

Leadership Styles

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There are a number of different approaches, or 'styles' to leadership and management that are based on different assumptions and theories. The style that individuals use will be based on a combination of their beliefs, values and preferences, as well as the organizational culture and norms which will encourage some styles and discourage others.

- Charismatic Leadership
- Participative Leadership
- Situational Leadership
- Transactional Leadership
- Transformational Leadership
- The Quiet Leader
- Servant Leadership

Additional research

- The Managerial Grid: Blake and Mouton's people-task balance.
- Lewin's leadership styles: Three original styles.
- Likert's leadership styles: from autocratic to participative.
- Six Emotional Leadership Styles: from 'Mr. Emotional Intelligence', Daniel Goleman and friends.

Negative styles

There are some relatively common styles of management that are anything but models of good leadership.

- Post-hoc Management: A poor, but common style.
- Micromanagement: Controls every detail.
- Seagull Management: Flying in, pooping on you and flying off again.
- Mushroom Management: Drop them in the poo and keep them in the dark.
- Kipper management: Two-faced approach.

Charismatic Leadership

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Assumptions | Style | Discussion | See also

Assumptions

Charm and grace are all that is needed to create followers.

Self-belief is a fundamental need of leaders.

People follow others that they personally admire.

Style

The Charismatic Leader gathers followers through dint of personality and charm, rather than any form of external power or authority.

The searchlight of attention

It is interesting to watch a Charismatic Leader 'working the room' as they move from person to person. They pay much attention to the person they are talking to at any one moment, making that person feel like they are, for that time, the most important person in the world.

Charismatic Leaders pay a great deal of attention in scanning and reading their environment, and are good at picking up the moods and concerns of both individuals and larger audiences. They then will hone their actions and words to suit the situation.

Pulling all of the strings

Charismatic Leaders use a wide range of methods to manage their image and, if they are not naturally charismatic, may practice assiduously at developing their skills. They may engender trust through visible self-sacrifice and taking personal risks in the name of their beliefs. They will show great confidence in their followers. They are very persuasive and make very effective use of body language as well as verbal language.

Deliberate charisma is played out in a theatrical sense, where the leader is 'playing to the house' to create a desired effect. They also make effective use of storytelling, including the use of symbolism and metaphor.

Many politicians use a charismatic style, as they need to gather a large number of followers. If you want to increase your charisma, studying videos of their speeches and the way they interact with others is a great source of learning. Religious leaders, too, may well use charisma, as do cult leaders.

Leading the team

Charismatic Leaders who are building a group, whether it is a political party, a cult or a business team, will often focus strongly on making the group very clear and distinct, separating it from other groups. They will then build the image of the group, in particular in the minds of their followers, as being far superior to all others.

The Charismatic Leader will typically attach themselves firmly to the identity of the group, such that to join the group is to become one with the leader. In doing so, they create an unchallengeable position for themselves.

Alternative views

The description above is purely based on charisma and takes into account varying moral positions. Other descriptions tend to assume a more benevolent approach.

Conger & Kanungo (1998) describe five behavioral attributes of Charismatic Leaders that indicate a more transformational viewpoint:

- Vision and articulation;
- Sensitivity to the environment;
- Sensitivity to member needs;
- Personal risk taking;
- Performing unconventional behaviour.

Musser (1987) notes that charismatic leaders seek to instill both commitment to ideological goals and also devotion to themselves. The extent to which either of these two goals is dominant depends on the underlying motivations and needs of the leader.

Discussion

The Charismatic Leader and the Transformational Leader can have many similarities, in that the Transformational Leader may well be charismatic. Their main difference is in their basic focus. Whereas the Transformational Leader has a basic focus of transforming the organization and, quite possibly, their followers, the Charismatic Leader may not want to change anything.

Despite their charm and apparent concern, the Charismatic Leader may well be somewhat more concerned with themselves than anyone else. A typical experience with them is that whilst you are talking with them, it is like being bathed in a warm and pleasant glow, in which they are very convincing. Yet afterwards, ask the sunbeam of their attention is moved elsewhere, you may begin to question what they said (or even whether they said anything of significance at all).

The values of the Charismatic Leader are highly significant. If they are well-intentioned towards others, they can elevate and transform an entire company. If they are selfish and Machiavellian, they can create cults and effectively rape the minds (and potentially the bodies) of the followers.

Their self-belief is so high, they can easily believe that they are infallible, and hence lead their followers into an abyss, even when they have received adequate warning from others. The self-belief can also lead them into psychotic narcissism, where their self-absorption or need for admiration and worship can lead to their followers questioning their leadership.

They may also be intolerant of challengers and their irreplaceability (intentional or otherwise) can mean that there are no successors when they leave.

Participative Leadership

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Assumptions | Style | Discussion | See also

Assumptions

Involvement in decision-making improves the understanding of the issues involved by those who must carry out the decisions.

People are more committed to actions where they have involved in the relevant decision-making.

People are less competitive and more collaborative when they are working on joint goals.

When people make decisions together, the social commitment to one another is greater and thus increases their commitment to the decision.

Several people deciding together make better decisions than one person alone.

Style

A Participative Leader, rather than taking autocratic decisions, seeks to involve other people in the process, possibly including subordinates, peers, superiors and other stakeholders. Often, however, as it is within the managers' whim to give or deny control to his or her subordinates, most participative activity is within the immediate team. The question of how much influence others are given thus may vary on the manager's preferences and beliefs, and a whole spectrum of participation is possible, as in the table below.

< Not participative		Highly participative >		
Autocratic decision by leader	Leader proposes decision, listens to feedback, then decides	Team proposes decision, leader has final decision	Joint decision with team as equals	Full delegation of decision to team

There are many varieties on this spectrum, including stages where the leader sells the idea to the team. Another variant is for the leader to describe the 'what' of objectives or goals and let the team or individuals decide the 'how' of the process by which the 'how' will be achieved (this is often called 'Management by Objectives').

The level of participation may also depend on the type of decision being made. Decisions on how to implement goals may be highly participative, whilst decisions during subordinate performance evaluations are more likely to be taken by the manager.

Discussion

There are many potential benefits of participative leadership, as indicated in the assumptions, above.

This approach is also known as consultation, empowerment, joint decision-making, democratic leadership, Management By Objective (MBO) and power-sharing.

Participative Leadership can be a sham when managers ask for opinions and then ignore them. This is likely to lead to cynicism and feelings of betrayal.

Situational Leadership

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Assumptions | Style | Discussion | See also

Assumptions

The best action of the leader depends on a range of situational factors.

Style

When a decision is needed, an effective leader does not just fall into a single preferred style, such as using transactional or transformational methods. In practice, as they say, things are not that simple.

Factors that affect situational decisions include motivation and capability of followers. This, in turn, is affected by factors within the particular situation. The relationship between followers and the leader may be another factor that affects leader behavior as much as it does follower behavior.

The leaders' perception of the follower and the situation will affect what they do rather than the truth of the situation. The leader's perception of themselves and other factors such as stress and mood will also modify the leaders' behavior.

Yukl (1989) seeks to combine other approaches and identifies six variables:

- *Subordinate effort*: the motivation and actual effort expended.
- *Subordinate ability and role clarity*: followers knowing what to do and how to do it.
- *Organization of the work*: the structure of the work and utilization of resources.
- *Cooperation and cohesiveness*: of the group in working together.
- *Resources and support*: the availability of tools, materials, people, etc.
- *External coordination*: the need to collaborate with other groups.

Leaders here work on such factors as external relationships, acquisition of resources, managing demands on the group and managing the structures and culture of the group.

Discussion

Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) identified three forces that led to the leader's action: the forces in the situation, the forces in the follower and also forces in the leader. This recognizes that the leader's style is highly variable, and even such distant events as a family argument can lead to the displacement activity of a more aggressive stance in an argument than usual.

Maier (1963) noted that leaders not only consider the likelihood of a follower accepting a suggestion, but also the overall importance of getting things done. Thus in critical situations, a leader is more likely to be directive in style simply because of the implications of failure.

Transactional Leadership

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Assumptions | Style | Discussion | See also

Assumptions

People are motivated by reward and punishment.

Social systems work best with a clear chain of command.

When people have agreed to do a job, a part of the deal is that they cede all authority to their manager.

The prime purpose of a subordinate is to do what their manager tells them to do.

Style

The transactional leader works through creating clear structures whereby it is clear what is required of their subordinates, and the rewards that they get for following orders.

Punishments are not always mentioned, but they are also well-understood and formal systems of discipline are usually in place.

The early stage of Transactional Leadership is in negotiating the contract whereby the subordinate is given a salary and other benefits, and the company (and by implication the subordinate's manager) gets authority over the subordinate.

When the Transactional Leader allocates work to a subordinate, they are considered to be fully responsible for it, whether or not they have the resources or capability to carry it out. When things go wrong, then the subordinate is considered to be personally at fault, and is punished for their failure (just as they are rewarded for succeeding).

The transactional leader often uses *management by exception*, working on the principle that if something is operating to defined (and hence expected) performance then it does not need attention. Exceptions to expectation require praise and reward for exceeding expectation, whilst some kind of corrective action is applied for performance below expectation.

Whereas Transformational Leadership has more of a 'selling' style, Transactional Leadership, once the contract is in place, takes a 'telling' style.

Discussion

Transactional leadership is based in *contingency*, in that reward or punishment is contingent upon performance.

Despite much research that highlights its limitations, Transactional Leadership is still a popular approach with many managers. Indeed, in the Leadership vs. Management spectrum, it is very much towards the management end of the scale.

The main limitation is the assumption of 'rational man', a person who is largely motivated by money and simple reward, and hence whose behavior is predictable. The underlying psychology is Behaviorism, including the Classical Conditioning of Pavlov and Skinner's Operant Conditioning. These theories are largely based on controlled laboratory experiments (often with animals) and ignore complex emotional factors and social values.

In practice, there is sufficient truth in Behaviorism to sustain Transactional approaches. This is reinforced by the supply-and-demand situation of much employment, coupled with the effects of deeper needs, as in Maslow's Hierarchy. When the demand for a skill outstrips the supply, then Transactional Leadership often is insufficient, and other approaches are more effective.

Transformational Leadership

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Assumptions | Style | Discussion | See also

Assumptions

People will follow a person who inspires them.

A person with vision and passion can achieve great things.

The way to get things done is by injecting enthusiasm and energy.

Style

Working for a Transformational Leader can be a wonderful and uplifting experience. They put passion and energy into everything. They care about you and want you to succeed.

Developing the vision

Transformational Leadership starts with the development of a vision, a view of the future that will excite and convert potential followers. This vision may be developed by the leader, by the senior team or may emerge from a broad series of discussions. The important factor is the leader buys into it, hook, line and sinker.

Selling the vision

The next step, which in fact never stops, is to constantly sell the vision. This takes energy and commitment, as few people will immediately buy into a radical vision, and some will join the show much more slowly than others. The Transformational Leader thus takes every opportunity and will use whatever works to convince others to climb on board the bandwagon.

In order to create followers, the Transformational Leader has to be very careful in creating trust, and their personal integrity is a critical part of the package that they are selling. In effect, they are selling themselves as well as the vision.

Finding the way forwards

In parallel with the selling activity is seeking the way forward. Some Transformational Leaders know the way, and simply want others to follow them. Others do not have a ready strategy, but will happily lead the exploration of possible routes to the promised land.

The route forwards may not be obvious and may not be plotted in details, but with a clear vision, the *direction* will always be known. Thus finding the way forward can be an ongoing process of course correction, and the Transformational Leader will accept that there will be

failures and blind canyons along the way. As long as they feel progress is being made, they will be happy.

Leading the charge

The final stage is to remain up-front and central during the action. Transformational Leaders are always visible and will stand up to be counted rather than hide behind their troops. They show by their attitudes and actions how everyone else should behave. They also make continued efforts to motivate and rally their followers, constantly doing the rounds, listening, soothing and enthusing.

It is their unswerving commitment as much as anything else that keeps people going, particularly through the darker times when some may question whether the vision can ever be achieved. If the people do not believe that they can succeed, then their efforts will flag. The Transformational Leader seeks to infect and reinfect their followers with a high level of commitment to the vision.

One of the methods the Transformational Leader uses to sustain motivation is in the use of ceremonies, rituals and other cultural symbolism. Small changes get big hurrahs, pumping up their significance as indicators of real progress.

Overall, they balance their attention between action that creates progress and the mental state of their followers. Perhaps more than other approaches, they are people-oriented and believe that success comes first and last through deep and sustained commitment.

Discussion

Whilst the Transformational Leader seeks overtly to transform the organization, there is also a tacit promise to followers that they also will be transformed in some way, perhaps to be more like this amazing leader. In some respects, then, the followers are the *product* of the transformation.

Transformational Leaders are often charismatic, but are not as narcissistic as pure Charismatic Leaders, who succeed through a belief in themselves rather than a belief in others.

One of the traps of Transformational Leadership is that passion and confidence can easily be mistaken for truth and reality. Whilst it is true that great things have been achieved through enthusiastic leadership, it is also true that many passionate people have led the charge right over the cliff and into a bottomless chasm. Just because someone *believes* they are right, it does not mean they *are* right.

Paradoxically, the energy that gets people going can also cause them to give up. Transformational Leaders often have large amounts of enthusiasm which, if relentlessly applied, can wear out their followers.

Transformational Leaders also tend to see the big picture, but not the details, where the devil often lurks. If they do not have people to take care of this level of information, then they are usually doomed to fail.

Finally, Transformational Leaders, by definition, seek to transform. When the organization does not need transforming and people are happy as they are, then such a leader will be frustrated. Like wartime leaders, however, given the right situation they come into their own and can be personally responsible for saving entire companies.

The Quiet Leader

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Assumptions | Style | Discussion | See also

Assumptions

The actions of a leader speak louder than his or her words.

People are motivated when you give them credit rather than take it yourself.

Ego and aggression are neither necessary nor constructive.

Style

The approach of quiet leaders is the antithesis of the classic charismatic (and often transformational) leaders in that they base their success not on ego and force of character but on their thoughts and actions. Although they are strongly task-focused, they are neither bullies nor unnecessarily unkind and may persuade people through rational argument and a form of benevolent Transactional Leadership.

The 'Level 5' leader

In his book *Good To Great*, Jim Collins, identified five levels of effectiveness people can take in organizations. At level four is the merely effective leader, whilst at level five the leader who combines professional will with personal humility. The 'professional will' indicates how they are far from being timid wilting flowers and will march against any advice if they believe it is the right thing to do. In 'personal humility' they put the well-being of others before their own personal needs, for example giving others credit after successes but taking personal responsibility for failures.

Taoist writings

The quiet leader is not a modern invention and Lao Tzu, who, in the classic Taoist text *Tao Te Ching*, was discussing the same characteristic around 500 BC:

The very highest is barely known by men,

Then comes that which they know and love,

Then that which is feared,

Then that which is despised.

He who does not trust enough will not be trusted.

When actions are performed

Without unnecessary speech,

People say "We did it!"

Here again, the highest level of leadership is virtually invisible.

Discussion

To some extent, the emphasis on the quiet leader is a reaction against the lauding of charismatic leaders in the press. In particular during the heady days of the dot-com boom of the 1990s, some very verbal leaders got much coverage. Meanwhile, the quiet leaders were getting on with the job.

Being quiet, of course, is not the secret of the universe, and leaders still need to see the way forwards. Their job can be harder when they are faced with people of a more external character.

For people accustomed to an extraverted charismatic style, a quiet style can be very confusing and they may downplay the person, which is usually a mistake. Successful quiet leaders often play the values card to persuade others, showing selfishness and lack of emotional control as being unworthy characteristics. Again there is a trap in this and leadership teams can fall into patterns of behavior where peace and harmony are prized over any form of challenge and conflict.

Servant Leadership

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Assumptions

The leader has responsibility for the followers.

Leaders have a responsibility towards society and those who are disadvantaged.

People who want to help others best do this by leading them.

Style

The servant leader serves others, rather than others serving the leader. Serving others thus comes by helping them to achieve and improve.

There are two criteria of servant leadership:

- The people served grow as individuals, becoming 'healthier, wiser, more autonomous and more likely themselves to become servants' (Greenleaf, 1977).
- The extent to which the leadership benefits those who are least advantaged in society (or at least does not disadvantage them).

Principles of servant leadership defined by the Alliance for Servant Leadership are:

- *Transformation* as a vehicle for personal and institutional growth.
- *Personal growth* as a route to better serve others.
- *Enabling environments* that empower and encourage service.
- *Service* as a fundamental goal.
- *Trusting relationships* as a basic platform for collaboration and service.
- *Creating commitment* as a way to collaborative activity.
- *Community building* as a way to create environments in which people can trust each other and work together.
- *Nurturing the spirit* as a way to provide joy and fulfilment in meaningful work.

Spears (2002) lists: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and building community.

An excellent example of a servant leader is Ernest Shackleton, the early 20th century explorer who, after his ship became frozen in the Antarctic life, brought every one of his 27 crew home alive, including an 800 mile journey in open boats across the winter Antarctic seas. It took two years, but Shackleton's sense of responsibility towards his men never wavered.

Discussion

Greenleaf says that true leadership "emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others." Servant leadership is a very moral position, putting the well-being of the followers before other goals.

It is easy to dismiss servant leadership as soft and easy, though this is not necessarily so, as individual followers may be expected to make sacrifices for the good of the whole, in the way of the servant leader.

The focus on the less privileged in society shows the servant leader as serving not just their followers but also the whole of society.

Servant leadership is a natural model for working in the public sector. It requires more careful interpretation in the private sector lest the needs of the shareholders and customers and the rigors of market competition are lost.

A challenge to servant leadership is in the assumption of the leader that the followers want to change. There is also the question of what 'better' is and who decides this.

Servant leadership aligns closely with religious morals and has been adopted by several Christian organizations.

Source Information:

Leadership Styles - http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/leadership_styles.htm