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Topic: Leadership

SubTopic: Leadership – Meaning, Concepts and Myths about Leadership, Components of Leadership- Leader, Followers and situation. Assessing Leadership & Measuring Its effects

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Leadership

Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization.

Leadership involves making sound -- and sometimes difficult -- decisions, creating and articulating a clear vision, establishing achievable goals and providing followers with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve those goals.

Leaders are found and required in most aspects of society, from business to politics to region to community-based organizations.

An effective leader possess the following characteristics: self-confidence, strong communication and management skills, creative and innovative thinking, perseverance in the face of failure, willingness to take risks, openness to change, and levelheadedness and reactivity in times of crisis.

In other words, great leaders know how to both inspire people and get followers to complete the tasks that achieve the leader's goal.

Leaders and their leadership skills play an important role in the growth of any organization. Leadership refers to the process of influencing the behaviour of people in a manner that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group objectives.

A leader should have the ability to maintain good interpersonal relations with the followers or subordinates and motivate them to help in achieving the organizational objectives.

Features of Leadership

- *Influence the behaviour of others*: Leadership is an ability of an individual to influence the behaviour of other employees in the organization to achieve a common purpose or goal so that they are willingly co-operating with each other for the fulfillment of the same.
- *Inter-personal process*: It is an interpersonal process between the leader and the followers. The relationship between the leader and the followers decides how efficiently and effectively the targets of the organization would be met.

- *Attainment of common organizational goals:* The purpose of leadership is to guide the people in an organization to work towards the attainment of common organizational goals. The leader brings the people and their efforts together to achieve common goals.
- *Continuous process:* Leadership is a continuous process. A leader has to guide his employees every time and also monitor them in order to make sure that their efforts are going in the same direction and that they are not deviating from their goals.
- *Group process:* It is a group process that involves two or more people together interacting with each other. A leader cannot lead without the followers.
- *Dependent on the situation:* It is situation bound as it all depends upon tackling the situations present. Thus, there is no single best style of leadership.

MYTHS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

The truth about leadership and management can be very different from many people's beliefs. There are many myths and beliefs of the best way to handle every situation but leadership is very situational. Successful tactics can be very different for different supervisors and different situations. There is no script or set way of doing things. Every leader has to find the way that works for them.

1: LEADERS DON'T HAVE TO WORK HARD BECAUSE THEY WORK SMART.

Although good leaders do try to find ways to work smarter, they are also hard workers. Just because you are put in a position of power it doesn't mean the work ends. Working hard and smart is the best way to not only get the most out of yourself but also get the most out of your employees. If you start to slack off because you made it to a position of power your employees will likely follow. As a leader, you set the example by working hard and smart.

Apple's CEO Tim Cook is an example of a great leader that is also a hard worker. He begins sending and responding to emails at 4:30 a.m. He is reported to typically be the first one in the office in the morning and the last one to leave the office in the afternoon.

2: LEADERS ARE BORN NOT MADE.

Leadership is a trait caused by both nature and nurture. It is true that some people have more natural abilities to lead but it is a skill that can be learned and built upon, just like any skill. There are so many ways to develop leadership skills in yourself. No matter where your skills are now, you can always improve them with a little training, mentorship, and practice.

3: A LEADER MUST NEVER SHOW WEAKNESS.

Leaders are people too and that means having moments and areas of weakness. It's ok for a leader to show weakness from time to time. As leaders, we must acknowledge our weaknesses and try to develop ourselves in those areas. Another thing we can do is find someone strong in the areas that we are weak. We can learn from and lean on or utilize this person to balance us out

in our areas of weakness. We must realize that we are stronger with the help of others. We are not alone in our journey of leadership.

4: LEADERS HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.

As leaders, there are going to be many situations where we don't have the answers. It's ok to not always have the answer. Nobody can have all the answers. As leaders, it's our job to find the answers or gather as much data as time will allow and make a decision. Sometimes we will make the wrong call but that is part of being a leader. What you don't want to do is pretend or think you must know everything. This can lead to many poor decisions that may have been avoided by asking someone else for assistance.

5: EXTROVERTS MAKE BETTER LEADERS.

There is a common misconception that all extroverts are outgoing and talkative, and all introverts are shy and like to be alone. Extrovert and introvert have more to do with how people process problems and ideas. Extroverts process problems and ideas by talking them out with others. While introverts tend to process problems and ideas in their head. Extroverts are believed to be good at building connections with others, but introverts can be just as good at building connections.

Believe it or not, Mark Zuckerberg, the founder, and CEO of Facebook is an introvert. Even though he runs the largest social networking company in the world, he can be a very shy person. Many times, he prefers to be alone or with close friends. He did not let his introverted thinking style hold him back from making Facebook a multibillion-dollar business.

6: ALL MANAGERS ARE LEADERS

As many of you may have experienced, not all managers are good leaders. Some managers are even good managers but not good leaders. On the flip side, not all leaders are managers. Many times, companies promote people based on their abilities to do the job on the floor and not their ability to lead. Sometimes it works out and people become good leaders, but other times it doesn't work out and teams are stuck with poor leaders. Therefore, some of the best companies develop their employees to be leaders by training them in areas of leadership before assuming the role.

The military is an organization that does a very good job of training their employees to be leaders from the start. There is a large focus on not only good followership but also good leadership. They offer many training avenues to train their employees like classes, seminars, and hands-on training. Even low ranking individuals are put in charge of small teams to help develop their abilities to lead.

Components of Leadership

Leader

You must have an honest understanding of who you are, what you know, and what you can do. Also, note that it is the followers, not the leader or someone else who determines if the leader is successful. If they do not trust or lack confidence in their leader, then they will be uninspired. To be successful you have to convince your followers, not yourself or your superiors, that you are worthy of being followed.

Followers

Different people require different styles of leadership. For example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee does. A person who lacks motivation requires a different approach than one with a high degree of motivation. You must know your people! The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. You must come to know your employees' *be*, *know*, and *do* attributes.

communication

You lead through two-way communication. Much of it is nonverbal. For instance, when you “set the example,” that communicates to your people that you would not ask them to perform anything that you would not be willing to do. What and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between you and your followers.

situations

All situations are different. What you do in one situation will not always work in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront an employee for inappropriate behavior, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the results may prove ineffective.

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