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Becoming an effective team leader.

I am currently a manager of a staff of eight employees in a fast paced, highly stressful

Undergraduate Admissions office at a four year University. Turnover due to stress and

low morale has had a negative impact on productivity. A lot of time and energy is spent

on the constant rehiring and training of new staff which distracts from actively working

on reaching University goals. As a manager, I am concerned for myself as well as for the

state of the staff and the University. I have a strong interest in learning how to turn my

current staff into a successful team by becoming a more effective leader. I began my

research by reviewing the concepts for 'team", team building and leadership styles. I

studied what successful leaders have done in regards to team building as well as what

steps of self awareness and self regulation that I will need to undertake to develop as a

more effective leader. Further research has shown that being an effective leader of a team

benefits the team leader as well as the staff and organization. I end by discussing my

process for development, plans for further research and my own continued personal and

development as I strive to be an effective leader who is able to successfully influence a

team.

I begin by providing meanings to important terms that I use throughout this paper.

Team: cooperative efforts by members of a group to achieve a common goal (Wikipedia

June, 2008)

Team building: "an effort in which a team studies its own process of working together and acts to create a climate that encourages and values the contributions of all team members. Their energies are directed toward problem solving, task effectiveness and maximizing the use all member resources to achieve teams purpose. Sound team building recognizes that it is not possible to fully separate one's performance from those of others." (Arnold Bateman, 1990)

Effective leadership: The ability to affect human behavior so as to accomplish a mission. Influencing a group of people to move towards its goal setting or goal achievement (Wikipedia, 2008))

Emotional Intelligence: A form of intelligence relating to the emotional side of life, such as the ability to recognize and manage one's own and others' emotions, to motivate oneself and restrain impulses, and to handle interpersonal relationships effectively. (Goleman, 2000)

Emotional Competence: "A learned capability based on emotional intelligence that result in outstanding performance at work. Our emotional intelligence determines our potential for learning the practical skills based on the five elements: self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships. Our emotional competence shows how much of that potential we have translated into on-the-job capabilities." (Goleman, 2000)

Self conscious attention to teamwork took form in the United States in the late 1970's. Today, teamwork is even more necessary. Work roles no longer have clear boundaries and jobs are ever evolving. To be able to successfully turn a group of people into a "team", one must be an effective leader who is able to influence others. Whether building a team or turning around an existing team, the responsibility of a manager is to lead their staff rather than direct. According to a Wikipedia article titled *Team Building* the communication revolution, global market and ever increasing specialization and division of labor has caused a need for use of team. (Wikipedia, 2008) Management is slowly moving from the "I" culture to the "We" culture. This is resulting in more people working and learning together as a team. Team building ideally will create a happier, more efficient and highly productive work groups

There are several Teambuilding models but what are common are 2 basic precepts. First, there are predictable stages every team goes through in order to become a team. Second, leaders and team members who are aware of these stages can improve quality of there teams interactions during each stage. According to Tuckman (1965) there are four stages of team development. (Fletcher, 2008) I summarize the stages below:

Stage 1   forming

This is the stage where individuals meet and start to agree on tasks. Individuals are usually on their "best behaviors" and behave individually and not yet as a team

Stage 2   storming

This is the stage where people start to open up but may revert to true styles. Team members can be confrontational due to different ideas.

Stage 3 norming

This is the stage of moving toward a more harmonious working atmosphere. Workers start to agree on ways to proceed together and begin to trust each other.

Stage 4 performing

This is the stage of high performance- Collaboration and decision making. This leads to high levels of respect, trust and group loyalty.

In building and sustaining a team, the team will need leadership. Developing and nurturing a successful team requires comprehensive skills from the team leader. Team leader should be able to adjust role as team develops. The basic premise of the Adair Leadership model (1970) is that a team leader has to be able to balance 3 competing needs: (Fletcher, 2008)

1. Those of the individual
2. Those of the team
3. Those of the task

This model emphasizes the importance of distinguishing the differences between these needs.

Staff motivation triggered by effective leadership is also needed once a team is built. Daniel McGregor (1960), an American social psychologist, proposed Theory X and Theory Y. (Wikipedia, 2008) Theory X is the authoritarian management approach. This is the traditional view of direction and control. This model states that workers dislike work therefore a manager's function is to force employees to work through coercion and threats of punishment. Worker motivation is money. Theory Y is the humanistic, self

actualization management approach. This theory states that work is natural and can be a source of satisfaction. When it is, workers can be highly motivated. Workers will seek responsibility and need to be more fully involved with management to become motivated.

Extensive research, discussion and publishing have been undertaken on leadership behavior since the 1950s. Until recently, no quantitative research has demonstrated which precise leadership behaviors yield positive results. Based on research from the consulting firm Hay/McBer (1999) psychologist Daniel Goleman, identifies six distinct types of leadership styles, each springing from different components of emotional intelligence.(Goleman, 2000) The styles individually have a direct and unique effect on the working atmosphere of a team or company. Most important, leaders who do not rely on one style alone but use most of them depending on the situation are most effective. Successful leaders have several strengths in several emotional intelligence competencies including self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Here are the six basic styles of leadership with each making use of the key components of emotional intelligence in different combinations. (Goleman, 2000).

Coercive style

This is the least effective style but most used in business world –'do what I tell you to do" This style inhibits flexibility and dampens morale.

Authoritive style

This is the most effective-"come with me" style. People realize goal and participate in making decisions to reach goal.

Affinitive style

This is the 'people come first" style- mediocrity may seem to be accepted and poor

performance may go uncorrected

Democratic style

This style generates constant fresh ideas and voice in decisions but can lead to endless

meetings and confused employees.

Pacesetter style

This style sets high expectations for the manager as well as others which can lead to

feelings of inadequacy.

Coaching style

This style focuses more on personal development than work tasks.

What is new about this research is its implication for action. This research offers

understanding of how different the styles are and how they affect performance and results

and then offers guidance on when and how to switch leadership styles. Switching

flexibility style is strongly encouraged. Each style has a proper time and place for use

depending upon the situation. Business environment is constantly changing so leaders

must respond as well (Goleman, 2000)

If you are able to master four or more styles (especially authoritative, affinitive,

democratic and coaching) this will lead to better work climate and boost business

performance. Leadership style is usually a result of personality versus choice. Rather than

choosing a style that best suits our temperament, leaders should select style that best

addresses the demands of situation. Fortunately, each of these styles can be studied and

learned with practice. This research suggests that enhancing emotional intelligence is possible with practice and commitment. (Goleman, 2000)

Successful leaders of the past and present have been able to successfully team build, motivate and inspire their teams. Much can be learned from other successful leaders. Famous leaders such as Lee Iacocca and Jack Welch have shown that by using effective leadership skills and solid team building, one can turn a business or staff around and be successful. Lee Iacocca was in the auto business for over 48 years. He is famous for his leadership and ability to turn Chrysler around. Lee Iacocca was a risk taker who made bold decisions. His innovative ideas were not always welcomed or easily accepted (perseverance). He had the ability to adjust to any situation quickly (adaptability). He was a visionary who could see beyond the day to day obligations of business. Lee Iacocca has said that decisiveness is necessary to be a good manager. Good managers must be able to prioritize, use time wisely and solve problems. A good leader must be an effective communicator who can motivate the staff. (Iacocca, 1984)

Jack Welch was the Chairman and CEO of GE for 20 years. He is famous for his unique management approach. He was considered tough but very fair. Yearly, he let go of the bottom 10% of mangers while rewarding top 20%. Welch believed that effective leaders needed to lead more and manage less. Leadership begins with you, the individual. You must lead yourself before you can lead others (self governing). Good managers have the ability to get average players to play like stars. (Welch, 1998)

Even though Iacocca and Welch were successful leaders in the auto industry, their successes as leaders can be universal for all types of business. Businesses large and small can learn from their leadership success and adjust to their business needs. Iacocca and Welch were able to master the authoritative style of leadership but were able to switch flexibility styles as needed. They were visionaries who established clear goals and provided clarity to the team. By empowering the staff, they were able build trust and commitment. Both Iacocca and Welch were able to turn around businesses that were failing. By charting a new different course and selling people on new, long term vision led to success for the business. Leaders must first learn to lead themselves before they can lead others. (Welch, 1998)

Leaders need to recognize their own leadership style (self awareness) and expand to encompass as many styles as needed dependent on situation. Effective leaders need to understand which emotional intelligence competencies underlie their leadership skills and work to actively increase the competencies that they are lacking. This will take practice and commitment. Wanting to alter ones leadership style must be genuine and done for self betterment rather than driven by job security.

According to psychologist Goleman (1990), in his research on emotional intelligence competence, both personal competence and social competence are necessary for effective leadership. (Hein 2008) Realizing ones own skills and talents will involve intense self awareness (emotional awareness accurate self assessment and self confidence) and self regulation (conscientiousness, adaptability and innovation) (Hein, 2008) Empathy, the ability to understand and develop others while being aware of diversity and external realities is a must. The right social skills needed include influence, communication,

managing conflict and change with collaboration and cooperation. Research from Gallup organization (Gallup, 1997) finds that great managers and supervisors possess identifiable talents or recurring patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Realizing ones own knowledge, skills and talents as well as managing them are an ongoing process. Leaders need to be skilled in managing both individuals and groups. A goal of an effective manger is to be able to successfully manage both team and individuals. Managers need to foster teamwork and collaboration while being aware of individual achievements. Leaders need to take the time to know the members of their team so as to match the right person to the right role (play to people's strength) and to be able to motivate and empower them. Research from Gallup organization (Gallup, 1997) states that a managers job is not to make people grow talents that they do not have but to identify and utilize existing talents to their fullest.

Leaders also need to demonstrate personal character and personality (modeling). Leaders should lead by example and have good management habits. Leaders are passionate, creative, and decisive individuals who have realized the need to manage less and lead more. Leaders are able to set clear goals and vision while creating a constant learning environment for all team members. It can be a challenge for a leader to turn a team around. This leader will need to unlearn old habits and practice new, more effective habits. Leaders need to study the six leadership styles and master the ability to effectively switch styles to meet the immediate demands of the business. Leaders need to learn not only their own personal strengths, weaknesses and stress factors but also how these can

positively or negatively affect the team. Research from the Gallup organization (Gallup, 1997) indicates that employees don't leave companies they leave managers and supervisors.

There are many benefits to being an effective leader while using the team concept. The team leader as well as the team and organization can benefit. According to Charles Roxin, President of Management Development Associates (1993) and a trainer in team building skills "the combined efforts of a team are greater than that of individual workers. (Sharples, 2003) Realizing one's skills and talents and improving ones sense of leadership style can bring about a more focused manager who is prepared to effectively influence a team.

Teamwork and effective leadership can increase productivity and empower the group. In a 2004 report published by the Families and work Institute, "When Work Works", authors note that engagement and job satisfaction are linked strongly with "job autonomy". Teamwork and effective leadership can also lower employee turnover and increase productivity by empowerment and motivation. According to a survey by Segal/Sibson (Winning workplaces, 2007), there is a strong correlation between low engagement at work and employee turnover. Further research by Gallup group (Gallup, 1997), shows that the lower productivity of actively disengaged workers cost the US employers about $300 billion a year.

Team building = Team + Effective team leader-= Effective team:

This is just a glimpse of the results of my research regarding the concept of team, team building and effective leadership. When I began this project, my thoughts were on 'team" as a solution to all my managing problems. The research led me to understand that there is so much more involved in turning a staff around. One needs to build the "right' team which takes time and effort. Once this team is built, an effective leader is needed to make the team effective and able to meet business goals.

My research continues even as I type my final draft. New ideas, thoughts and research continue to pique my interest. The psychological, intelligence competence study and research was a plus for me. The psychology of work is where my real interest lies.

In today's world, especially in 2008 with the sagging economy and despair looming in the future, the business world needs to be a lot smarter! Businesses need to better understand who they hire, why they hire and who will best lead in their business so as to stay alive. From my own experience as a manager, workers are younger with either no work ethic formed yet or a much more relaxed work ethic than past employees. This type of employee is demanding respect and use of their voice. An effective leader realizes this and moves forward with the change.

I predict continued growth in my personal and professional development. I have always been eager to learn new ways to do things better. From the 6 week leadership seminar, I have recently attended to the other many workshops and lectures on team work, managing etc. I have taken away key ideas and concepts to incorporate into my own personal and professional life.

The most effective research for me has been the 6 leadership styles, emotional competencies incorporated with the Myers Briggs personality results. Knowing myself truthfully is awkward. No one wants to even admit to let alone study and focus on their weaknesses. This leads to always being aware of "you". What you say and your actions have meaning not only to you but to others. Further development for me would be in fine tuning some of my social skills and learning to show more empathy.

I've been managing for about 5 years now. Truthfully, there have been times when I thought problem wasn't me but 'them" or work is not getting done because of "them" (them being staff or upper management). Realizing and changing focus from them to me is very new and can be overwhelming. I am responsible in part for the work health, safety and sanity of my staff. I am responsible in part for staff productivity and morale. Pretty big responsibility! This is why leaders need to have confidence, be risk takers and able to keep focus. I am up to the challenge.

Future steps

    I will need to continue my research by focusing on middle manager leaders and what they are doing. I will continue to research team building activities and use appropriate ones with the staff to measure results. I have learned that communication is vital. I have already started to meet more face to face with the staff individually so as to form better work relationships. This will allow me to assist the staff in realizing their individual strengths and skills. I have set up meetings with the staff to get their valuable input on procedures and will seriously consider their suggestions. I will also continue to educate myself by attending workshops and conferences as needed. I have also learned that every work day is a new experience. I need to be ready and able to adjust and adapt to whatever situation or issues arise.

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