

# Ten thoughts on community leadership

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# Who's waking me up?!

- **free software enthusiast**  
for over sixteen years
- founding member and executive director  
**The Document Foundation** (LibreOffice)

# What is a community?

- “a **group of people** with a **shared identity** and **joint interests**”  
*(loosely based on a German Wikipedia article)*
- has formal and informal **roles**

# 1. Cooperation

- ▀ transparency and honesty → creates **trust**
- ▀ time is precious → be **effective**
- ▀ share goals and visions → take **responsibility**
- ▀ **different views** are not mutually exclusive  
-> they bring **new opportunities**
- ▀ can be like a game of “**rope pulling**” :)

## 2. Commitment

- Got a role? Due to **contributions** and **skills**!
- So, first of all: Be **proud**!
- However: You now could have more work  
→ **unknown and additional tasks**

### 3. Variety

- ▶ many things **barely visible** to the public  
meetings, budgets, taxes, employees, tenders, trademark, copyright, regulations etc.
- ▶ needs a **”thick fur”** and **willingness to learn**
- ▶ everyone has **different interests**
  - make use of your **group skills**
  - clearly define **responsibilities**

# 4. Delegation

- replace ~~micromanagement~~ with trust  
→ it's a **sign of strength**
- **outsource** topics out of your core mission  
e.g. accounting, taxes, legal, infrastructure etc.
- instead focus on strategy and long-term goals  
(“**the big picture**”)
- **Topics unknown to you can be important!**

# 5. Responsibility

- ▶ everyone's **shared responsibility**
- ▶ gather **knowledge for oversight**
- ▶ be aware of **deadlines** and **regulations**
- ▶ **Topics unknown to you can be important!**



# 6. Social

- e.g. responsibility for **a paid (remote) team**
  - pro bono together with employees
  - **your project's success → their job safety**
- **talk with** each other, **listen to** each other
- steep learning curve, but **you learn a lot** for life

# 7. Diversity

- **Open source projects are amazing, because they are diverse and international.**
  - language, **culture**, religion
  - age, **profession** and **life experience**
  - points of view and **values**
- **but also:** peculiarities, “challenging” personalities
- new points of view, positions, opinions and insights  
→ **Be open and challenge yourself!**

# 8. Coordination

- ▶ **How to include everyone in a worldwide community?**
- ▶ **languages**, timezones, seasons, daylight savings, public holidays
- ▶ **meeting times**
  - there is just **no** such thing as “**ideal**” scheduling
    - ▶ polls, alternate slots, calendar invites
- ▶ mix “**synchronous**” calls and “**asynchronous**” e-mail
  - ▶ subject tagging and voting deadlines
  - ▶ call frequency and agenda preparation

# 9. Trust

- **no role can fly without trust**
- **“e-mails don’t have a face”**
- always assume the best
  - **avoid confirmation bias**

# 10. Reward

- It's **worthwhile** and exciting.
- It lets you grow **personally**.
- It will give you **professional** advantages.
- It gives you new **points of view**.
- It **enriches** your life.
- You will make **new friends**.

# Thank you very much!

## Let's get in touch...

- ▶ <https://blog.effenberger.org/2017/11/01/ten-thoughts-on-community-leadership/>
- ▶ <https://blog.effenberger.org/2020/03/08/ten-thoughts-on-community-leadership-talk-at-foss-backstage-2020/>
- ▶ <https://blog.effenberger.org/2018/05/28/what-do-open-source-and-cooking-have-in-common/>
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