Action Centred Leadership -- John Adair

John Adair's Action-Centred Leadership model is represented by Adair's 'three circles' diagram, which illustrates Adair's three core management responsibilities:

- achieving the task
- managing the team or group
- managing individuals

Good managers and leaders should have full command of the three main areas of the Action Centred Leadership model, and should be able to use each of the elements according to the situation. Being able to do all of these things, and keep the right balance, gets results, builds morale, improves quality, develops teams and productivity, and is the mark of a successful manager and leader. The effective leader is the one who keeps all three in balance; that is who attends to all three at the same time. If any one element is ignored, the others are unlikely to succeed.

When using it in your own environment think about the aspects of performance for success in your own situation and incorporate the local relevant factors into the model to create your own interpretation.

Adair was probably the first to demonstrate that leadership is a trainable, transferrable skill, rather than it being an exclusively inborn ability. He helped change perception of management to encompass leadership, to include associated abilities of decision-making, communication and time-management.

All leaders are not necessarily great managers, but the best leaders will possess good management skills. One skill-set does not automatically imply the other will be present.
Adair also provides us with a list of what effective leaders do under each of the three headings of "Task", "Group" and "Individual".

**Task Functions**
- Define the task.
- Devise a workable plan.
- Brief team members on the task and their role.
- Delegate work to team members.
- Allocate resources.
- Check the quality of the work.
- Control the pace of work.
- Keep the team focused on the plan.
- Evaluate progress and modify the plan accordingly.

**Group Functions**
- Set standards and an example.
- Maintain discipline.
- Build team spirit.
- Maintain morale.
- Give encouragement.
- Motivate members to achieve success.
- Keep open communication.
- Train in appropriate skills.
- Deal constructively to resolve conflicts.
- Avoid getting too deeply embroiled with the task itself.
- Appoint sub-leaders where appropriate.

**Individual Functions**
- Involve all team members in discussions and activity.
- Seek out and use individuals' abilities.
- Bring in the quieter members.
- Control overactive members.
- Use special skills.
- Establish previous experience.
- Offer constructive feedback.
- Praise, support and encourage.
- Avoid taking sides in an argument.

Importantly as well, Adair set out these core functions of leadership and says they are vital to the Action Centered Leadership model:

- Planning - seeking information, defining tasks, setting aims
- Initiating - briefing, task allocation, setting standards
- Controlling - maintaining standards, ensuring progress, ongoing decision-making
- Supporting - individuals’ contributions, encouraging, team spirit, reconciling, morale
- Informing - clarifying tasks and plans, updating, receiving feedback and interpreting
- Evaluating - feasibility of ideas, performance, enabling self assessment

The Action Centred Leadership model therefore does not stand-alone, it must be part of an integrated approach to managing and leading.

Source: [http://www.businessballs.com/action.htm](http://www.businessballs.com/action.htm)