



Figure 9-1. Evolution of leadership thinking.

Evolution of Leadership Models

The first paradigm is the *classical model* and is by far the longest standing ideology. The classical model dates from antiquity up until the 1970s.² As such, this model is deeply rooted in the psyche of many leaders and deeply intertwined within organizational and civic cultures. The classic leadership model (also referred to as trait theory) is the idea that great leaders are usually men or women who were part of a special group or class of people deserving or destined to lead. It is the classical model that is responsible for the common belief that leaders are born, not made. In the early 1900s a major focus of research was devoted to uncovering what these traits were.

The second model is referred to as *transactional leadership*. Transactional leadership was prominent from the 1970s to the 1980s, nearly 2 decades. It became popular with the advent of a relatively new concept called management. The transactional model is based on a formal transaction between a subordinate and supervisor, generally called a *contract*. The transactional model was implemented to create a predictable and patterned environment, and required the leader to be an expert technician who supervised nonexpert technicians. It is this model that is responsible for the assumption that leaders know more, and are, consequently, more qualified than the general public.

The third model is called *visionary leadership*. This model grew in popularity from the mid-1980s up until around the early 2000s. Visionary leadership (also referred to as *transformational*) is particularly useful in turbulent times, and it was developed to create consensus and momentum among the workforce. This was a significant change from transactional thinking, where leaders changed from forcing or manipulating followers to complying for the good of the company to inspiring and motivating followers. The major emphasis in the visionary model was on the leader's ability to inspire people to better perform, where "better" was mutually agreed-upon by the leader and follower. It was in the visionary model that referring to workers as "subordinates" became unpopular, and was replaced with the more benign term "follower."

The fourth model is the *organic model*. This model dates from early 2000's to the present. Organic leadership understands that the organization is alive, it is a living entity capable of growing, and self-organizing. Within the organic model, leaders typically prefer the term facilitator, and organizational leadership is developed from within the organization, or at a grassroots level. Another very interesting aspect of the organic model is that leadership is generally shared and traditional hierarchical structures are avoided. This model was popularized with the advent of knowledge workers. Today's workforce is highly specialized and highly educated requiring a different styles of leadership.