

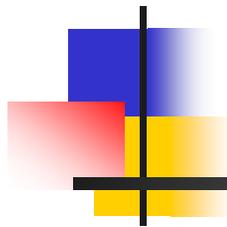
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15.281 Advanced Managerial Communication

Spring 2009

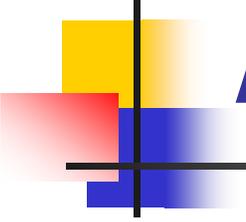
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# Leadership Derailment

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*Professor Neal Hartman*  
*Sloan School of Management*  
*MIT*



# Agenda

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- Why leaders get derailed
- Preventing leadership derailment
- Leadership self-assessment
- Team presentations



# Why leaders get derailed

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- *Difficulties with interpersonal relationships*
- Alienating others on the way up
- Being a “know-it-all”
- Displaying an abrasive, bullying style
- Showing insensitivity to others



# Why leaders get derailed

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- *Problems building a team*
- Creating a team in one's own image
- Careless selection
- Not allowing for true participation
- Inability or unwillingness to resolve conflict among team members
- Reluctance to delegate



# Why leaders get derailed

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- *Challenges in moving from the technical/tactical level to the general/strategic level*
- Becoming caught in details
- Succumbing to the pressure of higher levels of leadership
- Failing to move from *doing* to *seeing that things are done*



# Why leaders get derailed

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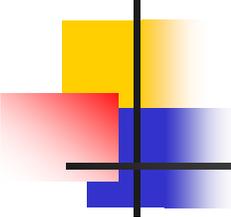
- *Lack of ability to follow through*
- Lack of attention to detail
- Moving too fast – leaving jobs unfinished



# Why leaders get derailed

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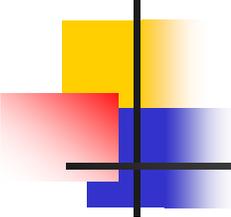
- *Overly ambitious*
- Relying too much on personal strength
- Stepping on others as they move along



# Why leaders get derailed

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- *Strategic differences with management*
- Inability to persuade one's superiors regarding a particular position
- Inability to adapt to a supervisor with a different style



# Top two derailment factors

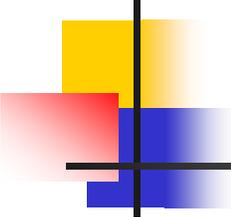
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- *In Europe*

- Poor working relations
- Inability to develop or adapt

- *In North America*

- Inability to develop or adapt
- Poor working relations

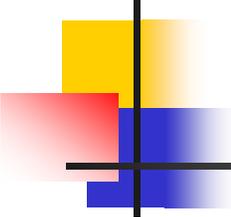


# Leaders face added pressures

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*Top competencies include:*

- Adaptability
- Communication
- Decision making
- Building a successful team
- Managing the job



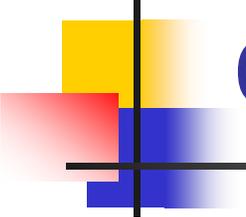
# Potential for derailment is high

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*According to Development Dimensions International, Inc., more than 2/3 of leaders show potential for derailment.*

*Why?*

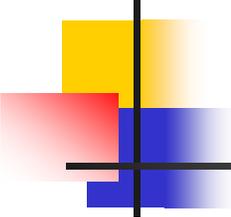
- Being overly concrete
- Micro-managing



# Consequences of derailment can be significant

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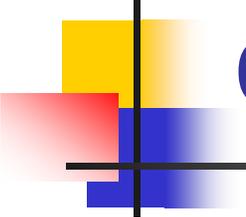
- Organizational direction, performance, effectiveness and morale weaker
- Reputation of an organization and its executives suffer
- High replacement/lost opportunity costs are incurred
- The organization can be put under sustained pressure



# Signs that signal derailment

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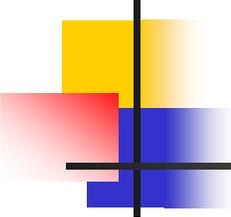
- Out of character behaviors
- Classic symptoms of stress
- Increased feelings of isolation
- Leader arrogance or self-delusion
- Tensions in close work relationships
- More caution or indecision
- Changes in work patterns
- Unexpected mistakes
- Irrational decisions
- Delays or failures in delivering commitments
- Increased reliance on support systems



# Attributes that lessen derailment

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- Diversity of experience
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Proven integrity
- Strategic and cognitive skills
- Fixing problems and managing mistakes
- Emotional stability and composure



## Thanks to . . .

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- Center for Creative Leadership,  
Greensboro, N.C.
- Development Dimensions International,  
Inc.
- Business Leadership Review, January  
2005