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## **A new model of volunteer leadership: lessons from a local festival**

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### **Abstract**

This article delivers insights into the leadership of volunteers using a local music festival as a case study. Leadership traits and styles have been discussed in the literature in relation to festivals and events, with authors particularly highlighting servant leadership and transformational leadership styles within this context. The traits of the heroic leader and the entrepreneurial leader, as well as the transactional leadership style and the creativity broker, also discovered within the events literature, are also used here to guide the analysis of the data. Semi-structured interviews with the festival director and festival volunteers were conducted and analysed. An overview of the data is reported in four clusters of leadership characteristics: inspiring, sharing, caring and delivering. The findings are then matched against the various leadership theories and a new volunteer leadership model, termed 'layered leadership', is developed.

## Introduction

There have been several calls for studies on the leadership of volunteers. Rochester (2013: 240) includes the need to explore how leadership is exercised in his agenda for future research on voluntary action. He suggests that this is best achieved by using qualitative studies to develop 'usable' theories of 'how things work'.

Although the dominant paradigm in volunteering emphasises large organisations engaged in social welfare-related activities, this is just one part of the full spectrum of volunteering, as Smith (1997) points out. Other volunteering forms include informal groupings around common concerns and interests; functions such as advocacy, campaigning and mutual support; and the provision of opportunities for creative activities, cultural events or other forms of expressive behaviour (Rochester 2013).

Andersson and Getz (2009) highlight the importance of volunteers to non-profit festivals and events in terms of both numbers and influence, while Goldblatt (2011) asserts that the vast majority of special events are entirely volunteer driven. A particular characteristic of festival volunteering is its short-term, episodic nature (Macduff 2004), making recruitment, training and ensuring commitment of the volunteers particularly challenging. Rochester (2006) concludes that episodic volunteering, especially relating to the organisation of festivals, is increasing, and may even be growing at the expense of traditional long-term volunteering. It is important therefore to ensure that volunteering within contexts other than the dominant paradigm is studied due to its increasing prevalence. Lessons may also be learned from this context which will be useful within the wider grassroots volunteering context.

Although the literature on festival and event volunteering is growing (Smith *et al.* 2014, Gallarza, Arteaga, and Gil-Saura 2013, Lockstone-Binney *et al.* 2010), with interest in sporting mega-event volunteering being particularly strong (Chanavat and Ferrand 2010,

Doherty 2009, Wilks 2014), in-depth study of volunteer leadership within these contexts is sparse. Similarly, within the wider community volunteering context, Jäger, Kreutzer and Beyes (2009) claim that the practices of leading volunteers in settings where the leader is also unpaid and thus has no formal power, as in this small festival case study, is an under-researched phenomenon, while Ockenden and Hutin (2008) also comment that little is known about leadership within small volunteer-led groups. Research which collects the views of followers, within any context, is also less common than a focus on the leaders' perspective.

Rochester (2006) highlights the need for high quality professional volunteer management, something which it is possible to recognise and formally organise in a large organisation. However, in smaller voluntary associations or mutual aid groups, which may include small-scale local festivals, quality assurance of volunteers needs to be addressed in terms of leadership rather than management, according to Rochester. As Storey (2011) notes, debate around appropriate leadership styles, as well as leadership qualities and characteristics continues to provoke interest. The multiple theories of leadership continue to evolve and exist side by side, according to Storey, rather than being refuted and superseded.

This study therefore aims to help to fill these gaps by examining how the leadership of volunteers was accomplished during the production of a small local music festival. Taking its inspiration from existing leadership theory, and drawing on the case study data, a new model of volunteer leadership is offered. The resulting model, which uses insights gained from interviews with the leader herself, as well as with festival volunteers, will be of interest to volunteer leaders and volunteers themselves within festival and events contexts. The knowledge presented here may also prove useful to other volunteer-led community groups.

## **Volunteer leadership within festivals and events**

Festivals draw heavily on volunteers for their operation, with many being completely staffed by volunteers and also run by unpaid leaders. Goldblatt (2011) outlines potential

festival and event leadership approaches. He suggests that event leaders need to possess qualities of integrity, confidence and persistence, to be able to facilitate collaborative decision making, to have vision, and to have skills in communication and problem solving.

Meanwhile, Getz (2012) adds in the need for an entrepreneurial leadership style, with innovation and creativity being particularly important amongst those who establish festivals.

Getz questions whether these leadership characteristics are personality traits, or rather something which can be learned.

Although sparse, a handful of empirical studies have looked at leadership within the context of festivals and other non-profit arts organisations. Einarsen and Mykletun (2009) identify leadership as one of three key factors in the success of Stavanger's non-profit Gladmatfestival, which uses around seventy volunteers. They conclude that the festival leadership role was conducted in an efficient, complex and autocratic style, with evidence of hero worship and the provision of values-led inspiration. The authors mention entrepreneurial, transactional and transformational leadership theories as underpinnings for understanding how the leadership of volunteers was accomplished within this context.

Parris and Peachey (2012) studied volunteer leadership within the context of the National Kidney Foundation Surf Festival, a cause-related event. In contrast to Einarsen and Mykletun's study, the authors conclude that the festival founder displayed a moral calling to help and serve the least privileged in society, as well using his unconditional love to inspire others to serve. They suggest that this demonstrates an alignment with the theoretical concept of servant leadership (Greenleaf 1977), rather than with transformational or transactional leadership.

Concluding that leadership focus is one of the elements which contributes to a successful event, Ensor, Robertson and Ali-Knight's (2007) study of Edinburgh Festivals highlights the role of leadership in ensuring creativity and innovation for a festival.

Volunteers are used across the range of Edinburgh Festivals in a variety of roles, including administration, front of house, box office and production. They conclude that creativity brokering (Bilton and Leary 2002) and a ‘non-business’ orientation are important elements of arts festival leadership.

Rowold and Rohmann’s (2009) study of recreational choirs is also within an event context and involves unpaid leaders of volunteer members. The authors investigate factors associated with theories of transformational and transactional leadership, as well as emotional factors. They conclude that, within this context, a transformational leadership style is more strongly related to effective leadership than a transactional leadership style.

Jäger, Kreutzer and Beyes (2009) explore how a range of non-profit leaders, including one of a film festival, deal with leading non-paid employees without formal power. They find that a hierarchy-driven leadership model was not applicable to their data; nor is a conventional transformative leadership style identifiable. They do, however, discover a high degree of respect for the volunteers’ ‘free will’, a commitment to building on volunteers’ potential, and an emphasis on direct contact and non-formalised action. They conclude that the conduct of non-profit leadership is relationship-driven: the leaders tend to respect the volunteers’ positions without abandoning a focus on organisational results. Jäger, Kreutzer and Beyes (2009) suggest that, in order to validate their findings, future research needs to take the volunteers’ actions, perceptions and reflections into account, as well as the leaders’.

The event volunteering literature includes a swathe of studies which explore the motivations of volunteers. Although most do not explicitly relate this knowledge back to leadership, a handful do conclude that an understanding of volunteer motivation can help in the management of volunteers. Wakelin (2013) for example, recommends that volunteer managers ensure that volunteers get what they want from the experience, whether this is to make friends and have fun, or to achieve a values-driven altruistic need to feel that they are

giving something back to the community. Treuren (2013) also studies volunteer motivation, concluding that managers can use this understanding to recruit and retain the type of volunteers they want. Similarly, in the sport volunteering sector of the literature, Allen and Bartle (2013) look at the relationships between motivation and managers' support for autonomy and engagement while volunteering. With an eye on recurrent volunteering, Campbell (2009) found that a sense of being valued was important to 'grey' volunteers at a folk festival.

This review demonstrates that the leadership of volunteers within festivals and events contexts, whether face to face or at organisational level, shows a variety of features, with a range of theoretical leadership traits and styles being represented across the studies. Transformational leadership style appears to be the most favoured, although not all of the studies conclude this. There is, therefore, a need to provide additional empirical evidence of how volunteer leadership works in practice within this context in order to construct useful theory.

## **Overview of leadership theory**

Drawing on the leadership traits and styles which were identified in the literature as relevant to volunteering at festivals and events, this section will provide further explanation and critique of the leadership theories which were used by the highlighted authors.

Dym and Hutson (2005) suggest that leadership style: that is, how a person acts or behaves, rather than a focus on the inherent character traits of a leader, is a dominant theoretical perspective within non-profit leadership study. So, the popular 'great man', or heroic, trait-based view of leadership, where the leader is said to be intelligent, self-confident, persistent and sociable, as well as able to communicate well and to have integrity is seen to be only part of the leadership puzzle, according to Dym and Hutson. Also suggesting a departure from trait-based heroic leadership, the authors suggest that leadership is learnable

behaviour, with 'leadership style', being contextual and shifting according to the needs of the organisation and of staff members. Confirming this view, Jäger, Kreuzer and Beyes' (2009) study of non-profit organisation leaders found that the hierarchy-driven, top-down, charismatic approaches to heroic leadership seem to be misplaced in the context of voluntary organisations.

Servant leadership (Greenleaf 1977), a leadership style which emphasises the support and empowerment of others has been considered in relation to volunteer leadership contexts (Parris and Peachey 2012, Schneider and George 2011, Dym and Hutson 2005). Schneider and George (2011) synthesise the theoretical features of servant leadership. They conclude that it involves ethical behaviour, a concern for subordinates, and the empowerment of subordinates to grow and succeed, both personally and professionally; as well as a need to achieve organisational and personal goals, while accepting the moral responsibility of serving all stakeholders.

Transformational leadership style, a construct which shows similarities to the servant leadership construct, has also been investigated within other voluntary sector contexts (Rowold and Rohmann 2009, Schneider and George 2011). This leadership theory was first outlined by Burns (1978) as a contrast to a task-focused, managerial, transactional leadership style. Rowold and Rohmann (2009) explain that in voluntary organisations, leaders cannot rely on strategies such as monetary reward and punish. Rather they need to inspire their followers and appeal to higher-order motives. Transformational leadership has also been linked to emotional reactions, such as enthusiasm, excitement, emotional involvement and commitment to group objectives, due to the leader acting with enthusiasm and articulating their vision (Bass 1985). Bass (1990) further expands on the characteristics of transformational leaders, highlighting the tendency of this style of leader to give personal attention to each follower, treating them as an individual. Dym and Hutson (2005) explain

that transformational leadership is based on relationship and on the leader catching the imagination of their followers to draw them in and ask still further of them. The transformational leader persuades followers to transcend their self-interest for the good of the organisation and the values of the mission.

As the festival in the case study is a new event, and the festival director is new to that function, it is also worth taking note that Bagheri, Lope Pihie and Krauss (2013) suggest that the key competencies of entrepreneurial leaders are being pro-active in taking steps to achieve the vision; being creatively innovative; and being willing to take calculated risks. Highlighting an aspect of entrepreneurship which is of particular relevance to non-profit environments, Bacq and Janssen (2011) review the development of the concept of social entrepreneurship. They conclude that although while social entrepreneurs have much in common with commercial entrepreneurs, featuring leadership, vision, drive and opportunism, social entrepreneurs also feature a socio-moral motivation.

Also highlighting the importance of creativity, particularly within an arts context, Bilton and Leary (2002) stress that creativity brokering by the leader is key to the successful delivery of a finished article. So, rather than placing an emphasis on individual creative people, creativity brokers use a participatory style of management to build mutual trust and provide an environment where creative talents can be drawn together, risks can be taken and resources can be mobilized.

It should also be noted that other commentators, such as Grint (2005) for example, concludes that no consensus exists on which traits, characteristics or competencies are essential or optional to leaders, and that no one person could possibly possess all of the many characteristics identified on the various lists. Conversely, although the various leadership theories do each provide a starting point for analysis, and each case study usually tends to

focus on one particular explanatory theory, it is important that researchers are open to the possibility of the theories not being mutually exclusive.

## **Methodology**

The research question which guided the research project was: ‘how was the leadership of volunteers accomplished during the production of a local music festival?’. The overarching aim was to be able to use the findings of this case study to model volunteer leadership in a way that would also be applicable to other festivals and events, as well as providing inspiration for the wider community volunteering sector.

This case study is set within the context of an acoustic music festival with four stages, seventy artists, and around 1,000 attendees. The selected festival’s purpose, an event held for the first time in England in 2013, was to increase the exposure, skills and confidence of a set of locally-based emerging acoustic musicians, as well as to support a cancer charity. The festival director, herself unpaid, so also a volunteer, decided to set up the festival for two reasons: as part of the marketing strategy for the Arts Foundation which supported emerging musicians, which she had recently created; and to support a friend who had recently taken over the running of the local country park where the event was held. Twenty-five volunteers helped to produce the festival, some being involved only on the day of the festival, and others also being involved in the planning phase. The volunteers were therefore a mixture of short-term and longer-term: all could be termed episodic, however, as they were all engaged for a defined period. The case provided the opportunity to study the leadership of volunteers from the perspectives of both the unpaid leader and of the volunteers themselves.

The strength of the case study method is that it enables the researcher to attempt to identify the various interactive processes which are occurring within a specific situation (Bell 1999). Also, as a means of theoretical generalization, Tsang (2013) argues that a case study approach is likely to have merit over quantitative methods. Semi-structured interviews with

key actors within the case allow the researcher to pursue lines of enquiry relevant to the research question, as well as to then probe and follow up on the responses of the interviewee, while investigating their motives and feelings (Bell 1999). This approach is therefore an appropriate method for the close examination of volunteer leadership, from the perspective both of the leader and of the followers, within the context of a local festival.

Ten festival volunteers, including managers, technicians and stewards, were interviewed in order to explore their experience of leadership and followership during the lead-up to and delivery of the studied festival (see Table 1). The diversity of the volunteers' roles and the differing timescales of their involvement give a useful cross-section of viewpoints. The interviewees' names have been changed to provide anonymity.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Role</b>
Ben	Health and safety manager
David	Festival site manager
Emily	Artwork producer
Gail	Stage manager, digital marketing (twitter)
Jess	Steward, stage-hand
John	Compere
Karen	Festival director
Lauren	Digital marketing (blogger)
Mike	Steward – car park
Phil	Artist liaison, media liaison, board member
Scott	Sound production

Table 1: Research participants and their volunteer roles

The semi-structured interviews covered the volunteers' roles, how they got involved in the festival, their values and perception of how these fit with the festival's values, their views on working without pay, and the personal gains they could identify. Their interactions with the festival director in relation to each of these aspects were examined. The festival director, who had no previous experience in festival organisation, was also interviewed.

Her interview covered the aims and values underpinning the festival, the strategies and tasks involved in delivering the festival, the role of the volunteers and her inter-relationships with them.

After transcription of the interviews, the leadership-related traits, styles and practices identified in the literature review were used to frame the coding of the data. Moving on from this first stage of analysis, an alternative vision Grounded Theory put forward by Charmaz (2006) which highlights the reflexive practice of seeing possibilities, establishing connections and asking questions was used to identify clusters of leadership traits. These clusters are termed inspiring, sharing, caring, and delivering.

The final stage in the methodology, the development of the layered leadership model, aims to clarify the relationships between the clusters. As Charmaz (2006: 135-6) suggests, constructing theory is not a mechanical process, and 'playfulness, whimsy and wonder', as well as 'openness to the unexpected' are needed in order to bring ideas to fruition. Following repeated dynamic and creative interrogation of the newly clustered data, involving interplay between the researcher and the data, a new model of volunteer leadership emerged.

## **Findings**

As explained within the methodology, four clusters of leadership characteristics were discovered, each of which can be linked back to aspects of leadership theory. This section on findings will explain, and use the data to evidence, each of the clusters. The 'inspiring' cluster links back to transformational leadership, heroic leadership, entrepreneurial leadership

and creativity brokering. The 'sharing' cluster can be linked to transformational leadership, servant leadership and creativity brokering. The characteristics of the 'caring' cluster are features of servant leadership and of transformational leadership. Finally, the 'delivering' cluster shows signs of transactional leadership, entrepreneurial leadership and creativity brokering. The data will therefore next be reported under these four cluster headings, with illustrative quotes provided as evidence.

### **Inspiring**

Providing inspiration by espousing higher order values and enthusiasm, is a particular feature of transformational leadership. The self-confidence which is linked to inspiration by some of the participants in this study is a feature of heroic leadership. Risk-taking, a feature of entrepreneurial leadership and creativity brokering, was also mentioned by participants in connection with inspiration.

Several of the volunteers mentioned being inspired and impressed by the festival director. Her confidence and enthusiasm appeared to be a key motivator, with Emily stating: 'she's very enthusiastic about what she does and she got me excited about it early on'. David also summed up his opinion, implying that it was the director herself who achieved the festival's delivery: 'I just think Karen is an amazing person to have pulled together what she did'.

The fact that the festival was a four stage, seventy-artist event, despite it being the first that the director had organised, impressed Phil, who was involved in the festival from its early planning phase: 'Once we got talking it soon became very obvious that she wasn't talking about a pub festival off the back of a flat-bed lorry. She was really going to go for it and I quite liked that ambition'.

The director's leadership qualities were mentioned specifically by Ben: 'I think she does have quite good leadership qualities. She was somebody that you wanted to help, you know, you kind of felt obligated to help her achieve what she wanted to achieve'.

Providing some insight into why he volunteered to help deliver the festival, Ben explained: 'because she was really clear and confident, that was why I was motivated'.

Karen herself also demonstrated awareness of the need to demonstrate self-confidence and to espouse higher order values: 'I'm confident in my own my own presence, in my own skills, in my belief that I've got the right motive'.

### **Sharing**

A sharing approach to leadership, through team building and taking on board input from team members, is highlighted within transformational leadership. Creativity brokering also highlights building trust and using a participatory management style, while servant leadership emphasises concern for subordinates.

Several volunteers commented on the sense of being part of a team to plan and deliver the festival, including Ben, who said that the director 'was very open to everybody's suggestions, she put a team together rather than kind of do everything herself really'. There was also a sense of being well supported by the rest of the team, and particularly supported by the director. David, commented on the role of teamwork: 'it sort of felt like we had a community of people who pulled together to get the event to happen'.

The festival blogger, Lauren, was pleased that the director put trust in her to deliver the blog without interference, after an initial supervisory stage: 'I think Karen didn't want to set me too many sort of boundaries and rules because it would then risk becoming kind of her take on things rather than mine, so I had a lot of freedom, which was good fun'. Similarly, Gail was entrusted with running the festival's twitter account in the early phases of the festival planning, while the Health and Safety Manager, Ben, was also pleased to be trusted:

‘I think that’s why everybody kind of followed her into battle, it was because she gave trust and that trust was then re-paid’.

There were, however, hints from David, who had been allocated the role of festival site manager, that the director did not leave him to get on with carrying out his allocated site-based staff liaison duties, leaving Karen to be free to oversee the event: ‘I just reminded her that that’s what I was there for’. One of the stewards, Mike, also noted the director’s ubiquity on the day of the festival: ‘everywhere you turned she was there’. Also relating perhaps to a need to oversee everything, Ben commented that the director would take advice from the management team, but it was she who would make the final decisions.

The director herself provided insight into her reasons for asking for input from team members: ‘I asked for feedback on various aspects that I was happy to get feedback on and involve people. That worked fine, because if people make a comment they buy into it’. Later in the interview she expanded further: ‘my general philosophy is that people need to feel good about themselves as a result of an interaction with you’. The director also implied that she did not pass over the responsibility completely, being keen to herself know how to carry out festival-related tasks: ‘every single aspect of the festival I’ve had to learn from scratch’.

### **Caring**

A caring approach to leadership is a feature of servant leadership, where subordinates are empowered to grow, while the emphasis on being values-led is key to transformational leadership.

As explained above, the festival was intended as a way of promoting the emerging artists who were being supported by the Arts Foundation, a Community Interest Company (CIC). A CIC is set up to benefit the community, rather than shareholders, and to provide social impact. The director explained the reasoning behind the decision she had made to use

that CIC legal form: 'I think it enables people to think that there's something altruistic about it, while it's being organised enough to be a responsible business really, and it's transparent'.

The altruistic values of the Foundation and the festival, which were explained on the website, as well as highlighted in other marketing communications, appealed to many of the volunteers and was often a factor in them offering their services free of charge. Some, such as Lauren, mentioned that its ethos of supporting emerging musicians, as well as its support of Cancer Research UK (inspired by the director's previous illness), aligned to their own outlook: 'it really fitted in with my values and the position I was in and some of the friends I've got even'. Gail, herself in her fifties and a festival artist, as well as a volunteer stage manager, also mentioned the inclusivity of the festival: 'I think that the whole value of trying to support the artist and the other thing that Karen embraced that a lot of people don't seem to embrace, is that old people can make good music too'. One of the volunteers, David, who was involved in the setting up of the Foundation, as well as the delivery of the festival was particularly explicit:

'I could recognise that what she was trying to create and the ethos and what she had behind it very much matched my motivation to do what I want to do here as well. So I could feel a kindred spirit if you like. So I thought well yeh this is the kind of thing that I'd like to do. The expression of what's going on, about supporting the arts, helping young artists, making sure that people who want a career in creative arts feel supported and don't feel that it's not a proper job. That's all stuff that I'd experienced in the past and I wanted create a culture through my business that said this is a proper legitimate way to live your life. And I could see that Karen had a similar ethos to that. Well it kind of matched.'

The volunteers were generally well looked after during the event, in terms of food, breaks, and so on, in lieu of direct payment. On the day of the festival, meal vouchers were

provided, as well as free entry, and apart from an occasional minor hiccup, these ‘perks’ worked well and seemed to be appreciated. Several volunteers also mentioned that they were keen to gain other benefits, such as adding skills and experience to a CV, or networking with music business personnel in the hope of future paid work. Sound producer, Scott, highlighted his range of motives: ‘I’m hoping to get some more work out of it and it was about helping out with community as well, I mean it wasn’t just about having fun doing it’.

The director also promoted volunteers’ skills, such as artist, Emily’s, on the festival website, providing further payback, as well as during radio interviews and newspaper pieces. Emily highlighted her appreciation of this: ‘I think Karen did a very good job of mentioning me because she was always letting me know how she was promoting the work and saying it was from me’.

The director’s communication of a caring attitude were highlighted by several volunteers in relation to being thanked face to face, as well as via email, Facebook and telephone for providing their services free of charge, as this comment from Phil, a board member, shows:

‘Karen is very good at communicating with people. You know she picks up the phone. The phone rang on the Monday, Karen recognised the contribution. She’s very good at doing the post-festival and she does it in such a way that it makes you feel it’s genuine as opposed to the almost robotic way that I’ve got from other bits. You know you get the email and you know what, if you took my name off the top of the email and put someone else’s, that’s the stock email. Karen doesn’t do that, she talks to you and you get the impression she’s talking to you.’

## **Delivering**

In contrast to the softer styles of leadership, transactional leadership, entrepreneurial leadership and creativity brokering all emphasise the delivery of outcomes, with a focus on

executing tasks and a willingness to take risks to mobilise resources, being important features.

The director was seen by the volunteers as being in charge of delivering the festival. The big risk involved in putting on such an ambitious event was mentioned by one volunteer, although he also commented that it ran smoothly. Another volunteer, John, spoke of the director's drive and determination to organise a big festival, suggesting that her business background was a key factor:

‘She’s a business woman isn’t she? That was fairly clear. So she’d been a business woman in her own right for many years. I think that people that are that way inclined don’t tend to do things by halves.’

Despite the festival and Arts Foundation being non-profit social enterprises, the director herself also stressed her business credentials: ‘I feel exactly the same as when I was first in business and doing business and you know, successful in business.’ Another volunteer highlighted the high level of credibility the director had gained ‘in the industry’ by successfully delivering such a large-scale festival.

The importance of the director being confident and organised was mentioned by several volunteers, including Scott, and was one of the key factors for him in deciding to contribute his services: ‘She was on the ball and she wanted to get everything sorted and she was motivated. That was why I sort of wanted to stay with it’.

An awareness of the tasks involved in delivering a festival was evident in the way in which the director went about recruiting volunteers. Emily, the designer of the artwork on the website and other promotional material described how she was recruited: ‘She saw my work in a local market and she immediately said oh I think you could really work well with this project I’m working on.’ Similarly, the festival blogger, Lauren, was spotted by the director when she was blogging for a local film festival and also editing the local university’s student

magazine. Other volunteers, such as stage managers, comperes, and health and safety managers, were recruited through meeting them at music events or out and about, chatting about the festival, then allowing them to offer to help.

The director gave some insight into how she selected volunteers for the various tasks: “I’d rather people offered and then I will think of a role for them. There’s no point in trying to make someone do something when they haven’t got their heart in something.” Another volunteer, Gail, mentioned how the director made it possible for people to make the offer:

‘To a certain extent you have to expose your vulnerability for people to say, do you want me to help you. And I think that possibly in the first place, she seemed to not really know much about what she was doing. At the time I would say that she seemed vulnerable, so I offered to help.’

The director also explained about the need for a balance between appearing business-like, while demonstrating enough vulnerability for people to see that she did need help:

‘Most people feel that they have to look like they’re omnipotent and can cope. On their own. And if they can’t that’s failure. Emm .... and that’s particularly for women, which can create quite an austere business woman image, which is unappealing and cold, very typical. So .... On the other hand, society hates vulnerable people. Feels they’re flaky and unreliable. There’s very little middle ground. So to be able to be vulnerable enough for people to think that their offer won’t be rejected is a really big marketing ....challenge.’

## **Discussion**

Matching the theoretical leadership traits and styles with the findings of this case study (see Table 2) demonstrates that the festival director’s leadership of the festival volunteers does not fit neatly into only one of these leadership approaches. Aspects of each of

the leadership approaches were found within the data, however, as illustrated within the data extracts above.

<b>Leadership theories and approaches</b>	<b>Features of theory</b>	<b>Evidence in findings?</b>
Heroic leadership	Traits of intelligence, self-confidence, persistence, sociable, good communicator, integrity	Self-confidence, persistence, sociable, good communicator
Transactional leadership	Task-focused, managerial, rewards (monetary) and punishes	Task-focused, managerial, rewards (non-monetary)
Servant leadership	Ethical behaviour, concern for subordinates, empowerment of subordinates to grow and succeed personally and professionally, achievement of organisational and personal goals, moral responsibility of serving all stakeholders	Empowerment of subordinates to grow and succeed, achievement of organisational goals
Transformational leadership	Inspires by higher-order motives, enthusiasm, vision, values-led, gives personal attention to individual followers	Higher-order motives, enthusiasm, values-led, gives personal attention to individual followers
Entrepreneurial leadership	Innovation, creativity, pro-active, willing to take calculated risks	Pro-active, risk-taking
Creativity brokering	Participatory management, builds trust, draws together creative talents,	Builds trust, draws together creative talents, takes risks,

	takes risks, mobilises resources	mobilises resources
Motivation-based leadership	Identifies whether motives are altruistic, instrumental, social and use knowledge to allocate tasks and demonstrate appreciation	Allocates tasks in line with motives, demonstrates appreciation

Table 2. Leadership theories: analysis of research evidence

The features of transformational leadership were displayed particularly strongly, with higher order motives, enthusiasm, being values-led and giving personal attention to followers being demonstrated. Servant leadership, which stresses the empowerment of subordinates to grow was also strong. However, the task-focused, more managerial features of transactional leadership, along with the risk-taking, drive and pro-active approach of entrepreneurial leadership were also present, indicating that not only the softer features of leadership were needed to accomplish the leadership of the festival volunteers.

Some leadership features were missing or less obvious. No evidence of punishment was found within the case study and monetary rewards were not provided. Punishment is something which is not usually executed where volunteers are involved and leaders need to find other ways of ensuring that volunteers fulfil their duties, whilst not being discouraged, as Dym and Hutson (2005) highlight. In this case, the provision of meal vouchers and of free entry into the festival were obvious and tangible non-monetary rewards. Less tangible rewards were also provided by the director. These included volunteers' skills being promoted by the director as part of the festival publicity and being trusted to take responsibility for areas in which CV-useful skills could be developed. A sense of being able to align themselves with and contribute to the ethos and values of the festival and the Foundation,

features of transformational leadership, also appeared to be compensation for a lack of monetary reward.

The gathering of evidence to confirm intelligence, integrity and ethical behaviour are outside the scope of this study, although the evident focus on higher order social values could be said to indicate the second and third features.

Specific evidence of the director herself being artistically creative was not discovered. However, she did draw together creative talents in the form of music, artwork and blogging, suggesting a creativity brokering trait.

Additional characteristics were also identified, such as a need to expose some level of vulnerability in order to encourage offers of help to be proffered, whilst balancing this with projecting confidence and organisational ability.

### **The layered leadership model**

As illustrated above, according to the evidence discovered within this case study, none of the existing theoretical frameworks perfectly explains how successful volunteer leadership operates at a grass-roots event level. A new theoretical model, termed 'layered leadership' is therefore proposed (see Figure 1). This model extends and transcends the existing leadership theories by highlighting the relationships between the various features of leadership discovered in the data.

The three layers of the layered leadership model may be matched to the clusters of leadership features identified by this study. The inner core of the model gathers together the features of 'delivery', which emphasise the harder skills of being task-focused, well-organised, goal-oriented and persistent, as well as being able to network in a targeted manner. To mask and soften these harder features within a volunteering environment, the features of

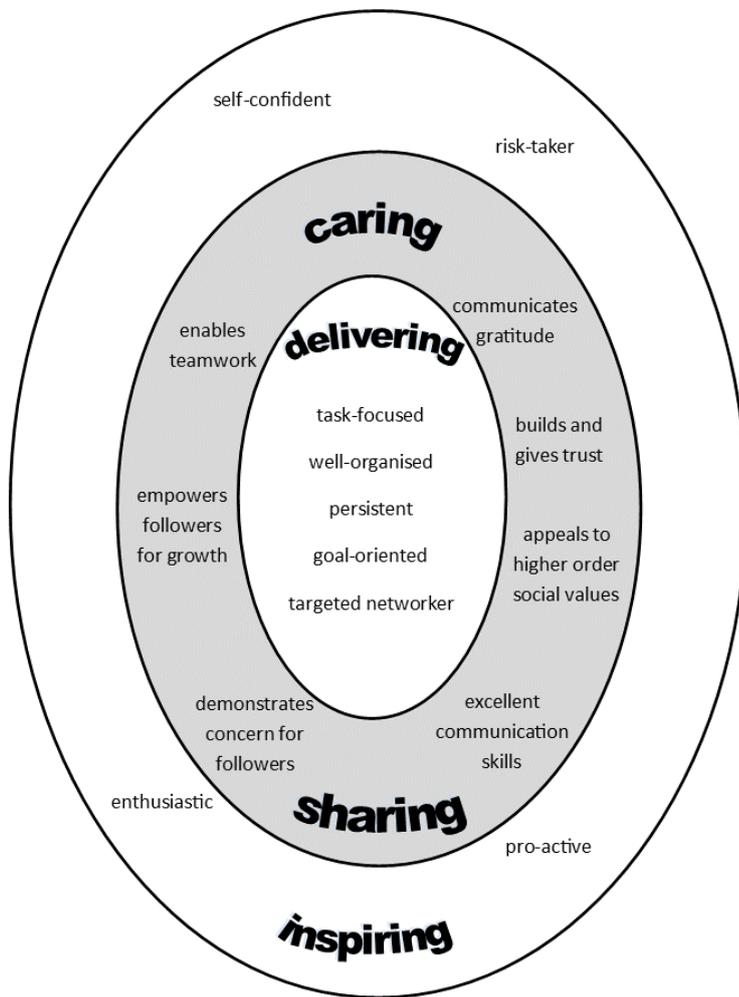


Figure 1. Layered leadership model

‘caring’ and ‘sharing’ appear in the middle layer: appealing to higher order social values, empowering followers for growth, communicating gratitude, building and giving trust, enabling teamwork, displaying excellent communication skills, and demonstrating concern for the volunteers. The exterior layer highlights the features of the ‘inspiring’ cluster: enthusiasm, self-confidence, risk-taking, being pro-active, and networking in a targeted

manner, which are closest to the surface due to the leader's need to attract followers before revealing to them the inner layers.

## **Conclusions**

The leadership of volunteers within the context of a grass-roots event demands a complex leadership style, as displayed within the new model offered here. This case study provides an example of how volunteer leadership can operate successfully within the context of a local festival, adding to the sparse literature already available. All of the interviewed volunteers reported that they enjoyed the festival volunteering experience and stated that they would be happy to volunteer again at the same festival the following year, if it were repeated, thus suggesting that lessons can be learned from the leadership approach they encountered.

As highlighted earlier, literature on leading event volunteers is sparse, and this study aims to expand theory and knowledge around these issues. The acknowledged expansion of episodic volunteering (Rochester 2006), a key feature of festivals and events volunteering, where recurrent recruitment and short-term retention of volunteers is needed, suggests that understanding how good leadership works within these contexts is particularly vital. The new layered leadership model responds to Rochester's (2013) request for the development, through qualitative research, of usable theories of how things work. It also adds to the canon of leadership theory, which as Storey (2010) asserts, is constantly evolving.

In line with the existing event volunteering leadership literature, this study discovered an emphasis on a values-driven approach, with empathy with followers being a key feature. However, the findings of this study suggest that it is not enough to focus on only one of the existing leadership theories when attempting to gain insight into how to lead event volunteers. This supports Einarsen and Mykletun's (2009) approach to the investigation of leadership at the Gladmatfestival, which draws on entrepreneurial, transactional and transformational leadership theories.

Within the wider non-profit volunteering literature, the outputs respond to Jäger, Kreutzer and Beyes's (2009) and Ockenden and Hutin's (2008) suggestions that more needs to be known about leadership within small volunteer-led groups. The gathering of views from the volunteers themselves, as achieved in this study, is also suggested as important by Jäger, Kreutzer and Beyes (2009), in order to gain a balanced view.

This study is not without limitations, in that it focuses on one new local music festival located in the UK and takes account of a selected, although pervasive, range of existing leadership theory. However, it is hoped that the suggested new layered leadership model will provide useful guidance to the leaders of volunteers within the context of festivals and events, as well as provide inspiration to other grassroots organisations.

It is recommended that further research be carried out within this field in order to test the usability of the model within the festivals and events context. Testing should also be extended to include other community and grassroots contexts, in order that further useful knowledge of how volunteer leadership works in practice may be developed.

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