

## C04-O04

### LEADERS AT THE POLES: WHAT POLAR RESEARCHERS CAN LEARN FROM MANAGERS AND WHAT CAN THEY TEACH THEM?

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Polar research is time consuming, expensive and still quite rarely meets with deep understanding and conscious public reception. It can be dangerous too. Chances of success depend strongly on external factors such as extreme weather and sea ice conditions or even polar bears activity. Those are hard to predict and estimate in a grant proposal. It needs strong determination and a kind of courage to overcome all the obstacles,

But in hardship lies opportunity, therefore the community of polar researchers and explorers has always been a group, where true leaders were forged. History praises pioneers, like Nansen and Amundsen, Uemura and Shackleton. They still inspire managers and psychologists who look for the insights into the secret of success and failure, risk managing, effective leadership in times of crisis, as well as of motivation and personal histories of outstanding leaders<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>. However, with those great examples in mind, one has to remember that no polar scientific station, research project or article would ever be created without the devotion of many more quiet leaders and their followers. And there is a practical lesson in each of their achievements.

We will present a project of a leadership training program dedicated to PhD students in various areas of polar sciences. General theoretical background of the program is based on recent findings from the field of psychology of leadership as well as on skills and knowledge of practitioners (business, political and social leaders). To provide specific polar-related perspective, this setup will be extended by applying the insights from the interviews with Polish polar researchers and explorers representing different disciplines and career stages. This will allow to propose an idealised model of a perfect polar leader.

We will also refer to results of other initiatives concerning leadership training, e.g. selected APECS webinars.

Following the main assumption that leaders are not born, but made by circumstances and by themselves, the main emphasise will be placed on practical ways of developing leadership skills in the context of polar research.

In the second part of the talk, we will discuss what polar leaders can teach others: politicians, company managers, teachers and students of every levels of education and reasons why they should do this.

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<sup>1</sup>Bennis, W. (2009). *On Becoming a Leader*. Basic Books, New York

<sup>2</sup>Collins, J., Hansen, M. T. (2011). *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck - Why Some Thrive Despite Them All*, 1ed. HarperCollins Publishers, New York

<sup>3</sup>Bainbridge, W. S. (Ed.). (2012). *Leadership in Science and Technology: A Reference Handbook*. SAGE reference series on leadership, Los Angeles

<sup>4</sup>Morrell, M., Capparell, S., Shackleton, A. (2002). *Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons from the Great Antarctic Explorer*. Penguin Books, New York