**Leadership**

***by Holly Soboroff***

Any media staff has many leadership positions, whether they are official ones like Editor-in-Chief or Assistant Business Manager, or unofficial ones like the staff member who knows how to use Photoshop really well or the staff Fun Director. No matter what sort of leader you are, understanding leadership can help you be better at working on your staff.

First, there are two ways leaders get people to do what they want: power and status.

**Power** is the ability to use punishments and rewards to persuade people. Think of grades - teachers can reward students with good grades or punish them with bad ones. The problem with power is that it only gets group members to do just enough work to get the desired reward or avoid the punishment, but no more. A student may refuse to cover for a sick reporter if he already has an A, or a student content with a C may never care if her stories are grammatically correct. The more a leader uses power, even rewards, the more group members tend to resent that leader, and the less they want to help the group, so trying to bribe or threaten people into acting the right way only goes so far and should be used sparingly.

**Status** is the ability to get people to see you as a good leader and want to follow you. Status characteristics are things that people tend to associate with good leaders for that group's goals. Some are things we can't control - people tend to take seniors more seriously than freshmen and tall people often have a higher status than short people. However, there are some traits we can control to balance out the ones we can't.

**Goal Oriented**

You are focused on the overall goal of the group, and work hard to achieve it. You put the newspaper or yearbook ahead of studying for your Spanish test. You care about the entire publication, not just the parts you are working on and you keep yourself focused on achieving the group’s goals. Goal oriented group members don't just focus on their assignments (though they get those done). They will help with anything to make the publication the best it can be.

**Group Oriented**

A group-oriented leader knows it takes more than one person to create a publication and works to help the entire group work to that end. You get input from the entire group and use decision making processes that let everyone give input. When a group member is struggling, you help that person through their problems instead of taking over the work yourself and work to make sure group members feel like this is their publication, too, and their opinions and skills matter.

**Competent**

You are good at what you do and work to improve your skills. If there is something you don't know, you aren't afraid to ask for help. A good leader doesn't need to be the best writer or photographer on staff, but you be should good at the important jobs. Being competent also includes being dependable - a competent staff member shows up on time (or early) and meets deadlines.

**Caring**

While the group's goals come first, a good leader also cares about group members and treats everyone with respect. You should look out for the people around you and be easy to approach when others need help. You offer praise when someone does well and you are tactful when you offer criticism. A caring leader finds little ways to show group members they matter, like saying happy birthday, asking how their weekend went or bringing treats in for everyone.

The great thing about status is the more you work towards those traits, the more people will want to follow you. Anyone on staff can work on those traits, so even a brand new freshman who doesn't have a lot of experience can start building up status just by showing up a little early to ask questions and getting to work right away. On the other hand, a senior editor can quickly lose status if she doesn't make her deadlines or makes large changes to other people's stories at the last minute (that's not group oriented).