

Leadership

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 03 Oct 2018

Keywords

Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a concept which is often talked about, and which has generated a proliferation of literature, especially in the field of management and organizational science (Jones, 2005).

One of the foremost scholars of leadership, Barnard Bass, has described leadership as a “universal phenomenon” (Bass, 1990). He defines leadership as “an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perception and expectations of the members.

1. Introduction

Leaders are agents of change – persons whose acts affect other people more than other people’s acts affect them. Leadership is defined as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (House et al., 2004).

Leadership is both a process and a property. The process of leadership is the use of non-coercive influence to direct and coordinate the activities of the members of an organized group toward the accomplishment of group objectives. As a property, leadership is the set of qualities or characteristics attributed to those who are perceived to successfully employ such influence (Jago, 1982)

2. Definition of Leadership:

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Northouse’s (2007) defines; Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

3. Four Factors of Leadership:

There are four major factors in leadership (U.S. Army, 1983):

Leader

A Leader must have an honest understanding of who they are, what they know, and what they can do. It is the followers, not the leader or someone else who determines if the leader is successful. If the followers do not trust or lack confidence in their leader, then they will be uninspired. To be successful, leaders must convince the followers, not themselves or the superiors, that you are worthy of being followed.

Followers

Different people require different styles of leadership. A new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee. A person who lacks motivation requires a different approach than one with a high degree of motivation. A Leader must know his people! The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation.

Communication

A leader leads through two-way communication. Much of it is nonverbal. What and how a leader communicates either builds or harms the relationship between the leader and the employees.

Situation

All situations are different. A Leader must judge and decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. The situation normally has a greater effect on a leader’s action than his or her traits.

Various forces will affect these four factors.

- Relationship with seniors.
- The skill of the followers.
- The informal leaders within organization.
- The way the organization is organized.

In a review of leadership theory, Northouse (2004) identified four common themes in the way leadership now tends to be conceived: (1) leadership is a *process*; (2) leadership involves *influence*; (3) leadership occurs in a *group context*; and (4) leadership involves *goal attainment*. He thus defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”

“Leadership is different from management, but not for the reason most people think. Leadership isn’t mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having charisma or other

exotic personality traits. It's not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement for it: rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment." (Kotter, 1990)

4. Total Leadership

People want to be guided by leaders, who have a clear sense of direction. To gain respect, a leader must be ethical. A sense of direction is achieved by conveying a strong vision of the future.

When people respect a person as a leader, they do not think about the attributes, rather, they observe what a leader does, so that they can know who they really are. They use this observation to tell if the person is an honorable and trusted leader or a self-serving person who misuses authority to look good and get promoted. Self-serving leaders are not as effective because their employees only obey them, not follow them. They succeed in many areas because they present a good image to their seniors at the expense of their workers

5. Ethical leadership:

The respect that leadership must have requires that one's ethics be without question. A leader not only stays above the line between rights and wrong, he stays well clear of the "gray areas"
- G. Alan Bernard

Ethical Leadership is essential in an organization because leaders who strive for ethical conduct motivate others to act in ethical ways. With the crisis facing leaders today, a strong character is needed to survive within an organization.

Even in the light of the availability of this rich information and knowledge, there are untold numbers of temptations and acts of unethical and illegal behaviours within organizations, as evidenced by daily news and media and government reports. Human beings often have a tendency to depart from the path that they know is right. It is a well known fact that power can corrupt a person in authority and leadership is a power relationship. Power opens door for the person with power to capitalize on personal gain in certain situations. Motivations that spark wrong doing are greed, envy, fear, anger and jealousy.

Organizations that do not participate in prevention and training programs or ethics programs place themselves at high risk for a substantial amount of unethical and illegal acts. One person doing something unethical can perpetuate a chain of unethical actions in an organization. People within an organization need to decide how much influence they want to have on the system and in turn how much influence an organization or other individuals will have upon them.

Ethical leadership is essential in an organization because leaders who strive for ethical conduct motivate others to act in ethical ways. Ethical leadership has a structure component and a substantive character component. Leaders can use their power in a positive way to influence people through role modelling, which is the reason that many researchers have

emphasized strong character for ethical leadership, thus using a virtue ethics approach. With the crisis facing leaders today, a strong character is needed to survive within an organization.

Ethical leadership involves a strategic planning process so that policies, decision-making processes, consultation, accountability and ethical standards, and ongoing assessment and monitoring are in place to ensure ethical practice by the leader and the followers. Ethical Leadership is measured by the organization's sustainable achievements over the long term.

6. The Process of Great Leadership:

The road to great leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1987) is common to successful leaders:

- **Challenge the process** - Finding a process that needs improvement.
- **Inspire a shared vision** - Sharing the vision with the followers.
- **Enable others to act** - Giving the tools and methods to solve the problem.
- **Model the way** - When the process is tough, get involved in it. A boss tells others what to do; a leader shows that it can be done.
- **Encourage the hearts** - Sharing the glory with your followers' hearts, while keeping the pains within your own.

7. Strategic Leadership:

The essential skills through research at the Wharton School involving more than 20,000 executives have identified six skills, namely the abilities to anticipate, challenge, interpret, decide, align, and learn. When these skills are mastered and used, it will allow leaders to think strategically and navigate the unknown effectively (Paul et al., 2013)

8. Anticipate

Most organizations and leaders are poor at detecting ambiguous threats and opportunities on the periphery of their business. Strategic leaders, in contrast, are constantly vigilant, honing their ability to anticipate by scanning the environment for signals of change.

To improve the ability to anticipate:

Discussing with customers, suppliers, and other partners to understand their challenges. Conduct market research and business simulations to understand competitors' perspectives, gauge reactions to new initiatives or products, and predict potential disruptive offerings.

- Using scenario planning to imagine various futures and prepare for the unexpected.
- Looking at a fast-growing rival and examine actions that puzzle you.
- Listing customers you have lost recently and try to figure out why.
- Attending conferences and events in other industries or functions.

9. Challenge

Strategic thinkers question the status quo. They challenge their own and others' assumptions and encourage divergent points of view. Only after careful reflection and examination of a problem through many lenses do they take decisive action. This requires patience, courage, and an open mind.

To improve the ability to challenge:

- Focus on the root causes of a problem rather than the symptoms.
- List long-standing assumptions about an aspect of your
- Encourage debate by holding "safe zone" meetings where open dialogue and conflict are expected and welcomed.
- Create a rotating position for the purpose of questioning the status quo.
- Include naysayers in a decision process to surface challenges early.
- Capture input from people not directly affected by a decision to have a good perspective on the repercussions.

10. Interpret

Leaders who challenge in the right way invariably elicit complex and conflicting information. Instead of reflexively seeing or hearing what you expect, you should synthesize all the input you have.

To improve the ability to interpret:

When analyzing ambiguous data, list at least three possible explanations for what you're observing and invite perspectives from diverse stakeholders.

- Actively look for missing information and evidence.
- Supplement observation with quantitative analysis.

11. Decide

In uncertain times, decision makers may have to make tough calls quickly with incomplete information. But strategic thinkers insist on multiple options at the. They follow a disciplined process that balances rigor with speed, considers the trade-offs involved, and takes both short- and long-term goals into account. At the end, strategic leaders must have the courage of their convictions—informed by a robust decision process.

To improve your ability to decide:

- Divide big decisions into pieces to understand component parts and better see unintended consequences.
- Tailor your decision criteria to long-term versus short-term projects.
- Let others know your decision process.
- Determine who needs to be directly involved and who can influence the success of your decision.

- Consider pilots or experiments instead of big bets, and make staged commitments.

12. Align

Strategic leaders must adapt to find common ground and achieve buy-in among stakeholders who have disparate views and agendas. This requires active outreach. Success depends on proactive communication, trust building, and frequent engagement.

To improve the ability to align:

- Communicate early and often to combat the two most common complaints in organizations
- Identify key internal and external stakeholders, mapping their positions on your initiative and pinpointing any misalignment of interests.
- Use structured and facilitated conversations to expose areas of misunderstanding or resistance.
- Reach out to resisters directly to understand their concerns and then address them.
- Be vigilant in monitoring stakeholders' positions during the rollout of your initiative or strategy.
- Recognize and otherwise reward colleagues who support team alignment.

13. Learn

Strategic leaders are the focal point for organizational learning. They promote a culture of inquiry, and they search for the lessons in both successful and unsuccessful outcomes. They study failures—their own and their teams'—in an open, constructive way to find the hidden lessons.

To improve the ability to learn:

- Institute after-action reviews, document lessons learned from major decisions or milestones and broadly communicate the resulting insights.
- Reward managers who try something laudable but fail in terms of outcomes.
- Conduct annual learning audits to see where decisions and team interactions may have fallen short.
- Identify initiatives that are not producing as expected and examine the root causes.
- Create a culture in which inquiry is valued and mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities.

Becoming a strategic leader means identifying weaknesses in the six skills discussed above and correcting them. Our research shows that strength in one skill cannot easily compensate for a deficit in another, so it is important to methodically optimize all six abilities.

14. Transformational Leadership:

James MacGregor Burns (1978), first introduced the concept of transforming leadership in his descriptive research on political leaders, but this term is now used in organizational psychology. According to Burns, transforming leadership is a

process in which "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation". The leader transforms and motivates followers through his or her idealized influence, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. In addition, transforming leaders encourages followers to come up with new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter the environment to support being successful.

Implications for managers

Yukl (1999) draws some tips for transformational leadership:

1. Develop a challenging and attractive vision, together with the employees.
2. Tie the vision to a strategy for its achievement.
3. Develop the vision, specify and translate it to actions.
4. Express confidence, decisiveness and optimism about the vision and its implementation.
5. Realize the vision through small planned steps and small successes in the path for its full implementation.

15. Situational Leadership

Whilst behavioural theories introduced the notion of different leadership styles, they gave little guidance as to what constitutes effective leadership in different situations. Indeed, most researchers today conclude that no one leadership style is right for every manager under all circumstances. Instead, situational theories were developed to indicate the style to be used depending upon factors as situation, people, task, organization and other environmental variables.

Fiedler (1964, 1967) proposed that there is no single best way to lead; instead the leaders' style should be selected according to the situation.

16. The Changing Nature of Society

Technological advances are transforming communications and access to information; the retired population is growing whilst the working population diminishes; global economies are becoming increasingly interdependent; the ethnic and religious mix is transforming. There is an improved awareness of the social and environmental impacts of our actions; a decreasing allegiance to traditional power structures; an increasing complexity with regards to stakeholders and decision-making; a move from family groups to individualism; increasing customer and employee demands; and a climate of change and uncertainty.

17. The Changing Nature of Work

The changes in society are impacting significantly upon the nature of work and the workforce. There is a trend towards flexible working which includes part-time, working from home and the mobile office. Decreasing job security, company loyalty and unemployment encourage mid-life career changes and self-employment. Demographic changes and global trade are leading to sectoral shifts from manufacturing and production to service and leisure industries. There are an ever-increasing number of stakeholders and an increasing pressure to work in

collaboration and to establish partnerships. Private sector organisations are becoming more powerful and influential in areas previously controlled by the public sector.

18. The Changing Face Of Leadership

In this climate of change, leadership is viewed as the key to organisational success. Although the core qualities of leaders may remain constant, the manner and mix in which they are exhibited needs to become more fluid and matched to the context. The leader needs to become increasingly adaptable to uncertainty and to manage complexity. The qualities of openness, empathy, integrity and self awareness demand for a more participative leadership style. The leader will increasingly need to "win the right to lead", "lead from the front", "lead by example" and be prepared to "share in hardship". Developing a culture of leadership in which people can excel is being seen as increasingly important, as is the need to create and communicate a shared long-term vision.

As the need for good strategic leadership becomes critical, it is proposed that further steps need to be taken to identify, develop and support potential future leaders from an early stage. The emphasis should be on experiential and reflective learning that builds upon innate qualities and personal experiences, and enhances the ability to define and communicate a vision and to adapt to different contexts and situations.

19. Leadership, Society and the Next 10 Years (Gosling, 2003)

Key leadership qualities for the next ten years:

- Integrity and moral courage
- Self-awareness and humility
- Empathy and emotional engagement
- Transparency and openness
- Clarity of vision
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Energy and resilience
- Decisiveness in the face of uncertainty
- Judgement, consistency and fairness
- Ability to inspire, motivate and listen
- Respect and trust
- Knowledge and expertise
- Delivering results

To conclude, we would like to challenge you to conceive of alternative ways of going about leadership within any organisation with which you are involved. We also encourage you to consider the wider implications of your involvement in leadership practice and any way in which it could be modified for the wider good.

20. Conclusion:

Towards a developmental conception of leadership, it is clear that the majority of conceptions of leadership largely neglect the importance of context and the political nature of leadership. Instead there is a strong tendency to conceive of

leadership in terms of traits, characteristics, styles or behaviours.

However, from a 'developmental' point of view, leadership is better understood as a political process that is contextually contingent and reflects the three factors mentioned earlier (Heather, 2009):

1. Leadership implies the organization or mobilization of people and resources in pursuit of particular ends.
2. Leadership must always be understood contextually, occurring within a given indigenous configuration of power, authority and legitimacy, shaped by history, institutions, goals and political culture.
3. Leadership regularly involves forging formal or informal coalitions, vertical or horizontal, of leaders and elites, in order to solve the pervasive collective action problems which largely define the challenges of growth and development.

In the developing world, especially in weak, fragile and evolving states, where informal institutions play a larger role and take a variety of hybrid forms, the impact of the context upon leadership is even greater and shapes both the limits and possibilities of leadership.

In this respect, indigenous leaders and leadership is therefore the key to establishing, maintaining, and implementing appropriate, legitimate and feasible local institutional arrangements. Leadership is a complex phenomenon that touches on many other important organisational, social and personal processes. It depends on a process of influence, whereby people are inspired to work towards group goals, not through coercion, but through personal motivation. Finally, this paper shows that leaders are not born leaders; they become great leaders throughout the course of their life by taking experiences and letting it guide them and their leadership style. That is a tactic leader can adopt well before they reach managerial level, or even before they enter the workforce.

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