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LEADER VS MANAGER. INFLUENCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEAM DEVELOPMENT.

Case study

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Abstract

When exposed to the theoretic leadership concepts, it is rather rare that managers - either already acting or pursuing this role – don't identify themselves as leaders. A leader is a person who motivates , supports and listens. To be a leader means to mobilize human resources , to establish a direction emerged from a personal vision on the evolution of things, to have the power to transform this vision into reality. And yet, real leaders are far more rare than most managers are ready to admit. Both have their added value within an organization and in practice it's rather challenging to see things moving ahead without having both roles pulling together. So far, a leader's skills are necessary to deal with the ambiguities and uncertainties with which they are accustomed. Another aspect is the strategic positioning in case of conflict . This paper aims to identify the influences of a leader in team building.

1. Leader vs. Manager. An Introduction

What do managers do and what do leaders do? This is the starting question. What managers do and leaders don't? What are the common mistakes that managers are doing? During this study we will try to discover some answers.

Leadership and management must go hand in hand in a collaborative, constructive way, based upon the objective acknowledgement of each other's strengths and value adding areas. They are not the same thing but they are linked, and complementary. Both of them have a scope. The manager's job is to plan, organize to coordinate and solve the problems. The leader's job is to inspire and motivate, to determine the people to follow the way.

In his book "On Becoming a Leader," Warren Bennis composed a list of the differences:

- The manager administers; the leader innovates
- The manager is a copy; the leader is an original.
- The manager maintains; the leader develops.
- The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people.
- The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust.
- The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective.
- The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why.
- The manager has his or her eye always on the bottom line; the leader's eye is on the horizon.
- The manager imitates; the leader originates.
- The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it.
- The manager is the classic good soldier; the leader is his or her own person.
- The manager does things right; the leader does the right thing (Bennis, 1989).

"The task is to lead people. And the goal is to make productive the specific strengths and knowledge of every individual." (Drucker, 2006).

In recent times, in the context of an ever-accelerating business and socio-economic advance, it is becoming more and more difficult to deal as a manager with employees aiming to express and develop themselves as complex individuals, persons with competences and personalities that require individual guidance and motivations, other than simple financial remuneration. Depending on the specifics of the activity, the employees may need far more than just the money to be motivated. They want to be

inspired and they need answers and solutions in the same time. Some studies have also established there is no direct correlation between the financial remuneration and the motivation of the employees.

2. Methods and results

The participants in this study were students and persons with experience in the labour market. Sampling has been imbalanced with regard to gender (25% women and 75% men) with an average of 21 years of age.

Among the qualities that define leaders, qualities mentioned by respondents were: vision, persuasion, communication, trust, ethics and ability to motivate, promote and sustain. On the other hand, leadership is the leader's ability to lead a group of individuals beyond a borderline that is perceived by him latter as a limit of their capacity to perform.

Usually, the leader takes over any obstacles encountered on the way and agrees to share with the group the results that would result from this effort.

Positive influence levers of a leader as identified by the respondents were: vision, good communication, motivation, inspiration, respect, integrity, empathy, etc.

A project leader is often described as having a vision of the direction towards which the project is heading and the ability to present it. Visionaries are those who open the new horizons and make the roads accessible. Ideally, it would also take some managers to pave these roads for taking everyone there...

Visionary leaders are those that are able to transmit a message so strong and well received that it determines team members to assume an important role in the project. Good communication is seen hence as key attribute of leadership.

In a broader acceptance the leader is inspiring by taking part effectively to the work done, while the main managers' task is to plan. Subsequently, a must for any high performance organization is the close collaboration between the leader and the manager(s). Should we sketch some less obvious tasks of a manager, the following are worth mentioning:

- to set up concrete action programs to achieve the higher level goals of the organization;
- to set the priorities related to the allocation of resources;
- to design and enforce the standards, processes and procedures to support tactical implementation of the organizational strategy.

A manager must do everything possible to ensure that:

- Activities are completed within the deadlines;
- Budget constraints are met;
- The team is motivated and maintains focus on the assigned tasks;
- Process performance is continuously evaluated;
- Quality standards are respected;
- The final results match the agreed specifications.

The manager must continually monitor and evaluate the activities' results in order to achieve alignment with the targeted objectives.

Across a manager's profile, specific skills have been identified consistently in the respondents' answers:

- Organizational skills, method;
- Competence in relevant technical areas, knowledge and experience in that field, the ability to provide viable solutions;
- Social and communication skills, team management;
- Ability to motivate staff;
- Conflict management, problem solver;
- Self-confidence, perseverance, determination, creativity;
- Adaptability; taking responsibility for the entire activity (ex. the manager is responsible for human resources, not the head of human resources department)

Another quality has been considered as essential by some respondents, and that is – charisma, identified as a person's ability to inspire and enhance the involvement of other persons in performing certain actions. We can appreciate this point as a common success trait for both managers as leaders. While a manager with charisma is likely to be more effective in fulfilling his or her duties and reaching the targets, charisma is an emanation specific to successful inspirational leaders. It is the primary explanation of the manner these leaders attract followers, embarking large number of people towards generally challenging, or distant, strategic goals.

With these considerations in mind, it is important to emphasize the distinction between leadership and authority. It is a relatively common mistake to confuse leadership with authority. The authority that defines the leadership does not necessarily mean formal power. An authoritative person is a person who is formally granted some powers for a particular purpose. Usually, it is such expected that the person who is formally empowered gets some results, achieves specific objectives throughout

making use of his or her formal assignment. A leader is not depending on formal empowerment.

In an organization it is expected that a person holding a particular function to provide solutions to problems that arise within the organization.

"Adaptive Leadership does not mean exceeding expectations" of the authorizers "but rather to challenging some of those expectations, by finding a way to push back without completely disappointing them" (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Blending leadership and authority is a natural habit, however a clear distinction has to be made between exerting leadership and exerting authority. Three responsibilities arise, namely: setting direction, providing protection and ensuring order. "Because it implies disrupting the balance and penetration into uncharted territory, addressing the adaptive challenges is an inherently risky activity, both for the organization and the individual." Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky, 2009 „*The practice of Adaptive Leadership – Tools and Tactics for Changing Organization and World*”

Within our research we were mentioning aspects related to teamwork, team cohesion and the pivotal role of the leader in setting up the team. We can consider the team as a well coagulated structure consisting in several members that work together to reach a common goal. Competence check is important to determine whether a person will manage to fulfill its duties within a team. It is vital to build a linkage, a group belonging perception within the team. Subsequently, a team represents success and performance as long as it is adequately organized and led by the right leader, the final result being obtained following the efforts of all the team members. The leader presence is required to set an example to be followed by all.

Success is the top achievement for a performance team, and the joy and satisfaction of a team success are boosted when achieved among trusted colleagues. A healthy competition environment based upon mutual respect must be promoted within the team. Task achievement efficiency is improved when the team is well structured and organized.

Being a member of a team means in the first place to have the feeling of belonging to that specific group. Although a team achievement is the result of the efforts of all its members, the leader has a major contribution, since he must manage, guide and control all the resources committed by the individual team members.

Most participants in the study noted that people working within teams benefit from wider

knowledge and experience. Although each team member has its own role, the performance team acts as a homogeneous structure. Trust, mutual support and joint decision making are all characteristics of a performance team.

“The key feature of a team is that all members work towards the achievement of common goals” (Lefter, 1999).

3. Considerations and conclusions

We are facing more and more tangible examples of what is called "successful management", but also of its opposite: the "mismanagement". These are largely influenced, if not determined, by the inspirational vision of a leader and the ability of a manager to bring it to reality. Cooperation between these two functions is pivotal for achieving success. Proper assignment to these key positions is likely to set the proper direction, embark and motivate the proper resources in reaching the objectives.

We can experience situations where a person is at once an excellent manager and a catastrophic leader. It is equally possible that a good leader may fail as a manager. Very few, only those particularly gifted, can excel in both situations. Methods like coaching and adaptive leadership are increasingly used. During a period when it is becoming increasingly difficult to drive the success of an organization, management itself is continuously adapting and evolving.

We live in a world where diversity has grown exponentially and the pace of change is continuously accelerating; hence the demands placed on organizations but also on individuals are increasing. Leaders and managers play increasing roles in the success of their organizations, facing an ever stronger competition.

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