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Essential Leader Characteristics

Competence and expertise are essential for instilling confidence among lab members and collaborators

Shein, 1996; Mumford et al., 2002; Tierney et al, 1999)

Nurturing the Heart and Mind: A Closer Look at the Career Journey of Scientific Leaders

Heart

Mind

Patient Scientific Inquiry, Amidst Performance Pressure: Balancing Curiosity and Ethical Boundaries

Discretion

A successful lab leader needs to understand how to make informed decisions, protect the integrity of research data, and maintain a responsible attitude towards the lab's resources and members.

Guiltless Conduct

Guiltless conduct here means making decisions that stand up to scrutiny, even when no one is watching. Leaders should not manipulate data to suit their objectives or hide uncomfortable truths.

...Amidst Career and Performance Pressure

The quest for novel findings, grant funding, and prestigious publications can often overshadow leader development and long-term scientific discovery.

Scarcity

Scientists grapple with a scarcity of grants, access to resources, including mentors and funding.

Solo Stars

Scientists are under pressure to produce high volumes of publications in prestigious journals to garner recognition.

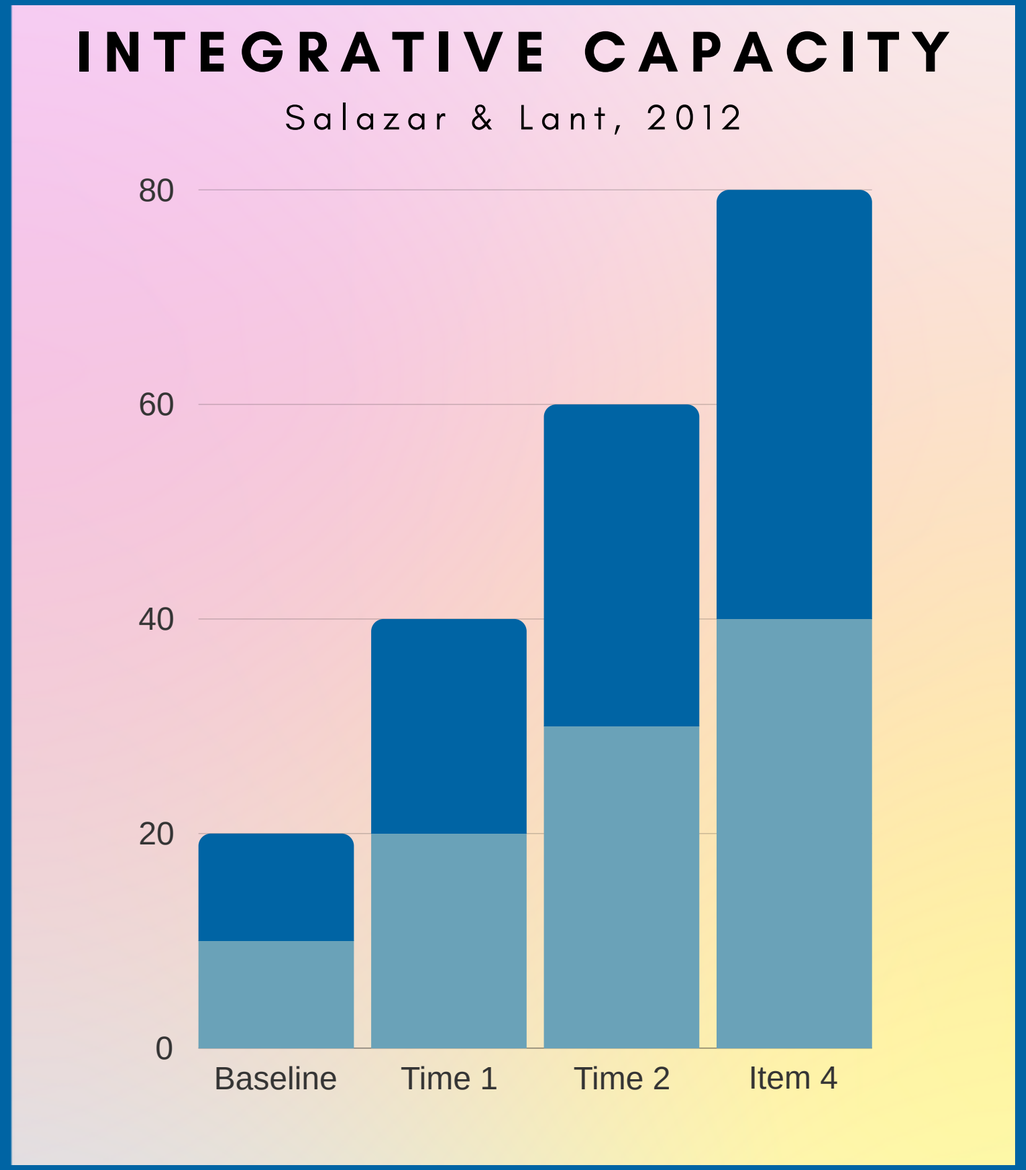
Socialization

The desire to 'win' in this competitive landscape can sometimes overshadow the scientific process and the collective knowledge base.

A Solution: Training & Development

Leadership is a complex interaction between people and environments that emerges through social systems (Day, 2000).

- Address blindspots and gaps over time
- Focus on relevant outcomes at appropriate intervals
- Broaden the leadership focus to collective aspects of science
- Use multiple training approaches for growth (coaching, badges, workshops)



Long Term Impact: Sustain a Scientific Ecosystem for Progress

How do you create a culture supportive of leadership development?

Passing along best practices, from advisor to student, P.I. to postdoc, is critical.

How do you do this?

- By implementing evidence-based training and development programs
- Acknowledging and rewarding leadership and team impact.

What holds up Back? Narrow Career Enmeshment

When too attached to our careers and accomplishments, an intense focus on achievement and external validation can limit a growth orientation.

Scientists often prioritize reaching specific career milestones or outperforming others, rather than focusing on personal growth and leadership capabilites - to the detriment of the discovery.

How do you motitivate a leader to want to address gaps and strengths?

THE DIFFICULTY OF COMMUNICATING THE PATH

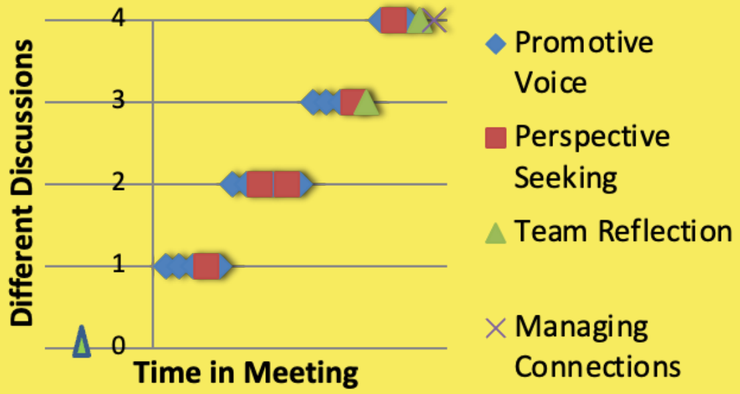
Navigating the Uncertainty Ahead

Crucial Leadership Processes

- Identifying the Problem
- Understanding its Context
- Determining its Boundaries
- Articulating the Problem
- Motivating and Engaging Others around the Problem

Education does not equal smart;
Smart does not equal competent (to lead a lab)…

Enhancing Leadership Capabilities = Maximizing ROI



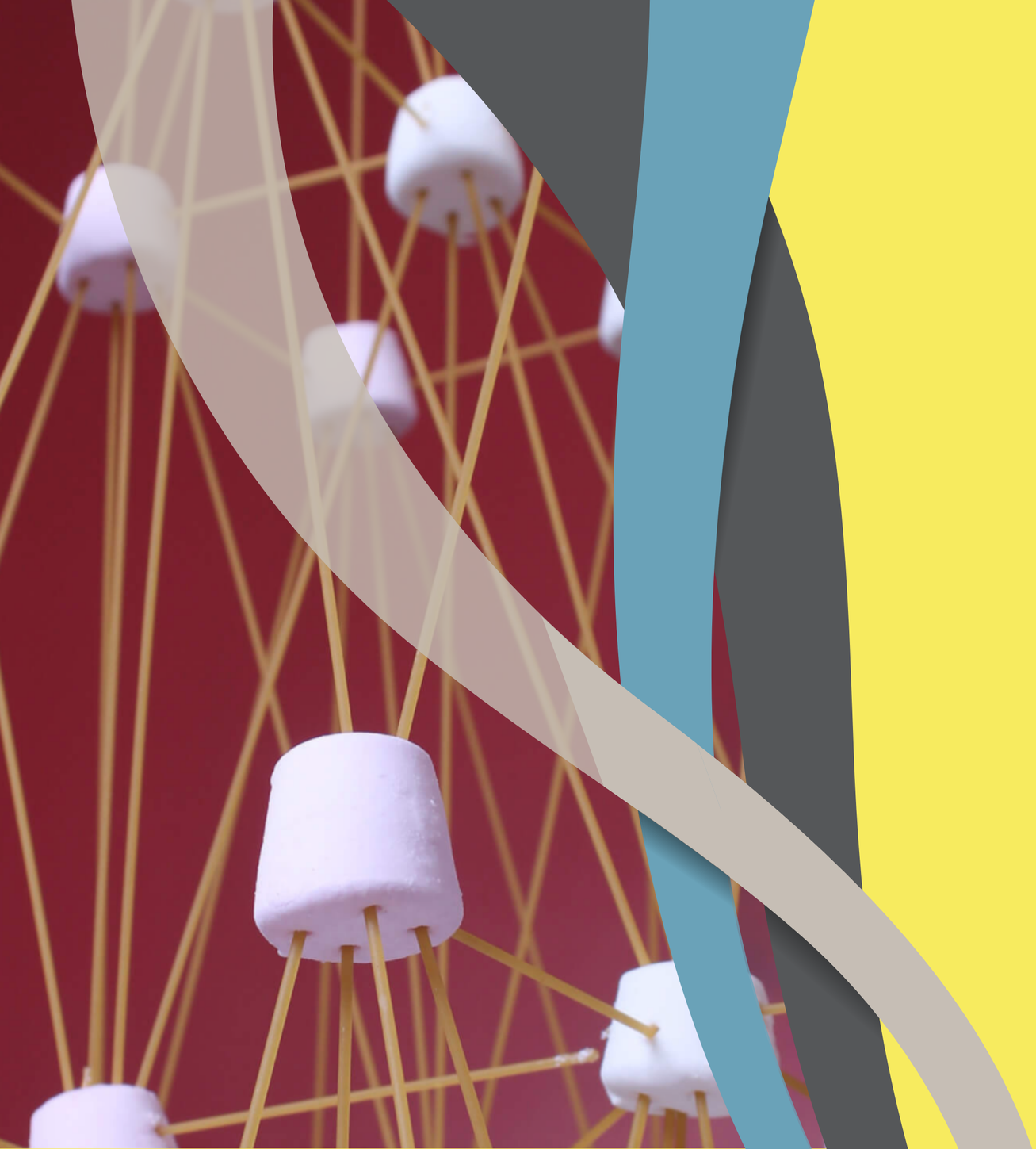
Skills & Abilities

- Forecasting Skills
- Creative Problem-Solving
- Communication
- Strategic Planning
- Group Processes

11-20% average increase in our measure of interdisciplinary collaboration behaviors and communication.

50% increase in external funding application and 2x increase in publication rate within a year.

Dougherty & Hardy, 1996, Salazar et al., 2018; Bisbey et al, 2019



EXPERIENTIAL TEAM-BASED EDUCATION

Unlearning, failure, and openness to alternatives are crucial for innovation.

Yet, threat and pressures to perform can foster increased rigidity.

Experiences that elicit the importance of flexibility, prototyping, playfulness, and learning from feedback can kick-start development.

Edmonson, 2004; Grant,2021; McCrae, 1987

Cultivating Interpersonal Skills: Catalyzing Career Development

- Mentors + Mentorship
- Leadership Coaching
    - Fostering Increased Self-Efficacy

Hund et al, 2018; Mubasher et al, 2021;

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