Developing Leaders in the Aerospace Industry

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Overview
Leadership within a dynamic, ever-changing environment is at the heart of the aerospace industry. A strong leadership figure in aerospace history remains “rocket scientist” Dr. Wernher von Braun. The lessons he taught and the challenges he encountered as a leader currently aid in the understanding of leadership success and leader development in the aerospace industry.

Explanation
Leadership is key to:
Articulate a clear vision, anticipate change, and future missions & success.

Key Findings
Early Leader Development
• Early fascination, dedication, vision
• Inspired & taught by mentors
• Early hands on experience as an active leader, & team builder in the field
• Leading large teams in crisis situation

Personality: open to new experiences, extraverted, agreeable

Leader – Follower – Situation Model
Transformational Charismatic Leader

Leaders Vision of the Future
Groups with vision
Inherently future oriented
• Stimulate & unify efforts of followers
• Transform people & the organization

Lessons Learned
1. Vision
2. Expert knowledge and skill sets ‘Being ahead of the Process’
3. Communication ‘Open Door Policy’
4. Ability to build, motivate, and lead teams ‘The use of head in the area of expertise will only make a good team-leader’
5. Select the right employees
6. Mentorship
7. Social networking and building relationships
8. Adapt leadership to changing situations

‘Von Braun conveyed the process of learning by inspiring each worker with his knowledge. For everybody he was a mentor who never doubt in the skills of his student.’
~ Student of Von Braun

Impact
Developing highly competent leaders is essential for meeting the growing challenges of the twentieth-first century work force.

• Encourage leader development programs & mentorship
• Infuse transformational leadership concepts into leaders development
• Use organizational & individual feedback tools

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