

Complementary Management

A Short Overview*

* This text is an excerpt of the book “Complementary Management: A Practice-driven Model of People Management and Leadership in Organizations” by Boris Kaehler (Springer 2022). Reproduced with the kind permission of the publisher.

The Theoretical Model's Subject and Aspirations [► Section 2.1]

a) Subject Matter, Purpose and Development Stage

The subject of the Complementary Management (or Complementary Leadership) Model is people management and leadership in organizations¹. The term Complementary Management is derived from the three elements of the core model, each of which has complementary components. For instance, the two complementary management functions – the support function and the disciplinary function – make up the totality of the management service. The range of complementary management tasks together generates the totality of the human performance conditions, which consist of enabling and carrying out work in order to achieve organizational goals. And finally, the complementary management actors together make up the totality of the key participants whose joint action shapes the management process.

In its current form, the Complementary Management Model is the result of a theoretical conceptualization process that has developed over many years. It started out as a broad outline and was subsequently further developed, with publications to date reflecting the respective stage of development (see Kaehler 2012, 2013, 2014a, b, 2017, 2020). Like most forms of systematic theorizing, it is based on practical observations, literature studies, and conceptual ideas that are condensed into a consistent web of theoretical assumptions (see, e.g., Neuberger 2002, p. 393 ff.). The individual mechanisms have been tested in practice and reflect functional people management and leadership as it is practiced in many organizations. The overall model has been applied in various companies and substantially refined on the basis of the experience gained. Next, empirical studies should be carried out which accompany its implementation in organizations and examine its effectiveness.

b) Objective and Benefit

Anyone seeking to understand and shape leadership and management in organizations needs a theoretical framework. The intention of Complementary

¹ For theoretical reasons explained in ► Section 1.2, management and leadership are used synonymously here. Since this will inevitably collide with the common understanding of many readers, I sometimes use “management and leadership” to facilitate reading.

Management Theory is to illustrate how people management and leadership are to be designed in order to best achieve their purpose of fulfilling the goals of the organizational unit by generating work performance and meeting other requirements. The theory is descriptive in the sense that it describes mechanisms of people management and leadership that are actually used and which function in practice. At the same time, it is normative in the sense that it clearly recommends that – with certain adaptations – leadership and management in organizations should precisely follow this pattern. By no means does the theoretical model need to depict and explain all of the conceivable aspects of leadership and management - only those that can be meaningfully generalized and standardized.

Even though the Complementary Management Model is also intended to be of scientific use and to serve as an orientation for managers, its main purpose is to provide a theoretical basis for corporate models (= principles, guidelines) of management and leadership. These are fundamental stipulations relating to leadership and management in a specific organization in the sense of a constitution of personnel work. They define why, by whom and how a specific organization or organizational unit (including its personnel) is to be managed and led. Organizations designing such corporate models may use some or all elements of Complementary Management and should progress with the project in five phases (see ► Section 2.6).

Initial Conceptual Considerations (► Chapter 1)

a) Underlying Concept of Management and Leadership

Organizational management, in the sense of managing people, is an influence on people in an organization and its units with the aim of achieving the unit's objectives by generating work performance and meeting other requirements. To lead a unit or its members is synonymous with "directing" or "leading" them. The deliverables of people management and leadership consist firstly of the short- and long-term work performance of employees, secondly of short- and long-term personnel costs, and thirdly of the fulfillment of other requirements made by the market, the legal situation, and the stakeholders.

Management and leadership influence can be exercised in two ways: through anticipatory norm-setting or through situational intervention. Both forms can be exercised in hard, externally directed ways or in gentle, non-directive ways. Since hard external influence usually triggers resistance, it is advisable to primarily exert influence in a gentle manner (e.g., in the form of systematic self-direction, instrumental behavioral reinforcement, nudging, collective social norms, or implicit communication).

Management and leadership in organizations, which are highly structured contexts, must be distinguished from political leadership, i.e., being a leader in poorly structured contexts, even though many sources narrow it down to just that. However, people management/leadership, employee management/leadership, and human resource management/leadership are one and the same. Of course, certain aspects of management and leadership are usually assigned to the HR department and others to line managers/leaders. However, these are not separate spheres but rather a division of labor in dealing with a single mandate, namely leadership and management of personnel.

b) Balance of Regulations and Latitudes

Normative recommendations for leadership are only effective if they contain a meaningful balance of regulations and regulation-free spaces. If corporate people management and leadership is to work well across the whole company, structures and responsibilities must be defined. At the same time, degrees of individual and situational freedom are needed in the right places. Organizations have room for discretion here. Even though certain aspects of leadership – including functions, tasks and actors – need to be regulated, others – e.g., situational and individual modes of application – most definitely should not be. Whether formal leadership rules are actually transformed into informal

structures and everyday behavior depends on whether they are a) functional, and b) consistently communicated and called for.

c) Complexity of Theoretical Management Models

Whether or not Complementary Management is a theory or a theoretical model depends on one's notion of the term and comes down to quibbleism. In fact, most social and economic science theories are limited to simple causality relations between a few variables. The Complementary Management Model is composed of seven model elements, each with various partial elements as well as interrelations, and is therefore quite complex. Those who consider this to be too overblown may prefer to visualize the theoretical complexity of making coffee or driving a car: How many elements could these be broken down into? The expectation of dealing with a useful theoretical or practical leadership model in a few sentences and making it comprehensible at first glance is just as unrealistic as explaining how to drive a car in a few short steps. The lack of practical relevance for many scientific studies may be nothing more than an indicator for the incompleteness of the underlying theories.

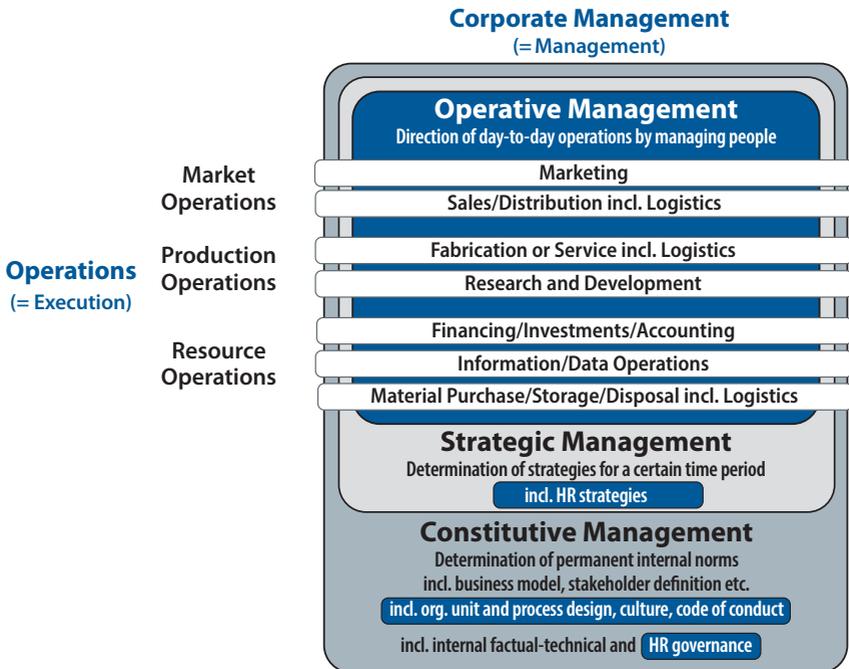


Fig. 1.3 The role of HR in the three fields of management activity (modified from Kaehler and Grundei 2019, S. 33; © Boris Kaehler/Jens Grundei. All rights reserved.)

d) People Management and Leadership as a Part of Corporate Management

Organizational people management and leadership is a part of organizational management in the sense of managing an organization. This is defined as a steering influence on market, production and/or resource operations in an organization and its units that may address both people and non-people issues with the aim of achieving the unit's objectives. This theoretical differentiation between steering and execution only makes sense, of course, if the steering also exists as self-steering, which it indeed does. It can be subdivided into three areas: constitutive management is about the basic set-up and positioning of the unit, strategic management is about steering the business within a certain timeframe, and operational management is about the ongoing implementation of the strategic guidelines. All three task fields are required at the overall organization level, but also at the level of each organizational unit. Against this backdrop, the prominent role and relevance of people management and leadership for success becomes clear: It is indeed a specific form of resource administration ("human resource management"), and as such is on par with, for example, the company's administration of financial or material resources. At the same time, however, it encompasses all operational management, since all activities in all areas of the business are carried out by people who are to be managed, i.e., led.

The Three Elements of the Core Model [► Chapter 2]

The core model of Complementary Leadership contains the fundamental aspects and mechanisms of people management and leadership in organizations. It describes them as a bundle of 24 tasks in which two functions take form and which are accomplished by five main actors (see Figure 2.1).

1. Complementary Management Functions: Leadership as a Service

The first element of the core model consists of the complementary management functions. Organizational people management and leadership are understood to be an internal service. This service has two functions with respect to the personnel in an organizational unit. The support function is to help individual employees perform their jobs. The catchwords „to foster“, „appreciation“ and „employee orientation“ illustrate this. The disciplinary function is to discipline and supervise the performance of individual employees. The catchwords here are „to demand“, „added value“ and „production orientation“. In terms of management and leadership theory, the model element thereby ties in with the approach of „management as a service“ and the classic duality

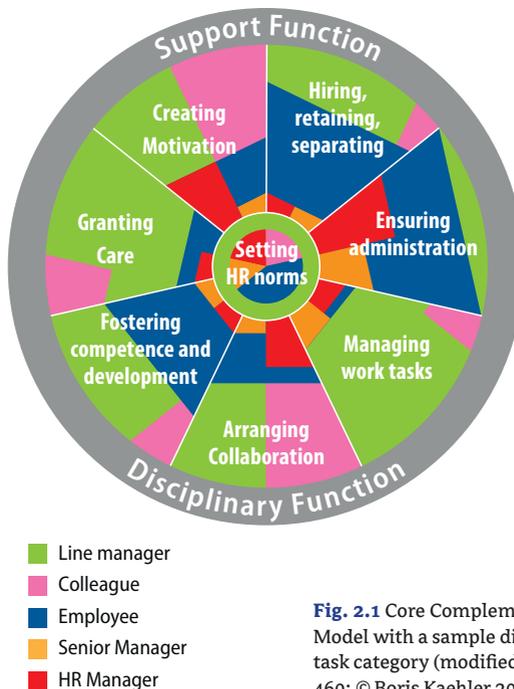


Fig. 2.1 Core Complementary Management Model with a sample distribution of actors per task category (modified from Kaehler 2014b, p. 460; © Boris Kaehler 2019. All rights reserved.)

of „employee orientation” vs. “production orientation”. It has the status of a fundamental principle and is primarily of practical value: The idea of management as a dual service provides orientation for leaders and prevents destructive leadership.

2. Complementary Management Tasks:

Leadership as a Bundle of Tasks

The complementary management tasks form the second model element. People management and leadership consists of 24 tasks that can be grouped into eight categories: “Setting HR norms,” “Hiring, retaining, separating,” “Ensuring administration,” “Managing work tasks,” “Arranging collaboration,” “Fostering competence and development,” “Granting care,” and “Crafting motivation”. This is based on the premise that precisely these influences are required to generate sustainable human performance. The model is thus in the theoretical tradition of normative task models of leadership and management. However, the management tasks are not understood as activities, but as abstract goals to be realized within the framework of concrete activities („management routines“). All 24 tasks together complement each other to form the overall task of people management and leadership. In each task, both the disciplinary and the support function are specified.

Task Category	Task	Task Content in Detail
Setting HR norms	To stipulate HR governance/HR strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operational leadership and management of the employee follows a coherent and functional internal HR governance consisting of the corporate management model as a metastructure and the HR infrastructure as a set of detailed regulations pertaining to structure, instruments, routines and resources. • It also follows a coherent and functional HR strategy; all operational areas of HR management (= the other 21 leadership/management tasks) are backed up in this strategy by strategic goals and demand scenarios for the coming business period.
	To optimize organizational design/ processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All work processes as well as the job and hierarchical integration of each employee are optimized in terms of time, cost and quality. • These processes and structures are documented in a comprehensible manner.
	To shape culture and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear cultural standards - shared values and appearances - applicable to the employee are set at the level of each organizational unit to which he or she belongs. • Clear diversity standards - welcomed differences and rules to protect them - applicable to the employee are set. • General rules of conduct (conduct, handling conflicts of interest, etc.) applicable to the employee are clearly defined.

Hiring, retaining, separating	To recruit and retain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant target groups with a high profile fit are defined. • All four sourcing areas (external and internal labor market, peripheral or pseudo workforces, and internal flexibility reserves) are considered with the defined target groups in mind. • Appropriate candidates are recruited. • Applicant relationships are systematically maintained. • Top performers are retained.
	To select and put onboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirement profiles of the positions are accurately recognized. • Personnel selection is carried out in an “end-to-end”, process-oriented manner and by means of planned aptitude testing. • Jobs are filled exclusively with suitable and highly capable candidates. • New employees are systematically integrated.
	To dismiss and release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible miscasts are dismissed. • Possible surplus personnel are reduced. • Organizational arrangements are made in the event of unwanted attrition.
Ensuring administration	To handle HR administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrative work related to the employee is taken care of.
	To collect and analyze data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data relevant to the employee and his or her work are collected and evaluated in order to identify optimization potentials.
	To look after employee representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional relationships exist with works councils as well as trade unions and other bodies representing staff.
Managing work tasks	To define work tasks and instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work tasks and work specifications of the employee are sensibly defined and known to him or her. • Development-oriented work task management is practiced, from small-scale leading with instructions to leading with objectives and self-control.
	To provide working time and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee is provided with working time, material resources and a financial budget in accordance with the tasks at hand.
	To evaluate performance and give feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work performance of employees is comprehensively appraised, and he or she knows how to properly judge it.
Arranging collaboration	To ensure coordinative communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee is continuously informed about the issues that are relevant to him or her. • The technical and functional need for coordination with the other group members is determined and the coordinative communication is conducted accordingly. • Wrong decisions and loss of creativity in groups are systematically prevented.
	To maintain relations and solve conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee assumes responsibility for relationships in all directions and maintains internal and external networks. • There is a constructive conflict culture. • Manifest conflicts are resolved quickly.
	To enhance group cohesiveness and identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an appropriately strong group cohesion. • The team members identify with the collective.

Fostering competence and development	To qualify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification gaps of the employee are identified and closed.
	To develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee's development potential is identified and systematically implemented. • Alternatives to a management career are also identified.
	To cultivate knowledge and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing knowledge of the employee is tapped and shared with others as needed. • Divergent and convergent thinking achieves continuous improvement and innovation.
Granting care	To protect health and life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health hazards are minimized, and disaster, pandemic and threat scenarios are in place. • The health and work-life balance of the employee are protected, and permanent work overload is prevented. • Resilience and the ability to cope with balance crises are strengthened.
	To create flow conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee has a sense of control with respect to his or her work and its conditions. • Work design enables and promotes the phenomenon of flow.
	To explain and accompany change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee understands the necessity and the context of upcoming changes. • Individual adaptation needs and requirements in connection with changes are taken into account.
Crafting motivation	To consider needs and wants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The permanent motive structures of the employee are recognized and taken into account. • The current motives of the employee are recognized and taken into account.
	To round off the incentive field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The real existing field of inducements of the managed person is continuously analyzed. • Additional activity inducements, option inducements, social inducements and monetary inducements are set in order to compensate for misaligned incentives and to generate additional motivation.
	To influence expectations/goals/impulse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance, change, incentives and justice expectations are consciously shaped. • The work activity is experienced as meaningful. • Goals and behavioral intentions correspond to work requirements. • The employee feels the necessary behavioral impulses to actually take action.

Tab. 2.5 The tasks of people management and leadership in organizations (modified from Kaehler 2014a, p. 82, 2017, p. 174; © Boris Kaehler 2019. All rights reserved.)

3. Complementary Management Actors: Leadership as Shared Leadership

The third element of the core model encompasses the complementary management actors. People management and leadership is the responsibility of several key players: the employee, his or her colleagues, the line manager, the senior manager and the HR advisor. The primary management principle should be self-management, i.e., the employee should ideally take on all leadership/management tasks him or herself. Since not all employees always do this, the line-manager must intervene in a compensatory manner when necessary. If he or she does not, it is up to the senior manager and the HR advisor acting as „co-HR manager“ to intervene in a compensatory manner. These interventions can be corrective, joint, delegative or substitutive. The complementary actors thus complement each other and collectively perform the 24 management tasks.

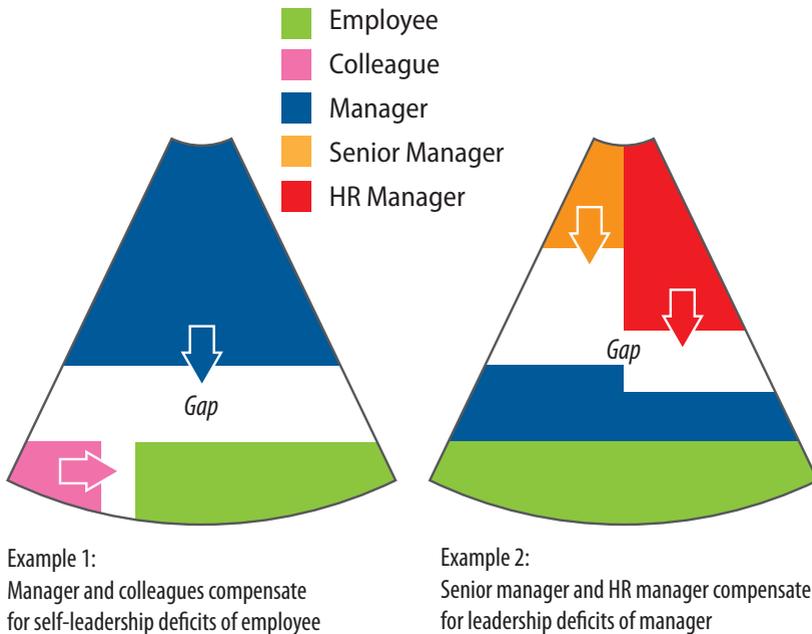


Fig. 2.2 Compensatory-situational interaction of the management actors (modified from Kaehler 2014b, p. 460; © Boris Kaehler 2019. All rights reserved.)

This compensatory mechanism ensures, on the one hand, that all management tasks are actually performed with regard to each individual employee even if the line manager is inactive, thus ensuring that work is performed. On the other hand, this multi-entity system is suitable for preventing an abuse

of power by the line manager. In terms of management and leadership theory, the element of complementary management actors takes up the „Shared Leadership“ approach, which is combined with the concept of self-management and with a vertical-hierarchical exercise of authority based on the principle of exception.

The core model of Complementary Management thus describes people management and leadership as a bundle of 24 tasks in which two service functions incorporate themselves and which are accomplished by five main actors. With these three core elements, it forms a counter-concept, so to speak, to the widespread idea of leadership as a personality-based or systemic relationship phenomenon (= in which there is a lack of clearly defined leadership/ management tasks) brought about by line managers (= in which there is a lack of other actors) which confers on them a reign-like self-image (= in which the idea of service is lacking).

The Four Implementation Elements [► Section 2.5]

Implementing it requires four further model implementation elements: management unit design, management routines, management instruments and management resources. The systematic relationship can be summarized as follows: Managers fulfil management tasks (e.g., performance feedback) using management routines (e.g., interviews), apply management instruments (e.g., work schedules), require management resources (e.g., business information), and do all this on the basis of the management unit structure (e.g., the design of their job).

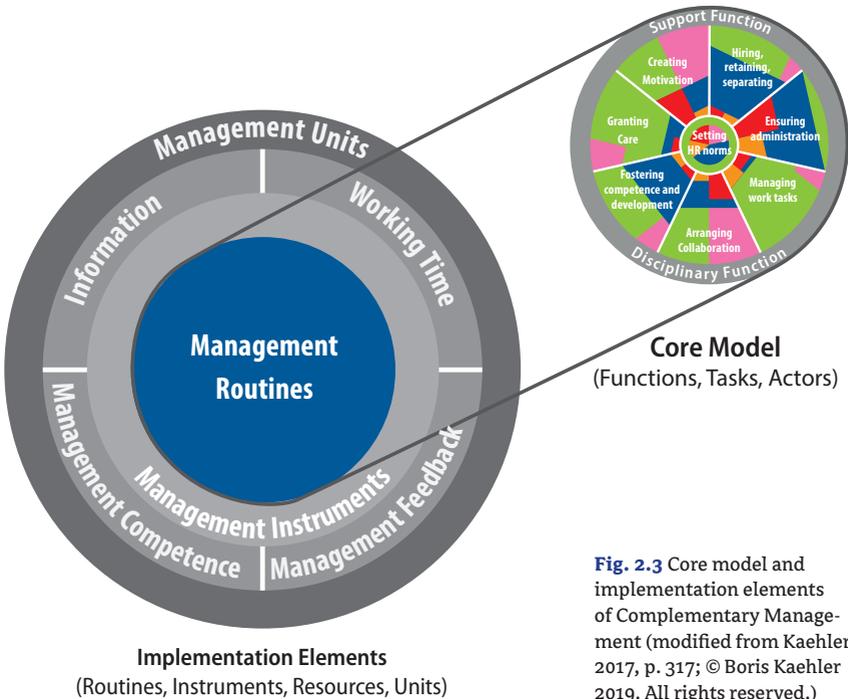


Fig. 2.3 Core model and implementation elements of Complementary Management (modified from Kaehler 2017, p. 317; © Boris Kaehler 2019. All rights reserved.)

4. Management Routines

The management routines, understood as concrete activities, serve as a way to implement the management tasks. For example, performance feedback is initially only an abstract task that must be implemented in regular employee dialogs, among other things. A distinction must be made between annual rou-

tines (e.g., annual employee reviews), continuous routines (e.g., weekly work dialogs) and on-demand routines (e.g., crisis interventions or hiring projects). The theoretical basis of this element of the management model is the established construct of organizational routines. Those for whom the term has a negative connotation (in the sense of getting stuck in a rut) may replace it with “management activities”. Organizations should clearly define which management routines are to be performed, which actors are involved, and what the frameworks are. The shares each actor has in the routines add up to the totality of their people management activities. This puts management responsibilities into very concrete terms: Has an actor actually carried out the routines incumbent upon him or her and thereby achieved the defined management tasks? If, for example, a line manager does not conduct regular work dialogs, he or she is simply neglecting his or her professional duties.

5. Management Instruments

Within the framework of management routines, management actors use the management instruments available in their respective companies. These are formalized tools that support employee management and leadership, in particular, rules, systems, programs and forms. The conceptual differentiation between routines and instruments has significant implications. Leadership and management are not exercised through the instrument (e.g., a salary system or appraisal procedure), but always through its specific application. Good instruments are sometimes devalued by their inadequate use in everyday management. Conversely, dysfunctional and poorly designed HR instruments can be relativized in the course of their application and misguided decisions can be avoided - a question of management quality and certainly also a question of the internal distribution of roles. Above all, however, it becomes clear that HR instruments must be designed in such a way that they effectively support day-to-day people management and leadership.

6. Management Unit Design

The management unit design encompasses the organizational structures in which the various management actors are integrated. This relates to the structure and hierarchical integration of the organizational units involved in people management and leadership (jobs, groups, departments, divisions, etc.). However, the distribution of tasks among the actors and their respective powers are also connected with it. The general principles of organizational science form the theoretical basis here. The management unit design, like the other elements of the model, does not represent a sub-area of leadership, but provides a special perspective on leadership and management. Thus, it cannot be considered separately from the overall model. Influencing processes certainly

take place without permanent management structures, but this has little to do with systematic organizational leadership and management. The Complementary Management Model leaves room for different distributions of tasks among the actors, but its elements provide a rough structural framework. For example, a human resources department that refuses to accept compensatory „HR co-management“ would not be compatible with the model. The same applies to management positions without disciplinary authority or with an overstretched management span. Functioning people management and leadership requires a functional management unit design.

7. Management Resources

In the Complementary Management Model, the implementation element of management resources represents a purely pragmatically reasoned selection of management prerequisites critical to success. In practice, leadership and management often fail because of four essential problematic resources - so much so that it is worth highlighting them prominently by means of a separate element. First: the working time required to perform management routines, which many leaders do not have or do not take. Second, management competencies are required. These consist of action competencies (i.e., skills to successfully perform management routines), which in turn are based on non-managerial elemental competencies (e.g., communication, analysis, assessment, decision-making). Third, management actors need comprehensive directional and situational information. And finally, holistic management feedback is required. All four resources are necessary to enable effective people management and leadership in the first place.

Literature

Kaehler, Boris (2012): *Komplementäre Führung – Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und konzeptionellen Praxis der organisationalen Führung*; epubli Verlag/Holtzbrinck 2012.

Kaehler, Boris (2013): *Aufgabenorientierte und komplementäre Führung – Grundzüge eines integrativen Modells* (Boris Kaehler); *Personalführung* Juli 2013, pp. 30–37.

Kaehler, Boris (2014a): *Komplementäre Führung – Ein praxiserprobtes Modell der organisationalen Führung*; 1st edition Springer Gabler 2014.

Kaehler, Boris (2014b): *Komplementäre Führung – Ein neues Führungsmodell*; *Arbeit und Arbeitsrecht* 8/2014 (Jahrgang 68); pp. 459–461.

Kaehler, Boris (2017): *Komplementäre Führung – Ein praxiserprobtes Modell der Personalführung in Organisationen*; 2nd edition Springer Gabler 2017.

Kaehler, Boris (2019): *Führen als Beruf*; 1st edition Tredition 2019.

Kaehler, Boris (2020): *Komplementäre Führung – Ein praxiserprobtes Modell der Personalführung in Organisationen*; 3rd edition Springer Gabler 2020.

Kaehler, Boris (2022): www.complementarymanagement.com (Accessed 01/05, 2022)