

THURSDAY TRAINING

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Adaptation, Decentralization
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Navigating New Horizons

The DMADD team carries out monthly workshops named 'ThursdayTraining'. These short trainings aim to facilitate knowledge sharing among its members. The sessions are planned to be conducted on the last Thursday of every month.

The primary objective of these workshops is to enhance mutual understanding and upskilling among team members, ultimately contributing to the achievement of the project's overarching goals. The D'MADD team will share insights related to their work as well as have the chance to impart valuable experiences and life lessons that could benefit the entire team.

This initiative not only promotes professional growth but also strengthens the bonds within the DMADD team, setting a positive tone for collaborations and teamwork.



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Leading without Authority: Influencing, collaborating & Delivering Results

25 March 2026



Training Overview

This month's Thursday Training Series session, delivered on 25 March 2026, facilitated by Dr. Waheed, Project Manager. The session was based on the presentation titled "Leading Without Authority." The training focused on equipping team members with practical leadership skills required to operate effectively in modern, cross-functional environments where formal authority may be limited, but outcomes and collaboration remain critical. The session emphasized that leadership today is less about position or title, and more about influence, trust, and the ability to mobilize people around shared goals. This message is particularly relevant in project-based and inter-agency contexts where success depends on cooperation rather than hierarchy.



Why Leading Without Authority Matters

The training began by highlighting why leading without formal authority has become an essential professional skill. Work environments are increasingly cross-functional, requiring collaboration across departments, organizations, and disciplines. In such settings, individuals often need to influence decisions and actions without having direct managerial control.

Dr. Waheed stressed that authority is often limited, especially in project teams, partnerships, and stakeholder-driven initiatives. As a result, influence—not position—drives results. Effective collaboration, built on trust and mutual respect, is now a key determinant of success. Participants were encouraged to view leadership as a behavior and capability rather than a job title.



Understanding “Leading Without Authority”

Leading without authority was defined as the ability to achieve outcomes without relying on formal power. This involves influencing people and decisions through credibility, relationships, and alignment rather than command and control.

Key aspects discussed included:

- Influencing stakeholders through logic, trust, and shared purpose
- Building alignment around goals, even when interests differ
- Creating trust so that people choose to follow, rather than comply

The session reinforced that leadership in this context is intentional and proactive, requiring self-awareness and adaptability.



Core Skills for Influence-Based Leadership

Dr. Waheed outlined 5 core skills that underpin effective leadership without authority:

- **Influence:** The ability to shape outcomes and perspectives through persuasion rather than enforcement.
- **Communication:** Clear, timely, and purposeful communication to ensure shared understanding.
- **Relationship Building:** Developing strong professional relationships that enable collaboration and openness.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Recognizing and managing one's own emotions while understanding those of others.
- **Credibility:** Being trusted and respected based on consistency, competence, and integrity.

Participants were encouraged to reflect on which of these skills they already demonstrate and which require further development.

Building Credibility Quickly

A significant portion of the training focused on credibility as the foundation of influence. Without credibility, attempts to lead or influence are unlikely to succeed.

Key actions to build credibility included:

- Delivering on commitments and doing what is promised.
- Being reliable and consistent in behavior and performance.
- Demonstrating expertise through preparation and quality contributions.
- Acting with integrity, especially when under pressure.

Dr. Waheed emphasized that credibility is built through repeated actions over time, but it can be lost quickly if trust is broken.

Understanding and Mapping Stakeholders

Participants were introduced to the importance of stakeholder awareness. Effective leadership without authority requires a clear understanding of who the key stakeholders are and what motivates them.

The session highlighted:

- Identifying individuals who influence decisions or outcomes.
- Understanding stakeholders' interests, priorities, and concerns.
- Mapping stakeholders based on power versus interest.
- Adapting engagement strategies accordingly.

This approach helps leaders focus their efforts where they will have the greatest impact and tailor messages to different audiences.

Communicating to Influence

Communication was presented as a central leadership tool. Dr. Waheed stressed that

influence depends not only on what is said, but how it is said.

Effective communication practices discussed included:

- Being clear and concise to avoid confusion.
- Listening actively to understand perspectives and concerns.
- Using storytelling to make messages relatable and memorable
- Tailoring messages to suit different audiences and contexts.

Participants were reminded that effective communication is a two-way process and that listening is often more powerful than speaking.

Collaborating Effectively

The training emphasized collaboration as a deliberate leadership activity. Rather than directing others, leaders without authority must create environments where people feel engaged and invested.

Key collaboration strategies included:

- Establishing shared goals that align individual and team interests.
- Encouraging participation and inclusive decision-making.
- Building a sense of ownership among team members.
- Recognizing contributions to reinforce positive behavior and motivation.

These practices help move teams from compliance to commitment.

Handling Resistance Professionally

Resistance was presented as a natural part of change and collaboration. Instead of viewing resistance as opposition, participants were encouraged to see it as information.

Approaches to managing resistance included:

- Seeking to understand underlying concerns.
- Remaining calm and professional, even in difficult situations.
- Using empathy to acknowledge different viewpoints.
- Working toward win-win solutions that balance needs and constraints.

This mindset supports constructive dialogue and reduces conflict.

Practical Tips for Everyday Application

To close the practical component, Dr. Waheed shared several actionable tips for applying the concepts discussed:

- Build relationships early, before influence is needed.
- Be visible and proactive in contributing value.
- Focus on value creation, not authority or title.
- Follow up consistently to maintain momentum and trust.

These habits help reinforce leadership behaviors over time.

Reflection and Key Takeaways

Participants were invited to reflect on three guiding questions:

- Who do you need to influence in your current role?
- What matters most to them?
- What is your next concrete action?

The session concluded with a strong message: modern organizations need people driven by purpose, passion, and persistence, not position. Success is no longer just about hiring talented individuals, but about nurturing people who make teams stronger through collaboration and shared ownership.



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