

Distributed Leadership Model

Module 4.3 — Movement Leadership: Hub-and-Spoke vs. Networked Leadership

The Leadership Paradox

The most effective advocacy leaders build distributed systems that make themselves structurally unnecessary. If your coalition collapses when you leave the room, you haven't built a movement — you've built a dependency. This is not modesty. It is the central strategic design challenge at Level 4.

Hub-and-Spoke vs. Networked Leadership

Hub-and-Spoke (Fragile)	Networked Leadership (Resilient)
Single point of failure	Multiple redundant leadership nodes
Coalition capacity = founder's capacity	Coalition capacity grows beyond any individual
Decisions bottleneck at the center	Decisions made at the level closest to the work
Volunteer participation is task-based	Volunteer participation is role-based with real authority
Succession = organizational crisis	Succession = planned transition between equals
Founder's absence = organizational pause	Founder's absence = business as usual

Five Distributed Leadership Roles

Beyond the founding advocate, a resilient coalition needs these five roles held by different people.

Role	Primary Function	Key Skills
Campaign Strategist	Designs and manages individual campaign cycles; translates organizational vision into tactical plans	Campaign planning, coalition coordination, escalation management
Relationship Steward	Maintains ongoing relationships with key decision-makers, allies, and community leaders	Diplomatic intelligence, trust maintenance, warm introductions
Communications Lead	Owens the public narrative — earned media, digital channels, framing discipline	Writing, media relations, frame analysis, message consistency
Operations Manager	Keeps the organization functional — finances, volunteers, systems, legal compliance	Systems thinking, logistics, nonprofit administration
Leadership Developer	Identifies, recruits, and mentors emerging leaders; builds the bench	Teaching, feedback delivery, curriculum design, patience

The Leadership Paradox as a Design Principle

Principle	What It Actually Requires of You
Develop leaders	Give away the work you're best at, to people who'll initially do it worse than you

Distribute authority	Real authority means real decisions — not just tasks that need approval
Document systems	If critical knowledge lives only in your head, it's not organizational capacity
Plan succession	Succession is not a crisis response — it's a standing design requirement

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