Leadership

Introduction

At present, leadership is one among the most discussed problems in a firm or company, nation, and business; at the same time, it has become very difficult to turn on a television set, read a newspaper or anything else without coming across distinct leaders, leadership and leading people. Well, there isn't any particular definition about leadership and doesn't have any general agreement among people on the feature of enhancing leaders and their leadership qualities.

Leadership is a theme that has been in discussion and also in people's interest from the ancient days itself, ancient philosophers of Greek like Socrates and Plato are superabundance gurus of leadership and management. It is said that, in this transforming world, leadership not only has solutions for firms and individual people but also furnish solutions to nations, sectors, and regions. Grint recognizes four difficulties which make unanimity on a usual leadership definition and those difficulties are as follows:

- Initially there is a problem about process whether leadership qualities of a leader are derived from his/her own personal qualities or not.
- Next question which required solution is about a position of a leader.
- A third thing that is needed to be worked out is about philosophy because it is also important to know that whether a leader employs an ordinary influence on follower's behavior or attempt for an international influence.
- The final thing of difficulty that has to be worked out is about the purity of a leader.

Along with all the parameters which are theoretical disputes, Grint also includes distinct features like attitude and compelling. The huge history behind us reminds everyone that leadership isn't a concept of moral because leaders who possess a quality of leadership are similar to the normal people, they are reliable and fraudulent, spineless and courageous, have eager desire and are magnanimous. So, blindly believing leaders is hazardous to human condition in few cases. In a modern theory of leadership, Northouse recognized four usual themes and they are as below:

- Process of leadership
- Involvement of influence in leadership
- Occurrence of leadership in group context
- Involvement of leadership in goal attainment

Leadership is a difficult phenomenon which handles various organizational processes, private processes and social processes; leadership is a quality whose footprints are everywhere but person nowhere to be seen.

What Is Leadership?

Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right. – *Professor Warren G. Bennis*

Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it. – *Dwight D. Eisenhower*

The word "leadership" can bring to mind a variety of images. For example:

- A political leader, pursuing a passionate, personal cause.
- An explorer, cutting a path through the jungle for the rest of his group to follow.
- An executive, developing her company's strategy to beat the competition.

Leaders help themselves and others to do the right things. They set direction, build an inspiring vision, and create something new. Leadership is about mapping out where you need to go to "win" as a team or an organization; and it is dynamic, exciting, and inspiring.

Yet, while leaders set the direction, they must also use management skills to guide their people to the right destination, in a smooth and efficient way.

In this article, we'll focus on the process of leadership. In particular, we'll discuss the "transformational leadership" model, first proposed by James MacGregor Burns and then developed by Bernard Bass. This model highlights visionary thinking and bringing about change, instead of management processes that are designed to maintain and steadily improve current performance.

Leadership and Management

What are the Key Characteristics of Management?

From a broad perspective, management is smaller scale and more focused on details than leadership. The leader sets the vision and the broad plan, the manager executes it and does what is needed to achieve that plan. Key characteristics of management are:

- A tactical focus on aspects of the organization's strategy
- Executing on specific areas within their responsibilities
- Formulating and enforcing the policies of a business to achieve its goals
- Directing and monitoring their team to achieve their specific goals
- Management and containment of risks in an organization
- Short term focus with attention to the details

What are the Key Characteristics of Leadership?

Leadership is setting the tone of an organization, the broad objectives and long term goals will come from the leader, and then managers need to execute on a plan to attain them. Leadership is not necessarily getting caught up in all the details but rather setting the plan and inspiring people to follow them. Key characteristics of leadership are:

- Strategic focus on the organization's needs
- Establishing goals and the strategic direction
- Establishing principles
- Empowering and mentoring the team to lead them to their goals
- Risk engagement and overall identification
- Long term, high level focus

Which is more important?

Any organization or business needs people who are good at both leadership and management if they are going to succeed. With good management and poor leadership they will be able to execute everything very well, but will be doing so without a consistent direction and overall strategy. With good leadership and poor management a company will have the goals and inspiration to succeed, but no one to execute the plan on how to get there.

Leadership Theories

For decades, leadership theories have been the source of numerous studies. In reality as well as in practice, many have tried to define what allows authentic leaders to stand apart from the mass! Hence, there as many theories on leadership as there are philosophers, researchers and professors that have studied and ultimately published their leadership theory. A great article to read before diving into the theories is the The Philosophical Foundations of Leadership

Theories are commonly categorized by which aspect is believed to define the leader the most. The most widespread one's are: Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Behavioural Theories, Contingency Theories, Transactional Theories and Transformational Theories.

Great Man Theory (1840s)

The Great Man theory evolved around the mid 19th century. Even though no one was able to identify with any scientific certainty, which human characteristic or combination of, were responsible for identifying great leaders. Everyone recognized that just as the name suggests; only a man could have the characteristic (s) of a great leader.

The Great Man theory assumes that the traits of leadership are intrinsic. That simply means that great leaders are born...

they are not made. This theory sees great leaders as those who are destined by birth to become a leader. Furthermore, the belief was that great leaders will rise when confronted with the appropriate situation. The theory was popularized by Thomas Carlyle, a writer and teacher. Just like him, the Great Man theory was inspired by the study of influential heroes. In his book "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History", he compared a wide array of heroes.

In 1860, Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher disputed the great man theory by affirming that these heroes are simply the product of their times and their actions the results of social conditions.

Trait Theory (1930's - 1940's)

The trait leadership theory believes that people are either born or are made with certain qualities that will make them excel in leadership roles. That is, certain qualities such as intelligence, sense of responsibility, creativity and other values puts anyone in the shoes of a good leader. In fact, Gordon Allport, an American psychologist,"...identified almost 18,000 English personality-relevant terms" (Matthews, Deary & Whiteman, 2003, p. 3).

The trait theory of leadership focused on analyzing mental, physical and social characteristic in order to gain more understanding of what is the characteristic or the combination of characteristics that are common among leaders.

There were many shortfalls with the trait leadership theory. However, from a psychology of personalities approach, Gordon Allport's studies are among the first ones and have brought, for the study of leadership, the behavioural approach.

- In the 1930s the field of Psychometrics was in its early years.
- Personality traits measurement weren't reliable across studies.
- Study samples were of low level managers
- Explanations weren't offered as to the relation between each characteristic and its impact on leadership.
- The context of the leader wasn't considered.

Many studies have analyzed the traits among existing leaders in the hope of uncovering those responsible for ones leadership abilities! In vain, the only characteristics that were identified among these individuals were those that were slightly taller and slightly more intelligent!

Behavioural Theories (1940's - 1950's)

In reaction to the trait leadership theory, the behavioural theories are offering a new perspective, one that focuses on the behaviours of the leaders as opposed to their mental, physical or social characteristics. Thus, with the evolutions in psychometrics, notably the factor analysis, researchers were able to measure the cause an effects relationship of specific human behaviours from leaders. From this point forward anyone with the right conditioning could have access to the once before elite club of naturally gifted leaders. In other words, leaders are made not born.

The behavioural theories first divided leaders in two categories. Those that were concerned with the tasks and those concerned with the people. Throughout the literature these are referred to as different names, but the essence are identical.

Contingency Theories (1960's)

The Contingency Leadership theory argues that there is no single way of leading and that every leadership style should be based on certain situations, which signifies that there are certain people who perform at the maximum level in certain places; but at minimal performance when taken out of their element.

To a certain extent contingency leadership theories are an extension of the trait theory, in the sense that human traits are related to the situation in which the leaders exercise their leadership. It is generally accepted within the contingency theories that leader are more likely to express their leadership when they feel that their followers will be responsive.

Transactional leadership Theories (1970's)

Transactional theories, also known as exchange theories of leadership, are characterized by a transaction made between the leader and the followers. In fact, the theory values a positive and mutually beneficial relationship.

For the transactional theories to be effective and as a result have motivational value, the leader must find a means to align to adequately reward (or punish) his follower, for performing leader-assigned task. In other words, transactional leaders are most efficient when they develop a mutual reinforcing environment, for which the individual and the organizational goals are in sync.

The transactional theorists state that humans in general are seeking to maximize pleasurable experiences and to diminish un-pleasurable experiences. Thus, we are more likely to associate ourselves with individuals that add to our strengths.

According to Research by asaecenter, leadership style is the way a person uses power to lead other people. Research has identified a variety of leadership styles based on the number of followers. The most appropriate leadership style depends on the function of the leader, the followers and the situation.

Some leaders cannot work comfortably with a high degree of followers' participation in decision making. Some employers lack the ability or the desire to assume responsibility. Furthermore, the specific situation helps determine the most effective style of interactions. Sometimes leaders must handle problems that require immediate solutions without consulting followers.

Leadership Styles

We have covered 12 different types of ways people tend to lead organizations or other people. Not all of these styles would deem fit for all kind of situations, you can read them through to see which one fits right to your company or situation.

1. Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership style is centered on the boss. In this leadership the leader holds all authority and responsibility. In this leadership, leaders make decisions on their own without consulting subordinates. They reach decisions, communicate them to subordinates and expect prompt implementation. Autocratic work environment does normally have little or no flexibility.

In this kind of leadership, guidelines, procedures and policies are all natural additions of an autocratic leader. Statistically, there are very few situations that can actually support autocratic leadership.

Some of the leaders that support this kind of leadership include: Albert J Dunlap (Sunbeam Corporation) and Donald Trump (Trump Organization) among others.

2. Democratic Leadership

In this leadership style, subordinates are involved in making decisions. Unlike autocratic, this headship is centered on subordinates' contributions. The democratic leader holds final responsibility, but he or she is known to delegate authority to other people, who determine work projects.

The most unique feature of this leadership is that communication is active upward and downward. With respect to statistics, democratic leadership is one of the most preferred leadership, and it entails the following: fairness, competence, creativity, courage, intelligence and honesty.

3. Strategic Leadership Style

Strategic leadership is one that involves a leader who is essentially the head of an organization. The strategic leader is not limited to those at the top of the organization. It is geared to a wider audience at all levels who want to create a high performance life, team or organization.

The strategic leader fills the gap between the need for new possibility and the need for practicality by providing a prescriptive set of habits. An effective strategic leadership delivers the goods in terms of what an organization naturally expects from its leadership in times of change. 55% of this leadership normally involves strategic thinking.

4. Transformational Leadership

Unlike other leadership styles, transformational leadership is all about initiating change in organizations, groups, oneself and others.

Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performance.

Statistically, transformational leadership tends to have more committed and satisfied followers. This is mainly so because transformational leaders empower followers.

5. Team Leadership

Team leadership involves the creation of a vivid picture of its future, where it is heading and what it will stand for. The vision inspires and provides a strong sense of purpose and direction.

Team leadership is about working with the hearts and minds of all those involved. It also recognizes that teamwork may not always involve trusting cooperative relationships. The most challenging aspect of this leadership is whether or not it will succeed. According to Harvard Business Review, team leadership may fail because of poor leadership qualities.

6. Cross-Cultural Leadership

This form of leadership normally exists where there are various cultures in the society. This leadership has also industrialized as a way to recognize front runners who work in the contemporary globalized market.

Organizations, particularly international ones require leaders who can effectively adjust their leadership to work in different environs. Most of the leaderships observed in the United States are cross-cultural because of the different cultures that live and work there.

7. Facilitative Leadership

Facilitative leadership is too dependent on measurements and outcomes – not a skill, although it takes much skill to master. The effectiveness of a group is directly related to the efficacy of its process. If the group is high functioning, the facilitative leader uses a light hand on the process.

On the other hand, if the group is low functioning, the facilitative leader will be more directives in helping the group run its process. An effective facilitative leadership involves monitoring of group dynamics, offering process suggestions and interventions to help the group stay on track.

8. Laissez-faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership gives authority to employees. According to azcentral, departments or subordinates are allowed to work as they choose with minimal or no interference. According to research, this kind of leadership has been consistently found to be the least satisfying and least effective management style.

9. Transactional Leadership

This is a leadership that maintains or continues the status quo. It is also the leadership that involves an exchange process, whereby followers get immediate, tangible rewards for carrying out the leader's orders. Transactional leadership can sound rather basic, with its focus on exchange.

Being clear, focusing on expectations, giving feedback are all important leadership skills. According to Boundless.com, transactional leadership behaviors can include: clarifying what is expected of followers' performance; explaining how to meet such expectations; and allocating rewards that are contingent on meeting objectives.

10. Coaching Leadership

Coaching leadership involves teaching and supervising followers. A coaching leader is highly operational in setting where results/ performance require improvement. Basically, in this kind of leadership, followers are helped to improve their skills. Coaching leadership does the following: motivates followers, inspires followers and encourages followers.

11. Charismatic Leadership

In this leadership, the charismatic leader manifests his or her revolutionary power. Charisma does not mean sheer behavioral change. It actually involves a transformation of followers' values and beliefs.

Therefore, this distinguishes a charismatic leader from a simply populist leader who may affect attitudes towards specific objects, but who is not prepared as the charismatic leader is, to transform the underlying normative orientation that structures specific attitudes.

12. Visionary Leadership

This form of leadership involves leaders who recognize that the methods, steps and processes of leadership are all obtained with and through people. Most great and successful leaders have the aspects of vision in them.

However, those who are highly visionary are the ones considered to be exhibiting visionary leadership. Outstanding leaders will always transform their visions into realities.

Conclusion

The Leadership skills approach takes into account the knowledge and abilities that the leader has. A leader can learn certain skills and turn himself into a remarkable one.

Researchers have studied leadership skills and abilities for a number of years. However, there are two influential models. The first one is a model proposed by Robert Katz in 1955. The second approach is proposed by Michael Mumford and colleagues in the year 2000. These models can be seen as complimentary to each other, since they offer different views on leadership from the skills point of view.

This is a first approach to conceptualize and create a structure of the process of leadership around skills. The model describes leadership in terms of skills and therefore makes leadership available to everyone. This model provides an expansive view of leadership that incorporates wide variety of components (i.e., problem-solving skills, social judgment skills) and a structure consistent with leadership education programs.

Reference

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