Leadership Assessment Report:

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln - Dance Marathon

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Overview

The University of Nebraska Dance Marathon is a student-led organization on campus whose main goal is to raise funds and awareness for the Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska.` Their mission statement is "to cultivate student leaders, foster campus community, and unite Husker Nation to champion kids' health". Over the past twenty years, this organization has raised just over 2 million dollars for the Children's Hospital. In each of these twenty years, the students in the organization come together to recruit new students into the organization to fight together for this cause. Other than students, the organization consists of thirty-two "miracle families" who have children that have been treated and or stayed at Omaha Children's Hospital. These families come to the events held by Dance Marathon and share their stories along with the experiences they've had at the hospital.

During one of these events, families come and tell their stories at Huskerthon. The students involved in Dance Marathon spend from August until February planning this 13.1-hour-long event. This period of time is dedicated to celebrating the lives of children who are and have had to fight battles that no human should have to fight. It's a chance for kids to simply be kids again.

This organization wouldn't be able to celebrate the lives of these children without the work of all the students in the organization. There are ample opportunities for students to pursue a leadership role in Dance Marathon. It starts at the top as the Executive Director, then the four Vice Presidents who are in charge of the Executive Team who are then in charge of the staff. Within these different levels of leadership, each student is assigned to a cabinet. Dance Marathon has four cabinets that consist of engagement, marketing, programming, and finance. All of these roles give students some sort of responsibility to be a part of something bigger than themselves, fight for a cause, and provide opportunities for students to grow as a leader and overall person.

Ever since the coronavirus took the world by storm, Dance Marathon has been trying to rebuild what was ruined. Since March 2020, Dance Marathon has struggled to recruit students to be involved in the organization. The number of participants in the organization has drastically dropped from over 300 hundred students to a total of 257 participants. Along with the drastic drop in numbers, the organization is having a hard time keeping members in leadership roles. In the 2022-2023 Dance Marathon year, they went through two different executive directors at the beginning of the year and ended the year without an executive director. We chose to create a training and development program for Dance Marathon to see if we could help increase their numbers, engagement, and involvement on campus.

Dance Marathon Organizational Assessment

- Define your role and responsibility in Dance Marathon.
- Do you feel valued as a person and for your work?
- Do you have opportunities to grow in Dance Marathon?
- Who had the biggest impact on you this year? Why?
- Describe your level of engagement in Dance Marathon.
- Describe your level of Commitment in Dance Marathon
- Describe your level of satisfaction within Dance Marathon at the end of the year.
- How would you describe Dance Marathon's culture?
- What is one thing you enjoy about being involved with Dance Marathon?
- What is one thing you would change about being in Dance Marathon?
- Do you receive effective feedback from your leaders?
- Do you feel supported by other leadership roles within your work?
- Do you feel supported by other leadership roles in your decision making?
- How would you describe the communication between the VPs, Executive Team, and Staff?
- What worked well within the leadership roles this year?
- What didn't work well within leadership roles this year?

Figure 1: Initial Survey

We created a survey (Figure 1) asking questions on responsibilities, culture, and engagement directed toward Dance Marathon. Nine students within Dance Marathon took the survey and we averaged their scores on each section of the survey on a scale from 1-5 (Figure 2). The results of our survey concluded that everyone believed that they knew their roles and responsibilities where 66.7% of people rated themselves a five and the other 33.3% rated themselves a 4. Everyone believed that they felt valued as a person and for their work, although 11.1% felt moderately valued, giving a ranking of 3 out of 5. 77.5% of people strongly believed that they have opportunities to grow within the organization, and 22.2% rated this at a 3 out of 5. Dance Marathon is full of effective leaders that have been considered impactful and influential. An individual that took the survey said the leaders"... pushed me to be the best I could be, and

lead by example at all times…". Another individual said that the leaders are " … always reassuring that I was valued…". Multiple other individuals stated that the leaders within Dance Marathon create a welcoming and fun environment for everyone to fnd a love for the student-led organization.
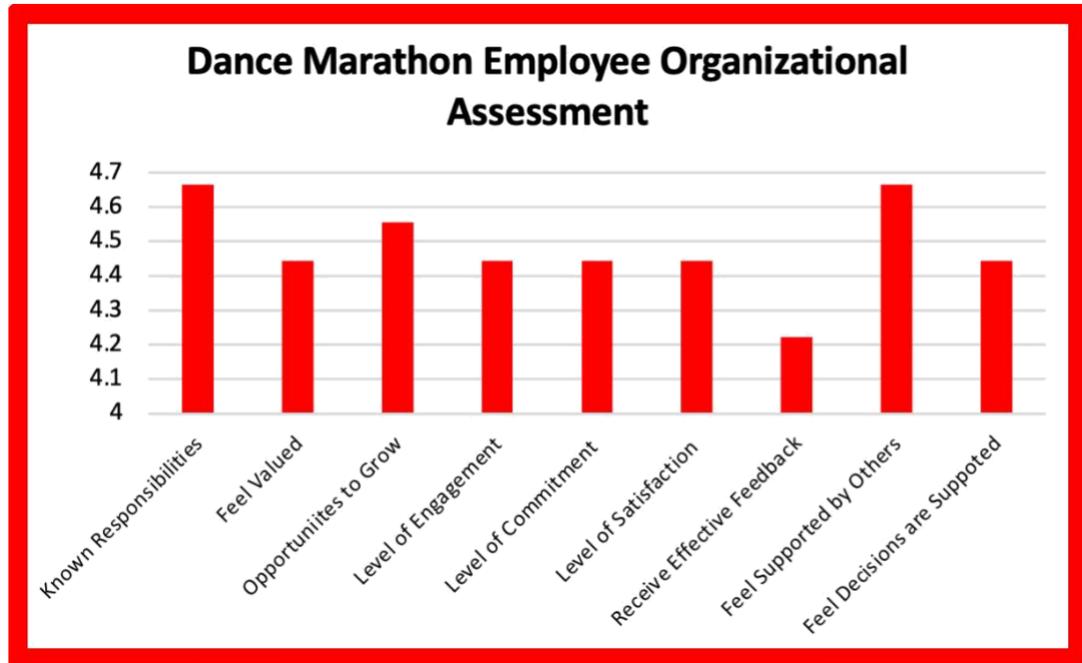
Figure 2: Results from Survey (Graph scaled from original options.)

Figure 3: Dance Marathon Current State

Dance Marathon is full of student-leaders that have the potential to be effective within their positions. After collecting and analyzing our survey, Dance Marathon can benefit from servant leadership. Based on the survey results, student-leaders within Dance Marathon want a higher level of engagement and an improved amount of effective/quality communication. Servant leadership focuses on leader attentiveness to the concerns of their followers, empathizing with them, and nurturing them. Servant leaders put their followers first by empowering and helping them develop their full personal capacities (Northouse, 2019). If this leadership level is

desired, engagement and communication must be improved. According to Lemoine, Hartnell, and Leroy, servant leaders are ethical and lead in ways to serve the greater good of an organization, community, and society (Lemoine et al., 2019).

Greenleaf (1970) states that servant leadership begins with the natural feeling to serve first and ensure other people's priorities are met. Hale and Fields add that servant leaders focus on follower development by placing the good of followers over their self-interests. Servant characteristics consist of ten characteristics: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment, and community-building. The model of servant leadership (Figure 4) has three main components: antecedent conditions, servant leaders' behaviors, and outcomes. Antecedent conditions include context and culture, leader attributes, and follower receptivity.

Context and culture influence the way servant leadership can be achieved. For example, Dance Marathon's context and culture are influenced by the desire to care for others, and its power is not shared equally through the leadership ladder. Leader Attributes define the qualities, traits, and ideas that individuals bring to servant leadership situations. People will act differently in certain situations; that is fine as long as their traits influence their engagement in servant leadership. Follower Receptivity is influential in servant leadership outcomes such as personal and organizational job performance. This antecedent condition prompts servant leaders to ask: Do we show a desire for servant leadership? If this desire is present, there will be a positive impact on performance and organizational behavior.

Antecedent Conditions	Servant Leader Behaviors	Outcomes
Context and Culture	• Conceptualizing • Emotional Healing • Putting Followers First • Helping Followers Grow and Succeed • Behaving Ethically • Empowering • Creating Value for the Community	Follower Performance and Growth
Leader Attributes		Organizational Performance
Follower Receptivity		Societal Impact

Figure 4: Servant Leadership Model

Training and Development

To further our knowledge of the measures of servant leadership within each role, we administered the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Appendix A). The SLQ consists of 28 questions that pinpoint 7 separate aspects of servant leadership. Research indicates that the SLQ is distinct and evaluates leadership qualities that difer from those assessed by transformational and leader-member exchange theories (Northouse, 2022).

When analyzing the results of the servant leadership questionnaire, we averaged the scores. After averaging the scores, we found that the respondents scored high range in all of the categories. For emotional healing, putting followers frst, and behaving ethically, the respondents had an average score of 24.5. The average score was 25.5 in creating value for the community and in conceptual skills; they scored close to the same with a score of 25.25. In the empowering category, the average score was 24 and in helping followers grow and succeed, they scored 23.5.

After this analysis of the SLQ scores, we chose four of the leadership behaviors we saw to be most important for the Dance Marathon. With that being said, we decided to base our Training and Development Program around conceptualizing leadership behaviors, helping followers grow and succeed, empowering leadership behaviors, and creating value for the community. Our Training and Development Program dedicates coaching sessions to each of these programs along with a time to refect on what is learned from these sessions. From this Servant Leadership Training program, leaders within Dance Marathon have the opportunity to grow as a human and become an efective servant leader within the organization.

Program Structure

WEEK ONE
- Teaching Servant Leadership
  - Describe what Servant Leadership is to all members of Dance Marathon, explain the Servant Leadership Model, and give examples of situations when using Servant Leadership is appropriate. Display research that has been done to prove Servant Leadership is efficient.
- Servant Leadership Process
  - Go through the antecedent conditions, servant leader behaviors, and outcomes of servant leadership.

WEEK TWO
- Implement Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)

- ○ All Staff Members of Dance Marathon will take the SLQ on their respective director.
- ○ All members in leadership roles within the organization will take SLQ on themselves
- ○ All Executive Members of Dance Marathon will take the SLQ on their respective Vice President
- ○ All Vice Presidents will take the SLQ on the Executive Director of Dance Marathon
- ● Whole Group Coaching Session 1
  - ○ Leadership Consultants will go through the SLQ results with the members to whom the SLQ was administered (Executive Members, Vice Presidents, and Executive directors).
    - ■ Consultants will talk about the strengths and weaknesses the data revealed
  - ○ SLQ journal reflection
    - ■ Ask questions such as:
      - ● Do you agree with the results of the SLQ?
      - ● What surprised you about these results?
      - ● Where do you see yourself using these attributes in the areas to score high?
      - ● What are some situations that could lead you to grow in the areas you scored low?
      - ● What are some things you are going to be more intentional about when leading going forward?
- ● Individual Coaching Session 1 (Executive Team, Vice Presidents, and Executive Director)
  - ○ Leadership Consultants will meet with the executive team and higher review their test scores individually.
    - ■ Will go over how to better utilize the Servant Leadership skills they scored both high and low in.

WEEK THREE
- ● Whole Group Coaching Session 2
  - ○ The Executive Team, Vice Presidents, and Executive Director will learn about Conceptualizing leadership behaviors.
    - ■ Leaders will learn how conceptualizing is a servant leader's in-depth understanding of the organization.
      - ● Servant Leaders should thoroughly understand:
        - ○ Organization's purpose, complexities, and mission
    - ■ Leaders will then complete a journal that reflects their thoughts after this lesson

- Individual Coaching Session 2 (Executive Team, Vice Presidents, and Executive Director)
  - Leaders in the organization will discuss their reflections after their lesson
    - What is one thing that stuck with you while learning about conceptualization?
    - What surprised you about conceptualization?

WEEK FOUR
- Whole Group Coaching Session 3
  - The Executive Team, Vice Presidents, and Executive Director will learn about helping followers grow and succeed.
    - Leaders in Dance Marathon should know their followers' personal or professional goals and help them to reach those goals.
    - These leaders should also make their follower's career development a top priority. This includes supporting them and mentoring them
    - Leaders should aim to help their followers reach their best human potential.
      - Leaders should complete a journal of reflection to share
- Individual Coaching Session 3
  - Discuss reflection on helping followers grow and succeed.
    - What's one thing that stuck out the most to you?
    - What did you find the most interesting?
    - Do you think this leader's behavior is feasible?
- Readminister SLQ
  - Leaders will take the SLQ on themselves
  - Those who are under their respective leader will take the SLQ on them

- Whole Group Coaching Session 4
  - Executive Team, Vice Presidents, and Executive Director will learn about empowering leadership behaviors
    - The leader's behavior of empowering means the leader gives their followers the freedom of independence
      - Followers can make decisions on their own
      - Followers can be sufficient
    - Empowerment also gives the ability for leader and follower to share the power
    - Gives followers confidence to think for themselves and act on their thoughts.
      - Leaders should complete a journal of reflection to share
- Individual Coaching Session 4
  - Discuss reflection from the whole group coaching session

- - - Have you felt empowered by another leader?
      - Do you think others feel empowered by you? If so, why?
      - What stuck with you after learning about this leader's behavior?
  - Review new SLQ scores
    - Compare the first scores from the date you received them to the most recent
      - Were there differences in the results of the tests?
      - Did any of your results drastically change?
      - Did any of your results stay the same?

WEEK SIX
- Whole Group Coaching Session 5
  - Executive Team, Vice Presidents, and Executive Director will learn about leadership behaviors that lead to creating value for the community
    - Dance Marathon leaders will learn that servant leaders create value for their community by constantly giving back, being involved in communal activities, and encouraging others to volunteer
    - Servant Leaders do these things to connect the purpose and goals of their organization
      - Leaders should create a journal of reflection to share
- Individual Coaching Session 5
  - Discuss reflection from the whole group coaching session
    - How do you see yourself creating value for the community?
    - What volunteer experience have you had that has already made you feel you were giving back to the community?
    - What does community mean to you?

WEEK SEVEN
- Whole Group Coaching Session 6
  - The Executive Team, Vice Presidents, and Executive Director will learn about the outcomes of all of these Leader Behaviors.
    - Follower Performance and Growth
      - Servant Leaders are to encourage their followers to expect greater self-actualization, realize how much they are capable of when they are nurtured, give their followers control, and help their followers reach their personal goals
    - Organizational Performance
      - Servant Leaders have a positive impact on an organization's performance.
      - Servant Leadership has been found to enhance team effectiveness because of the increased confidence that is shared among team members
    - Societal Impact

- Servant Leadership has a very positive Impact on society
    - Leaders should complete a journal of reflection to share
- Individual Coaching Session 6
    - Discuss reflection journal from the whole group discussion
        - Have you seen these outcomes come from a different leader than yourself?
        - Which outcome do you hope to accomplish within Dance Marathon?
- Readminister the SLQ
    - All members of Dance Marathon in a leadership position will take the SLQ on themselves
    - The followers will administer the SLQ to their respective leaders within the organization

WEEK EIGHT
- Whole Group Coaching Session 7
    - Review the newest SLQ results
        - What was the biggest difference between the first test results and the last test results?
        - What was the biggest surprise throughout this whole process?
        - What has been the most important lesson learned through this process?
    - Reflect on this Servant Leadership development process
        - What was the biggest lesson learned?
        - Is there anything you disagree with?
        - What is your biggest goal going forward?

Training & Development Program

Week 1	• Teaching Servant Leadership • Describe the Servant Leadership Process ○ Antecedent conditions, leader behaviors, and outcomes

Week 2	• Implement Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)
	  ○ Staff, members, executive members, and vice presidents
	• Whole Group Coaching Session 1
	  ○ Discuss SLQ results with everyone
	• Individual Career Coaching Session 1
	  ○ Review SLQ scores individually

Week 3	• Whole Group Coaching Session 2
	  ○ Teach conceptualizing leadership behaviors
	• Individual Coaching Session 2
	  ○ Leaders discuss reflection of lesson

Week 4	• Whole Group Coaching Session 3
	   ○ Teaching follower development to DM leaders
	• Individual Coaching Session 3
	   ○ Discuss reflection of meeting above
	• Readminister SLQ

Week 5	• Whole Group Coaching Session 4
	   ○ Teach empowering leadership behaviors to DM leaders
	• Individual Coaching Session 4
	   ○ Discuss reflection of the meeting above
	• Review New SLQ Results

Week 6	• Whole Group Coaching Session 5
	   ○ Teach behaviors that create value for the community to DM leaders
	• Individual Coaching Session 5
	   ○ Discuss reflection of the meeting above

Week 7	• Whole Group Coaching Session 6
	   ○ Teach outcomes of leader behaviors to DM leaders
	• Individual Coaching Session 6
	   ○ Discuss reflections of the meeting above
	• Re-administer the SLQ

Week 8	• Whole Group Coaching Session 7 ○ Review newest SLQ results

Figure 5: Training and Development Model

Intended Outcomes

Dance Marathon, since Covid, has recently been struggling with involvement within its program. We created an 8-week training and development program to educate the staff in Servant Leadership. After the program, we expect to see an increase in follower performance, organizational performance, and societal impact. According to Greenleaf, followers themselves will become servant leaders (Greenleaf, 1970). Therefore, we expect to see followers transform into servant leaders. Meuser suggested that an outcome of servant leadership is that followers will have more in-role performance which will affect how followers complete their tasks (Meuser, 2011). From Meuser's theory, we intend for the followers to be more involved within the organization and be able to create better communication between leadership levels. Our overall goal is to give them the tools they need to further their servant leadership skills. After our program, we intended that leaders, when they possess a problem, will be able to fix it themselves using servant leadership.

Figure 6: Dance Marathon's Outcomes

Program Evaluation for Effectiveness

After our 8-week program, we will have the staff retake the SLQ to assess our program for effectiveness. We will have the staff not only take it on each other but on themselves as well. Within our training and development program, we readministered the SLQ three different times. It will be administered at the beginning of the program, the middle of the program, and at the very end of the program. From the three times of taking the SLQ, we plan to measure the effectiveness of this program by analyzing the scores of the staff of Dance Marathon which will show more involvement and better communication amongst the staff. By the third time taking the SLQ we intend to see a rise in scores due to the coaching sessions. We will see that our program is effective when we see followers have a strong motivation to lead and become more involved in Dance Marathon. Having better team effectiveness will be a big supporting factor for Dance Marathon (Hu and Liden, 2011). Better team effectiveness will allow for better communication through the branches of staff and overall will help with a better impact on society and on the program itself.

Appendix A: Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Liden et al. 2015)

Servant Leadership Questionnaire

Purpose: The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine the servant leadership behaviors you exhibit.

Instructions: Have a friend, colleague, or classmate read each item carefully and use the following 7-point scale to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements as they pertain to your leadership. In these statements, "the leader" is referring to you in a leadership capacity.

Key: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Disagree somewhat 4 = Undecided 5 = Agree somewhat 6 = Agree 7 = Strongly agree

1.	Others would seek help from the leader if they had a personal problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	The leader emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	The leader can tell if something work-related is going wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	The leader gives others the responsibility to make important decisions about their own jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	The leader makes others' career development a priority.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	The leader cares more about others' success than their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	The leader holds high ethical standards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	The leader cares about others' personal well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	The leader is always interested in helping people in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	The leader is able to think through complex problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	The leader encourages others to handle important work decisions on their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	The leader is interested in making sure others reach their career goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	The leader puts others' best interests above their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	The leader is always honest.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	The leader takes time to talk to others on a personal level.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	The leader is involved in community activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	The leader has a thorough understanding of the organization and its goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	The leader gives others the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way they feel(s) is best.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	The leader provides others with work experiences that enable them to develop new skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	The leader sacrifices their own interests to meet others' needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	The leader would not compromise ethical principles in order to meet success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	The leader can recognize when others are feeling down without asking them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	The leader encourages others to volunteer in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	The leader can solve work problems with new or creative ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	If others need to make important decisions at work, they do not need to consult the leader.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	The leader wants to know about others' career goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	The leader does what they can to make others' jobs easier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	The leader values honesty more than profits.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Source: Adapted from *The Leadership Quarterly, 19,* by R. C. Liden, S. J. Wayne, H. Zhao, and D. Henderson, "Servant Leadership: Development of a Multidimensional Measure and Multi-Level Assessment," pp. 161–177, Copyright (2008).

Scoring

1. Add up the scores for 1, 8, 15, and 22. This is your score for emotional healing.
2. Add up the scores for 2, 9, 16, and 23. This is your score for creating value for the community.
3. Add up the scores for 3, 10, 17, and 24. This is your score for conceptual skills.
4. Add up the scores for 4, 11, 18, and 25. This is your score for empowering.
5. Add up the scores for 5, 12, 19, and 26. This is your score for helping followers grow and succeed.
6. Add up the scores for 6, 13, 20, and 27. This is your score for putting followers first.
7. Add up the scores for 7, 14, 21, and 28. This is your score for behaving ethically.

Scoring Interpretation

The scores you received on the SLQ indicate the degree to which you exhibit the seven behaviors characteristic of a servant leader. You can use the results to assess areas in which you have strong servant leadership behaviors and areas in which you may strive to improve. Based on the responses of the person who filled out this questionnaire on your leadership, the following scores for each category can be broken down as follows:

- *High range:* A score between 23 and 28 means others believe you strongly exhibit this servant leadership behavior.

- *Moderate range:* A score between 14 and 22 means others believe you tend to exhibit this behavior in an average way.

- *Low range:* A score between 4 and 13 means others believe you exhibit this leadership behavior below the average or expected degree.

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