepting more *accountability* and acknowledging the context of their *assignment*; by the *acquisition* of more capabilities and improving their *adaptability*; and by exhibiting a high-performance *attitude*, while constantly *aligning* with their manager's expectations.
- **Followership cycle can be used as contracting tool**. Managers and direct reports can use the cycle as a check list, agreeing on mutual actions to increase empowerment.

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## **Meyer's Management Models**

### ***Insightful Tools to Kickstart Your Thinking***

#### **Publication Schedule**

<b><i>July 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Mind the Gap Model</i></b>	<b><i>Change Management</i></b>
<b><i>August 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Platform Map</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>September 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Interaction Pressure Gauge</i></b>	<b><i>Interpersonal Interaction</i></b>
<b><i>October 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Revenue Model Framework</i></b>	<b><i>Revenue Model Typology</i></b>
<b><i>November 2019</i></b>	<b><i>House of Engagement</i></b>	<b><i>Organizational Engagement</i></b>
<b><i>December 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Confidence Quotient</i></b>	<b><i>Trust Building</i></b>
<b><i>January 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Competition Tornado</i></b>	<b><i>Competitive Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>February 2020</i></b>	<b><i>11C Synergy Model</i></b>	<b><i>Corporate Synergy Management</i></b>
<b><i>March 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Leadership Fairness Model</i></b>	<b><i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i></b>
<b><i>April 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Strategic Agility Model</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy Process Approach</i></b>
<b><i>May 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Control Panel</i></b>	<b><i>Corporate Control Dimensions</i></b>
<b><i>June 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Rising Star Framework</i></b>	<b><i>Talent Management</i></b>
<b><i>July 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy Development Cycle</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy Process Steps</i></b>
<b><i>August 2020</i></b>	<b><i>7I Roles of the Corporate Center</i></b>	<b><i>Corporate Organization</i></b>
<b><i>September 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Storytelling Scripts</i></b>	<b><i>Leadership Communication</i></b>
<b><i>October 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Strategic Bets Framework</i></b>	<b><i>Strategic Decision-Making</i></b>
<b><i>November 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Rebound Model of Resilience</i></b>	<b><i>Organizational Resilience</i></b>
<b><i>December 2020</i></b>	<b><i>4C Leadership Capabilities</i></b>	<b><i>Leadership Competences</i></b>
<b><i>January 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Product Model Dial</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>February 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Distribution Model Dial</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>March 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Empowerment Cycle</i></b>	<b><i>Employee Empowerment</i></b>
<b><i>April 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Innovation Box</i></b>	<b><i>Innovation Approaches</i></b>
<b><i>May 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Knowledge Sharing Bridges</i></b>	<b><i>Best Practice Sharing</i></b>
<b><i>June 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Followership Cycle</i></b>	<b><i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i></b>
<b><i>July 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Everest Model of Change</i></b>	<b><i>Change Management</i></b>
<b><i>August 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Fruits &amp; Nuts Matrix</i></b>	<b><i>Priority-Setting</i></b>
<b><i>September 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Deft Dialogue Model</i></b>	<b><i>Interpersonal Communication</i></b>
<b><i>October 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy Hourglass</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy Process Timing</i></b>
<b><i>November 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Powerhouse Model</i></b>	<b><i>People &amp; Organization Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>December 2021</i></b>	<b><i>New Pyramid Principle</i></b>	<b><i>Presentation Approaches</i></b>
<b><i>January 2022</i></b>	<b><i>Corporate Value Creation Model</i></b>	<b><i>Corporate Level Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>February 2022</i></b>	<b><i>Team-Building Cycle</i></b>	<b><i>Team-Building Process</i></b>
<b><i>March 2022</i></b>	<b><i>Embedded Identity Model</i></b>	<b><i>Personal Awareness</i></b>
<b><i>April 2022</i></b>	<b><i>Customer-Centricity Circle</i></b>	<b><i>Organizational Design</i></b>
<b><i>May 2022</i></b>	<b><i>Partnership Distance Model</i></b>	<b><i>Interorganizational Relations</i></b>