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Characteristics of Effective Leaders in Economic Development: An Exploratory Study

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For years, significant attention has been given to the topic of leader effectiveness across a variety of situations. In a managerial context, most research almost exclusively focuses on the individual leader and leadership processes in a typical organization with paid employees. Similarly, mainstream leadership education and training programs focus on preparing leaders for roles in typical organizations, both public and private. Yet, leading and leadership processes are contextual (Doh, 2003; Schruijer & Vansina, 2002) and thus, to be effective, require unique leadership characteristics and behaviors to match the contextual situation (Fiedler, 1996; Schaeffer, 2002). Given this contextual nature of leadership, valuable insights into leader effectiveness can be developed through research in varied contexts. One such context is economic development (ED). Although ample anecdotal evidence and published research identify characteristics and behaviors associated with effective leadership in typical organizations, little research related to effective leadership in the context of the ED sector has been published.

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Clearly, though, ED organizations and ED leaders and leadership processes may have characteristics that differ from those studied in mainstream organizational research. For example, ED organizations frequently are hybrids that may include quasi-governmental elements combined with volunteer members who, themselves, are leaders in other organizations. An ED initiative may be local, regional, or statewide. Leaders of ED organizations may be volunteers, or they may be selected through a political process. They may be "outsiders" hired for their general reputations as being skilled in public relations or, perhaps, for having succeeded in an ED initiative in another geographic region or in a specific organization. Finally, these leaders may be individuals formally educated in ED but with little actual ED experience.

All of these elements illustrate the unique context of ED leaders and ED leadership processes. Existing research has provided scant insights and guidance for organizations

with missions and environments differing from those of the typical mainstream organization (Hooijberg & Choi, 2001; Van Wart, 2003). In addition, little research has addressed training needs and outcomes for ED leaders.

A curriculum evaluation of the Leadership Southeast Georgia (SEGA) training program resulted in the pursuit of this study. Like many ED training programs, Leadership SEGA focused more on "issue awareness" rather than actual leadership skills. For example, recent topics in the Leadership SEGA program included community development, education, economic development, environmental issues, and health care. This study seeks to identify the actual leadership skills underlying effective ED leadership so that these may be included in future training.

Emerging Perspectives on Leadership

Both profit and nonprofit organizations are social entities comprised of individuals working toward a common goal or purpose (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Although this characteristic of organizations appears to be stable, a number of other organizational characteristics are changing. For example, the use of team-based structures and employee involvement programs has been noted in both profit and nonprofit organizations (Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1998; Langfred & Shanley, 1997). Decision making processes are becoming more inclusive and it is recognized that informa-tion and wisdom are not limited to a few key people in the organization. Because of the changes, it is reasonable to conclude the role of the leader is also changing. This role is increasingly seen as one of coach and facilitator, providing coordination of efforts and orchestration of worker skills, talents, and motivation toward the facilitation of team performance. This new role will require additional competencies that emphasize social and political behaviors. Leaders will be required to succeed in situations lacking the traditional levels of authority and control (Ahearn, et al, 2004). By working with and through others, leaders can also become more effective by networking, coalition building, and social capital creation (e.g., Brass, 2001; House, 1995; Luthans, Hodgetts & Rosenkrantz, 1988). This emphasis on social influence processes is quite different than the traditional approaches to understanding leadership and indicates that leaders may need a different set of characteristics than previously thought. Furthermore, the interest in "followership" and its role in the leadership process has increased. This approach recognizes that many of the outcomes valued by organizations result from the diligence, hard work, and ability of others. It also recognizes the importance of follower perceptions of leaders and the notion that effective leaders must be able to shift cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes within others. Thus, if a leader is to influence others, he or she must be capable of shifting cognitions such as follower attitudes or the schemas, scripts, and other knowledge structures that are most accessible (Lord & Brown, 2004). It has also been shown that leaders who are judged by followers to be competent gain more power and have more discretion to make changes (Yukl, 2002). All of this supports the importance of followers and follower perceptions in leadership processes. This entire discussion supports the notion that effective leaders today need skills that go beyond traditional skills such as goal setting, decision making, and monitoring subordinates (Baron, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Nyhan, 1999). The realization is that organizational and situational characteristics may require a new set of skills that acknowledge the importance of social interactions and follower perceptions.

Economic Development

The primary focus of most ED is business development,

which generally takes four forms: 1) establish business start-ups; 2) attract new firms to the region; 3) sustain and expand existing businesses; and 4) increase innovation and entrepreneurship in the area (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). ED initiatives are the work of both private and public agencies. Private development agencies are funded local and/or regional "business" entities linked to chambers of commerce or other similar organizations. Such private associations typically function as partners with local governments. Yet, private organizations are motivated by the limited interests of their specific memberships.

On the other hand, public economic developmental agencies, such as development authorities represent interests of a state's, region's, county's or city's administration. The efforts of public ED agencies thus are more broad-based, repre-senting interests of their citizen constituencies.

Public and private agencies often develop partnerships in pursuit of mutual interests. The public-private partnership signifies a commitment to pursue a shared ED goal as determined by the community (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). The essence of a public-private partnership arrangement is the sharing of risks as well as rewards. A successful public-private partnership must be willing to identify the risks linked to projects and realizes the risk can affect the public sector, the private sector, and/or both (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). In both public and private ED agencies, leader characteristics and leadership behaviors are situated in a unique context, particularly in that the followers typically may be volunteers (Catano, Pond, & Kelloway, 2001), certainly not required to invest or perform according to the leader's wishes. Moreover, the volunteers are often leaders (paid or unpaid) in other organizations.

Leadership in ED

The limited research available on leadership in an ED context suggests leadership processes that emphasize the importance of social and political influences. For example, Stimson, Stough, and Roberts (2002) state that no single individual has the authority or power to undertake fully effective region-wide ED. Consequently, to be effective local leaders must inspire and motivate followers through persuasion, example, data informed arguments, and empowerment (Bunch, 1987; Burns, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Neustat & May, 1990). They continue by describing leadership for regional ED as "not based on traditional hierarchical authority relationships; rather it is a collaborative relationship between local institutional actors and is based on mutual trust and cooperation" (Stimson et al., 2002: 279). Even though this points to a cooperative effort, the importance of the individual leader is still recognized in ED efforts (Schultz, 2004). For example, Lackey, Freshwater, and Rupasingha (2002) stressed the importance of a "sparkplug" in cooperative efforts—someone who facilitates, plans, oversees, nurtures, establishes trust, and reduces suspicion. Therefore, based upon current trends in leadership research and limited research on ED leaders, it seems reasonable to suggest that effective ED leaders will use an approach that emphasizes social and political skills, team and coalition building, and follower inspiration as opposed to approaches relying more on traditional authority. It is reasonable to conclude that a logical starting point to understanding ED leadership processes is follower perceptions.

Transformational leadership involves eliciting extraordinary performance toward broad, elevated goals (Dvir et al., 2002), often with followers offered no extrinsic reward in exchange for such efforts. The ED context appears to be exemplary of just this element of transformational leadership. Because ED leaders work with and lead followers who are leaders in their own right, leadership behaviors expected to represent successful ED

leadership include those that empower followers and encourage follower participation in decision making and direction of ED initiatives (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). These particular behaviors, in fact, are successful in motivating followers generally (Glew et al., 1995) and are considered particularly salient in the ED context.

Method

This study is designed to investigate the leader skills and leadership processes successful in an ED context. Through the perceptions of ED leaders' and followers' judgements, we expect to learn about unique leader characteristics and leadership processes that are successful in the context of the ED industry.

Research into general leader and leadership successes must include an assessment of leader skills and behaviors (Johns & Moser, 2001). Yet, only a limited body of research addresses the appropriate methodology for leadership research in ED. Reese (1997: 234) suggests that,

> researchers could obtain both quantitative macro and qualitative micro data on local leadership issues as they relate to economic development within a state.

Survey Instrument

Based upon a review of the literature, a 40 item survey (see Appendix A) was developed to investigate the researchers' assumption that ED leadership is identified by personal skills (i.e., Yukl, 2002; Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). The first part of the survey, items 1-6, was designed to collect basic demographic information about the respondents. The second section solicited information about the respondents' perceptions of the importance of personal and leadership characteristics that the respondent's believed had been exhibited in successful ED leaders. The 30 items that comprise this section of the survey were derived from several sources. First, scales used to measure transformational leadership were reviewed because of their similarity to the ED context (e.g Bass & Avolio, 1990; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Morrman, & Fetter, 1990). Leader characteristics identified in these studies were included. Second, characteristics identified in prior ED research (Bunch, 1987; Burns, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Neustat & May, 1990; Stimson et al., 2002) were also included. Finally, anecdotal sources were considered and some items were identified from discussions with various ED leaders. These items were all measured on a 5 point Likert scale anchored with a 1 representing "very important" and a 5 representing "not important." The remaining four survey items were included to facilitate future quantitative and qualitative analyses. The respondents were asked to identify the person(s) they considered to be (a) successful economic leader(s) in the state and describe why they were successful. Additionally, the respondents were asked to describe a recent situation in which leadership in economic development played a key role in the outcome of the project and to identify the leader in the aforementioned situation. The desired outcome was to gather enough information about the identified leaders to evaluate the characteristics that attributed to their success, thus matching leadership with decisions, actions, and outcomes in economic development.

To investigate the reliability of the items reported herein, Cronbach's alpha using the Reliability Analysis routine in SPSS was employed. An overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.9251 resulted for the 30 items. The individual item-to-correlations for 21 of the 30 items exceeded a .5 cut-off, which is acceptable for exploratory data analysis (Hair et al., 1998). Since the intent of the research was exploratory and not scale

development, the authors believe the reliability analysis is sufficient for the purposes of the results contained in this manuscript.

Sample

Georgia's success in ED is the result of the efforts and initiatives made by multiple organizations across the state. The shared goal of continued growth and prosperity in Georgia is the common thread that binds these agencies to coordinate, without redundancy, the individual contributors to ED (Fisher & Dowling, 2002).

The sample for this study was drawn from the in-state membership of the Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA). The GEDA's mission is to "provide and promote networking, professional development opportunities, and to shape economic development public policy," (GEDA, 2003). Membership in GEDA includes the majority of the state's economic developers. Given the size of the organization, most members know one another but do not, in most cases, work for each other. The in-state members of GEDA were solicited for survey participation because they are the individuals who interact most frequently with leaders, or are themselves leaders, in ED in the state.

A total of 995 surveys were mailed to GEDA members with a follow-up reminder postcard mailed approximately three weeks later. The survey response rate was 18.5 percent, (184 respondents). This response rate is attributed to the significance that individuals in ED attach to their work and to the importance these individuals assign to strong, effective leadership in the field.

Results

Respondent Demographics

One of the key demographics of survey respondents was the ED experience/work diversity of the 184 respondents. Roughly 71 percent of the respondents reported working in the ED field in excess of five years. Another key demographic characteristic of survey respondents was their specific economic development organization affiliations. Thirty-five percent of the economic developers in the survey reported working for a chamber or economic development authority, with 28 percent working for governmental agencies. Clearly, the survey respondents' experiences justify the appropriateness of this sample for the stated research objectives. Furthermore, these respondents would be expected to have formed strong and clear personal perceptions regarding skills and behaviors indicative of successful ED leaders. Additional demographic statistics including gender, rural vs. urban focus of ED, and compensation of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Survey Item Analysis

The analysis of the survey items pertaining to the respondents' perceptions of the importance of the various leadership skills is a two-part process. The first part of the item analysis began by examining the mean response and standard deviation for each of the 30 items describing the characteristics and skills of a successful ED leader. For comparative purposes, the items were ranked in order of importance based upon the mean response (due to the coding scheme, a lower mean score indicated higher importance of the item). The standard deviation of each item can be interpreted as the relative agreement among respondents as to the importance of the item. By examining the means and standard deviations for each item in rank order, one can evaluate the relative agreement of the importance of each item judged by the survey respondents collectively. The actual number of responses per item varied between 180 and 184 due to some respondents not answering a specific question. These results are presented in Table 2.

Table 1
ED Respondent Demographics

Demographic	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female	51	27.7
Male	131	71.2
No Response	2	1.1
Work Experience		
1 to 5 years	48	26.1
6 to 10 years	42	22.8
11 to 15 years	33	17.9
16 to 20 years	18	9.9
21 to 25 years	13	7.1
26 years or more	25	13.6
No Response	5	2.7
ED Work Focus		
Exclusively Rural	49	26.6
Exclusively Urban	53	17.9
Combination Rural and Urban	99	53.8
No Response	3	1.6
ED Organization Type		
Academic	16	8.8
Governmental (City/Local/State)	51	28.0
Chamber/Economic Development Authority	65	35.7
Private-for-Profit Organizations	21	11.5
Private-Non-Profit Organizations	14	7.7
Other	15	8.2
Compensation		
Paid	148	80.4
Volunteer	20	10.9
Other	12	6.5
No Response	4	2.2

Table 2
Summary Statistics for the Transformational Leadership Survey Skills

Items	Mean	Standard
Builds relationships	1.186	0.467
Treats others with respect	1.272	0.584
Sets Examples	1.273	0.576
Leads by example	1.306	0.588
Is honest	1.321	0.670
Shows respect for others	1.363	0.631
Is a good listener	1.390	0.628
Explains the vision/goals	1.401	0.647
Encourages expression	1.478	0.693
Stays calm in a crisis	1.495	0.654
Inspires others to achieve goals	1.536	0.749
Effectively resolves conflict	1.603	0.796
Is self-confident	1.623	0.715
Makes others feel appreciated	1.658	0.752
Keeps others focused on goals	1.669	0.708
Regularly shares relevant info with others in the group	1.702	0.809
Encourages others to take initiative	1.718	0.710
Works hard or harder on projects	1.721	0.867
Shows others how their work contributes to the success of the project	1.756	0.781
Explains decisions	1.768	0.811
Comes up with creative solutions to complex problems	1.786	0.789
Shows concern	1.788	0.826
Teaches others	1.796	0.917
Sets standards and expectations	1.836	0.880
Suggest ways to improve performance	1.842	0.772
Gives everyone a chance to express opinion	1.890	0.814
Encourages group problem solving	1.891	0.845
Commands respect from everyone	2.060	1.009
Puts needs of others before own	2.115	0.968
Makes decisions with little input from others	3.680	1.119

As indicated by the rank ordered means, survey respondents perceive "building relationships" to be the most important skill of a successful ED leader (mean response of 1.186). Furthermore, this item had the smallest standard deviation (0.467) of the 30 items indicating overwhelming agreement among survey respondents that "building relationships" was the most important skill that an ED leader should possess. While the ability of an ED leader to facilitate relationship building is intuitive, these results provide some statistical evidence to support that notion.

Respect is another area that respondents perceive to be an important characteristic of ED leaders. Two items were used to evaluate respect: "treating others with respect" ranked second and "shows respect for others" ranked sixth. The mean response for "treating others with respect" was 1.272 with a standard deviation of 0.584 indicating a high degree of agreement among respondents as to the importance of this characteristic. The item "shows respect for others" had a mean and standard deviation of 1.363 and 0.631 respectively. Despite the increased standard deviation of these items, the agreement among respondents as to the importance of respect by ED leaders remains relatively high.

The ability of successful ED leaders to use examples was a highly regarded characteristic by survey respondents. "Sets examples" ranked third among the 30 items with a mean of 1.273. The standard deviation of this item, 0.576, was the second lowest of the 30 items which indicates a high level of agreement among respondents as to the importance of this characteristic. "Leading by example" ranked fourth with a mean and standard deviation of 1.306 and 0.588 respectively.

The second least regarded quality in a leader, according to respondents, was for a leader to "put needs of others before own needs." The mean answer for this item was 2.115 in the scale and its standard deviation was 0.968, denoting a low level of agreement. "Commanding respect from others" ranked the third least regarded quality in a leader. It is important to note that, similar to results for the last characteristic, the least regarded qualities in a leader also have the highest standard deviation, denoting a lower level of agreement among respondents about the importance of these qualities in an individual holding an ED leadership position.

Take Me to Your Leader

Survey respondents named 196 different leaders when asked to identify one or more individuals whom they judged to be strong leaders in ED. In evaluating this survey item, each leader was ranked according to the number of respondents who identified that individual leader in Item 37 of the survey. Table 3 provides the basic information regarding the top 11 leaders identified by the respondents. These individuals are persons with whom respondents may or may not have worked with directly. In the table, coverage indicates whether the mentioned leaders have a state (S), regional (R), or local (L) area of influence.

Of the individual leaders identified by survey respondents, two names appeared most often (16 respondents each, 8.7% of respondents). One named leader was the president of the GEDA organization; the other, the deputy commissioner of the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism[1] (Georgia's principal business recruitment organization at the state level). Both individuals hold, or held visible positions in the ED process for the state; however, we note that neither individual would have attained these positions without the possession and use of strong leadership skills and without success in the ED process. The remaining top leaders identified are spread across state government and local or regional development

Table 3
Description of Top Economic Development Leaders Identified by Respondents

Rank	Position/Agency	Coverage	Public	Private	Urban	Rural
1	Leader 1a	S, R, L		X	X	X
1	Leader 1b	S	X		X	X
3	Leader 3	R, L	X	X	X	
4	Leader 4a	R, L		X		X
4	Leader 4b	R, L		X	X	X
6	Leader 6a	R, L		X	X	
6	Leader 6b	S	X		X	X
6	Leader 6c	S, R	X		X	X
6	Leader 6d	R, L		X	X	
10	Leader 10a	S, R	X		X	X
10	Leader 10b	S	X		X	X

authorities and chambers. The scope of their work spans both rural and urban issues.

Content Analysis of Effective Leader Characteristics

In further consideration of successful leader skills, respondents were asked, through an open-ended question, to explain what made the identified leader successful. Content analysis (CA) was used to investigate responses to this item. "Content analysis is a research method that uses procedures to make valid inference from text," (Weber 1990, p. 9). In other words, CA is a useful methodology to explore research questions concerned with words spoken or written by a respondent (for example, to identify trends, comparisons, or standards of reporting) (Crano & Brewer 1973). Computer-aided CA software has eased the burden of coding scheme development. For this project, the content analysis software NVIVOBOL212\f'Symbol'\s12 to facilitate the coding process was utilized.[2] With NVIVOÔ, two methods are employed in the coding process. First, the data are examined with no predefined coding scheme used;[3] second, the skills in Items 7 through 36 are used to categorize the data. In this project, the context unit was the questionnaire responses, while the coding units were the leadership skills, leaders' names, and projects.

Simple quantitative analysis was used for category counts. Word frequency listings facilitated the pragmatic description of the data. Accordingly, this research project uses relative category counts to measure and describe the skills associated with leaders in ED.

Table 4 compares the results from Items 7-36 (Table 2) with the skills of the leaders identified as being exemplary in ED (Item 38). The ranking,

Survey Ranks were assigned for Items 7-36 based upon the sort order of the mean response for each survey item. The ranking for identified skills, CA Rank, was obtained from the content analysis of the responses to Item 38. The ranking represents the maximum counts for each characteristic. For example, "shows concern" was ranked

Table 4
Comparison of Leadership Skills between Survey Items and Content Analysis

Survey Item	Survey Rank	CA
Builds relationships	1	1
Teaches others	23	2
Commands respect from everyone	28	3
Is honest	5	4
Shows concern	22	5
Inspires others to achieve goals	11	6
Encourages group problem solving	27	7
Is a good listener	7	8
Encourages expression	9	8
Explains the vision/goals	8	10
Works hard or harder on projects	18	10
Shows others how their work contributes to project success	19	10
Comes up with creative solutions to complex problems	21	10
Treats others with respect	2	14
Puts needs of others before own	29	14
Sets examples	3	16
Leads by example	4	16
Stays calm in a crisis	10	16
Regularly shares relevant info with others in the group	16	16
Encourages others to take initiative	17	16
Sets standards and expectations	24	16
Is self-confident	13	22
Makes others feel appreciated	14	22
Gives everyone a chance to express opinion	26	22
Shows respect for others	6	25
Effectively resolves conflict	12	25
Keeps others focused on goals	15	25
Explains decisions	20	25
Suggest ways to improve performance	25	25
Makes decisions with little input from others	30	25

fifth in the CA Rank, which means "shows concern" was the fifth most popular characteristic identified in Item 38.

The skill "Builds relationships" was rated highest in both rankings; however, that is where the similarities begin to disintegrate. In the case of the CA ranking, the skills respondents use to describe individuals whom they perceive to be strong leaders were observed. This, in fact, may be more indicative of the skills and behaviors necessary to include in training programs. The additional skills identified include "teaches others" ranked second and "commands respect from everyone" ranked third. The behavior "is honest" ranked similarly in both the Survey and CA rankings, fifth and fourth respectively. Furthermore, "is a good listener" also ranked in the top ten in both rankings.

Ties in the CA Rank contribute to some of the discrepancies observed between the two ratings. For instance, "Is a good listener" tied for eighth position with "Encourages expression" in the CA Rank, i.e., the two skills were mentioned the same number of times in Item 38; however, in the Survey Rank, the former ranked seventh, while the later ranked ninth. The more significant type of discrepancy can be seen, for example, in "Shows concern." Respondents' Survey Rank of Item 11 was 22nd; but when examined in CA, the relative importance of this characteristic rose to fifth.

The discrepancies in the rankings of the two alternate evaluations can be attributed to several factors. First, only 77 respondents provided usable answers in Item 38. Therefore, the skills may be biased toward those individuals' responses. As mentioned previously, none of the means for Items 7-36 (Table 2) were significant. This result, in fact, would imply that the ranking from the CA is more representative of respondent perceptions of important leadership skills and behaviors. Another possible explanation is that the leaders identified in Item 37 do not possess the skills deemed important in the earlier portion of the questionnaire. Finally, the coding in the CA is subject to coder biases and interpretations of the data.

More likely, the divergence in ranking reflects the contextual differences in the leaders involved. The skills necessary to be a successful leader at the state level can vary from those required at the local level.

This study attempted to evaluate the specific leadership skills associated with the top leaders identified in Item 37; however, the respondents generally either failed to describe why they considered these leaders to be successful (in Item 38), or simply responded with a general statement such as "They possess all the skills described in Items 7-36." In retrospect, the item could have been written more clearly to specifically ask for the skills of the identified leader, or a list of skills for the respondents to check could have been provided.

Discussion

This research used questionnaire responses provided by 184 GEDA members to assess perceptions of ED leadership skills and behaviors. Both item analysis and content analysis of the results were conducted. In both analyses, "building relationships" emerged as the most important skill. The survey analysis alone revealed two additional skills of top importance: "showing respect for others" and "leading by example." The content analysis revealed two alternate skills to be of top importance: "teaching others" and "showing concern for others."

Consistent with the discussion of emerging leadership perspectives earlier in this article, the characteristics identified as most important are very "follower focused." This certainly points to the importance of follower perceptions in the ED leadership process.

In addition, it is interesting to note the similarity of the characteristics identified in this study and those associated with emotional intelligence. EI is a construct introduced by

Goleman (1998) who suggested that success and effectiveness have more to do with EI competencies (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills) than with intelligence as traditionally depicted. Certainly, two of the factors that emerged in our study (showing respect for others and showing concern for others) relate to empathy. Building relationships seems to tie closely to social skills and leading by example would seem to include self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation.

Although the construct of EI was introduced more than ten years ago, it has only recently been applied to leadership (Goleman, 2002). Goleman presents evidence from other studies that supports the notion that leaders with EI competencies significantly outperform others. Robbins (2005) states, "EI has been shown to be positively related to job performance at all levels. But it appears to be especially relevant in jobs that demand a high degree of social interaction." The research in EI is particularly relevant to this discussion because of its focus on EI competencies as something that can be taught. In fact, Goleman (1998: 317) asserts,

> At the individual level, elements of emotional intelligence can be identified, assessed, and upgraded. At the group level, it means fine-tuning the interpersonal dynamics that make groups smarter. At the organizational level, it means revising the value hierarchy to make emotional intelligence a priority—in the concrete terms of hiring, training and development, performance evaluation, and promotion.

Future research in this area may be fruitful and should include looking at measures of EI and success in ED leadership.

Building on the results of this study and the previous discussion, several curriculum recommendations can be made. The findings of this study support the notion that the focus of ED leadership training should be primarily improving social interactions. Table 5 presents a summary of topics for consideration in ED leader training programs. Additional research is needed to expand the list and prioritize these training needs; however, incorporating these topics into leadership training programs should improve key skills needed by ED leaders.

Table 5
Curriculum Recommendations

Building Relationships	Leading by Example	Showing Concern	Showing Respect	Teaching Others
* Creating and keeping trust * Team building * Dealing with difficult people * Communication	* Managing conflict and change * Managing your emotions * Effective leadership skills * Team leadership * Self leadership * Effective decision making	* Effective listening skills	* Treating others with respect	* Coaching skills * Developing others * Mentoring

Although the results of this study provide some insight into key ED leadership skills and characteristics, it should also be noted that the two methods for ranking important ED leader skills and processes revealed considerable discrepancies. Although the results of both emphasize the importance of social interactions and follower perceptions, some differences still need clarification. These discrepancies should be investigated in future research.

Other recommendations for future research include looking at other characteristics not included on the survey. More than 75 leader characteristics were identified in the initial CA coding process and further examination of this coding should be conducted to identify any additional transformational characteristics that, for various reasons, were not included in the questionnaire.

Finally, although this study was conducted to aid the training programs for Leadership SEGA, the authors believe that the results are useful to similar programs across the country. As previously noted, evaluation of specific aspects of ED leadership are lacking in the literature. A research agenda including the development of scales specific to the measurement of ED leadership is clearly warranted due to the increased importance of economic development to communities in today's global economy. To this end, the authors intend to use the results contained herein to begin the process of scale development and refinement to create a reliable and valid scale to evaluate ED leadership.

In summary, this study takes a step forward by conducting this initial investigation into the skills, behaviors, and characteristics of successful ED leaders. It shows the importance of social interaction in the ED leadership process and makes recommendations on training needs for ED leaders. Although considerable work in this area is needed, this study provides a framework for discussion and further research into this important topic.

End Notes

1. GDITT was recently renamed to be the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

2. The content analysis coding system in NVIVOÔ takes the form of a hierarchical tree structure. Coding items are referred to as nodes.

3. This means that the categories evolve as the data are explored. For example, in the first document the respondent may have said that the leader is energetic. A node could be established entitled "is energetic." Henceforth, each time a respondent indicated the leader was energetic, the given text could be marked with the "is energetic" node.

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