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Chapter 14

Leadership and Change Management

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Introduction

Leadership – yes, it differs from management, but the important fact about leadership is that it is integral to, and essential for, effective management. In his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, author Warren Bennis writes, "Managers do things right - leaders do the right things."¹ That sounds like a cliché, doesn't it? But think about it. You are the news director at Channel 13 and the manager in you demands the best possible six o'clock news every night of the week. Do it right - be a good manager. But the leader in you needs to be asking, "How can we improve the quality of our news effort? How can we combat Channel 6's effort to overtake us in the next ratings book?" That same news director serves as both an operational manager by trying to ensure a successful nightly news broadcast but also a leader in wanting to advance high-quality news and the use of new on-line digital

news platforms for the audience. In sum, effective management combines elements of both leadership and management.

Leadership Defined

Leadership is a process that involves influence and the art of directing people within an organization to achieve a clearly defined set of goals and outcomes. Successful leaders know what they want to accomplish in terms of organizational outcomes. As Peter Northouse, writes:

Leadership involves influence; it is concerned with how the leader affects followers. Influence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without influence, leadership does not exist... Leadership includes attention to goals. This means that leadership has to do with directing a group of individuals toward accomplishing some task or end.²

One of the central arguments in this chapter is that leadership is not a stand alone act, but rather an ongoing relationship between those who purport to lead and those who follow. One of the early discussions involving the principles of leadership comes from James MacGregor Burns in his 1978 seminal text, *Leadership*. Burns draws a distinction between what he calls *transactional* leadership versus *transformational* leadership. According to Burns:

[Transactional leadership] occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things... Contrast this with [transformational leadership]. Such leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.³

Authors Note: In 2018, Dr. Rod Rightmire passed away. He was my mentor during my Ph.D. graduate school days at Ohio University as well as a friend and colleague. A lot of what I've learned over the years about leadership came from Rod. This chapter combines both old school knowledge as well as modern day examples. It is dedicated to Rod who was the consummate educator.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership refers to the various kinds of exchange that occur between leaders and followers. Often the exchange is tied to a system of rewards and punishments. As an example, a politician engages in transactional leadership when he/she promises voters an increase in jobs or improvements in the local school in exchange for being elected. Similarly, managers who offer promotions to employees who surpass their monthly sales goals are exhibiting a kind of transactional leadership.

How does transactional leadership, for example, apply in the real world of broadcast television sales? Let's consider a sales department at a local TV station affiliate where a conscientious sales manager is trying to create an environment where the sales force will be more productive. In the first instance, the sales manager's approach was to motivate his team with the tried and true contest - sales person of the month or year. You get the picture. But consider the implications. There is undoubtedly, among the group, one sales person who can win the contest by simply renewing some of his/her existing major accounts. In contrast, is the new kid-on-the block with an Internet list serve or Linked-In account, that is faced with the prospect of doing a lot of cold calling or engaging in a large email blast. Motivated or de-motivated? One winner and a whole lot of losers... Will such an approach result in increased sales for that broadcast station sales department? Does such an approach demonstrate good leadership on behalf of the sales manager?

Let's contrast this with a different kind of leadership approach. In the second instance, the sales manager reached out to her staff in a way in which everyone felt they had a chance to win, and that would positively affect the entire sales department. The second sales manager found a very simple but effective solution; not one contest winner,

but several. She gave an award for most new business for the likes of the new kid-on-the block; another for the largest increase over last month; one for best new sales person and of course, one for most business. This is transactional leadership in its most essential form, but done in a way that promoted a team sense and effectiveness for the whole department.

Another important consideration in transactional leadership is the perceived value of that which is being exchanged. A different sales manager was concerned that his contest had garnered very little enthusiasm from his staff. When asked about the prize, he indicated that it was an opportunity to select merchandise from an on-line catalog via a prepaid gift card. After all, he does a lot of shopping for clothes and sporting goods from his preferred Nordstrom and LL Bean EC shopping site. It's not hard to imagine the blank expression on everyone's face. The sales manager cannot understand why his staff were not very enthusiastic about a gift card and the opportunity to pick something from an on-line catalogue. Finally, a suggestion was made that he ask his sales team what they would like to have as a form of recognition. The answer proved surprisingly very simple. They wanted a glass plaque with an inscription. And they wanted to use the remaining money to cover a light evening on the town. They wanted to go dancing. Most of the sales force were young and they wanted to have fun. In transactional leadership, it becomes important that the leader and one's team agree on the value of the exchange.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership raises the dynamics of organizational performance to a whole new level. A transformational leader can be described as someone who motivates a group of people to accomplish something with a clear sense of vision and purpose.

History is filled with examples of transformational leaders, including, Mohandas Gandhi,

Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela to name only a few. Their followers willingly subjected themselves to police brutality, went to jail and in some cases, gave up their lives because they believed in a cause greater than themselves. At the same time, transformational leadership is not strictly the province of social activists, politicians and artists. As Marc Benioff, CEO for Sales Force writes, “Business is the greatest platform for change.”⁴ From the Apple iPhone to Facebook and social media, the technology and cultural impact of business is enormous.

Product Champion and Charismatic Leadership

Writer Malcolm Gladwell contends that every great innovation needs a product champion and chief spokesperson. Gladwell describes such individuals as mavens, salesmen, and connectors.⁵ They become the champion for a new product concept. Part of that effort involves making the right connections with various designers, marketers and outside investors who will help advance the product launch. In recent years, a lot of attention has been given to the subject of charismatic leadership. Researcher Robert House examined the question of charismatic leadership by looking at different personality features that make up the charismatic leader.⁶ According to House, the charismatic leader is someone who is confident, tends to be highly persuasive and has a strong desire to champion the success of a product launch.⁷ As an example, when Steve Jobs introduced the iPhone at the 2007 Macworld exposition, he wanted to engage the audience in the iPhone’s stickiness factor. Similarly, Sony’s Norio Ohga in 1982 had to elicit support for the compact disk (CD) that was considered a highly disruptive technology for its time given the entrenched interests

of the music industry. In both cases, Jobs and Ohga were the champions for their respective product introductions.⁸

The challenge for the charismatic leader is not to outshine the teaching itself. Sometimes, the charismatic leader calls too much attention to himself/herself at the expense of guiding and managing the organization.⁹ As Jim Collins points out, great leaders (or what he calls Level 5 leaders) embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will. “They are ambitious to be sure, but ambitious first and foremost for the company and not themselves.”¹⁰ Similarly, Joseph Badaracco makes the point that the most effective leaders are rarely public heroes. These men and women are seldom high-profile champions of causes. Rather, they lead their respective organizations, “patiently, carefully and incrementally.”¹¹ Charisma alone, is no substitute for effective leadership.

Putting Leadership into Practice

We have tried to define leadership. But what does it take to put leadership into practice? Are there certain identifiable characteristics that make some leaders truly great in comparison to their peers? Over the years, numerous management writers, political figures and athletes have attempted to answer this question by offering their own perspective on the “right stuff” of leadership. In this next section, we consider five important characteristics that help to explain what it takes to be an effective leader. They include:

1. Vision
2. Effective Communication
3. Alignment
4. Trust and Integrity
5. A Willingness to Take Risks

Vision

The word vision suggests something grand or mystical. But for most organizations, vision is simply a clear plan (or strategy) that is designed to achieve a successful outcome. In his book, *Leading Change*, author John Kotter, suggests that a leader's strategic vision should convey a picture of what the future will look like as well as appealing to the long-term interests of organizational members, customers and others who have a stake in the enterprise.¹² The leader may be asked to take an under performing company and turn it around or initiate an altogether new strategy with the goal of making the organization progressively better. The situations and tasks may vary. What is most important, however, is that the transformative leader instills a sense of mission to the task at hand and obtains commitment to achieve new or untried goals. An effective leader must have vision; that is, the willingness to think conceptually and articulate a view of the future. Let's consider a few examples both past and present.

David Sarnoff and RCA.

A good example of vision from the past was David Sarnoff at RCA. His idea of the "radio music box" led to the first mass production of radios. As a result, he was promoted to General Manager of RCA and a few years later to President of the company at the age of 39. His efforts also led to the formation of the NBC radio network in 1926. The same NBC would later become the NBC television network in 1948. David Sarnoff would also be instrumental in promoting the adoption of electronic television as well as advancing industry support for NBC's color standard.

When *Wisdom* magazine published a special edition entitled, "The Universe of David Sarnoff," it printed congratulatory letters from four Presidents of the United States,

including: Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. President Roosevelt said, in part, "I congratulate David Sarnoff personally for his splendid leadership. His organization throughout the years has created new wonders and brought into being new services in all phases of radio activity for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere."¹³

Bill Gates and Microsoft Corporation

William (Bill) H. Gates is chairman and co-founder of Microsoft Corporation, the worldwide leader in computer desktop software and solutions. Microsoft employs more than 71,000 people in 103 countries and regions. In 1973, Gates entered Harvard University as a freshman, where he lived down the hall from Steve Ballmer; Microsoft's one-time chief executive officer. While at Harvard, Gates developed a version of the programming language BASIC for the first microcomputer – the MITS Altair. In his junior year, Gates left Harvard to devote his time to Microsoft, a company he had begun in 1975 with his childhood friend Paul Allen.

From the beginning, Gates understood the importance of personal computing and what it could mean for business and residential users.¹⁴ Further, Gates and his team from Microsoft recognized that the future of personal computing would lie in software development and not hardware; a mistake that would prove costly to companies like IBM and Hewlett Packard. Gates' foresight and his vision for personal computing have been central to the success of Microsoft. What is sometimes forgotten is the important role that Microsoft (and specifically Gates) has played in helping to advance personal computing. Microsoft set the defacto standards in business computing software. By shifting the value proposition in computing to software, Microsoft commoditized the manufacture of hardware

equipment, thus making personal computing accessible to the general public.²⁵ Microsoft, more than any company, took the mystery out of computing by transforming an industry that was once the purview of the guys in the white coats. Unlike Apple, Microsoft did not create a proprietary standard, thereby allowing all manufacturers to build computers using Microsoft software. Microsoft put a PC on everyone's desk. Microsoft built a strong, reliable operating system and set of software products that enabled millions of users worldwide to engage in computing at a cost point that greatly advanced the field of personal computing.

Robert Iger and the Walt Disney Company

A third example can be seen with Walt Disney Company CEO, Robert Iger. When Iger was named CEO of the Walt Disney Company in 2004 he was faced with the challenge of replacing a once highly successful CEO (Michael Eisner) who had in recent years come under a lot of fire for the loss of momentum within the company; specifically, poor program performance at ABC, decreased attendance at the company's theme parks, a strained relationship with Apple's CEO Steve Jobs involving Disney's partnership with Pixar entertainment and shareholder revolt being led by Walt Disney's nephew Roy Disney over how the company was being led. In addition, there were multiple questions by the company's Board of Directors whether Iger was the right man for the job. At the outset of his tenure, Iger set into motion three major strategic initiatives.¹⁵ They included:

- 1) To improve and expand the company's program and branded content.

This can be seen with the \$7.4 billion purchase of Pixar entertainment in 2006 while greatly expanding ESPN into becoming the world's leading cable television program service.

In addition, Disney under Iger's direction acquired Marvel Entertainment (2009), Lucasfilm *Star Wars*, (2012) and 21st Century Fox (2019). Taken together, these various acquisitions

have greatly added to the company's branded film entertainment as well as creating internal synergies with Disney's theme-park business.

2) The need to embrace changing technology; specifically, the future of OTT. In 2019, Disney launched its Disney+ OTT service. This includes television and film entertainment based on Disney animation, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars and National Geographic. 3) The need to expand internationally underscored by the launch of Disney Shanghai in China in 2016 which is 11 times the size of Disneyland at a cost of \$6 billion.

Effective Communication

Once the vision has had a chance to resonate, it must be communicated forcefully and effectively. Such communication happens at all levels of the organization. As John Kotter, writes:

...the real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or activity have a common understanding of its goals and direction. That shared sense of a desirable future can help motivate and coordinate the kinds of actions that create transformations.¹⁶

Effective communication skills requires the ability to articulate the vision and organizational strategy in a meaningful way and to mobilize one's staff to focus on a set of goals and outcomes. Simply laying out the organizational strategy via an email is not enough. According to John Gardner, the leader must also be an educator. "Every great leader is clearly teaching -- and every great teacher is leading."¹⁷

As Disney's Robert Iger points out,

A company's culture is shaped by a lot of things, but this is one of the most important -- you have to convey your priorities clearly and repeatedly... A CEO must provide the company and its senior team with a road map... This is where we want to be. This is how we're going to get there.¹⁸

Alignment

The success of any major project or undertaking requires a high degree of buy-in from those members of the organization who will be responsible for implementing the proposed strategy. We call this alignment. In its simplest form, alignment means teamwork; specifically, a willingness to pull together for the good of the project or organization. Alignment means getting the entire organization moving forward in the same direction. The leader plays an important role by articulating a clear vision, building strong teams and by creating a productive and supportive work environment. To that end, developing alignment requires good communication and consensus building skills. According to Ed Whitacre, former Chair and CEO of AT&T:

Business, for me, has always been about the people. It goes back to a basic feeling I have that 99.99 percent of people want to feel successful and that they're making a contribution to something that has meaning to them. . . . Employees work hard to make good things happen in business; they will if you show respect and treat them right, at least – this has been my experience over the years.¹⁹

A Word About Optimism and Motivation

Closely tied to the principle of alignment, is the issue of motivation. A successful leader sets the tone for the organization and plays an important role in inspiring others to do their best work. While each work situation is different, an effective leader needs to create the kind of atmosphere where people feel appreciated, confident and a strong sense of accomplishment. Let's consider some of the ways in which leaders motivate others by setting the right tone.

1. Recognizing good work when it is performed. This can include public recognition in the form of a plaque or public display. Or it can include dinner for two at a favorite restaurant or a similar-type reward. It can also be as simple as a handshake or compliment for a job well done.

2. Making the work environment a satisfying place to come to work. Many of today's companies provide their employees with an exercise facility, food and coffee dispensaries, day care or greater flex time in determining one's schedule.
3. Promotion and advancement. A good leader recognizes the value of promoting good employees by giving them the opportunity to take on greater responsibility. Sometimes, this is accompanied by a pay raise and/or change in title.
- 4) Knowing how to engage your professional team and staff when faced with difficult choices and things are not going well

According to Disney's Robert Iger,

Even in the face of difficulty choices and less than ideal outcomes, an optimistic leader does not yield to pessimism. Simply put, people are not motivated or energized by pessimists....²⁰ The people you lead need to feel confident that in your ability to focus on what matters, and not to operate from a place of defensiveness and self-preservation... The tone you set as a leader has an enormous effect on the people around you.²¹

Trust and Integrity

If the leader cannot be trusted, the ability to lead is compromised. Is there anything more important than trust? An instructor has proof that a student has cheated on an exam; a person finds out that a spouse is having an affair; a manager discovers that an employee has falsified accounting records. In each instance there will be consequences. The student may fail; the marriage may end in divorce; the company may become the target of a government investigation. A violation of trust will have a profound and lasting effect. Nothing is more important to a company than its reputation in the marketplace.

Effective leadership starts by creating a climate of trust. The leader should lead by example and create a positive and safe work environment. What are some of the issues that often undermine trust? Let's explore three: 1) consistency, 2) maintaining a confidence and 3) gossip.

Consistency is the ability to convey the same message (good or bad) to those who would seek information from you. A clear consistent style goes along way in generating trust. Consistency also has to do with making sure that people really hear what you're saying. To that end, say what you mean, mean what you say. Second, learn to maintain a confidence once its given. All it takes is for one person to believe that the confidence that he/she shared with you has been broken. After that, your team or set of colleagues will avoid telling you anything that is important or personal. And third, avoid gossiping about someone who is not present. This is sometimes difficult since a person may come to you in confidence for the express purpose of talking about someone else in the organization. Such conversations are unavoidable. The late Clark Pollock, former President of Nationwide Communications once said: "We come into the world, and we leave the world, with only two things of importance – our word and our good name."

A Willingness to Take Risks

Individuals manage risk every day of their lives. We purchase car insurance to minimize the financial risk of having an accident. We accept a new job, knowing that there is a certain amount of risk in making a change. As a mid-level manager, we assume a level of risk whenever we hire a new person. The business leader's risk, however, is quite different. The business leader assumes a high degree of professional risk when it comes to initiating a major change in business strategy.

Experimentation lies at the heart of every company's ability to innovate. Most companies like to talk a good game about being innovative. But in practical terms, many such companies are not comfortable with change. They are risk averse and want to avoid failure at all costs. Companies, like people, can become easily satisfied with organizational

routines that stand in the way of being innovative. Current businesses are understood and well established. A variety of commitments have been made in terms of people, manufacturing and marketing, production schedules, and contracts going forward. Such commitments to on-going business activities have an established trajectory. There is a clear pattern of success that translates into customer clients, sales volume, and public (and business) awareness for the work that has been accomplished to date. Instead of blue ocean thinking, managers become preoccupied with fine-tuning and making slight adjustments to an existing product line rather than preparing for the future.²²

The smart, innovative company knows how to experiment. David Kelley, founder of IDEO, believes that it is important to rethink the role of failure in the design process. When a novel idea fails in an experiment, the failure can expose important knowledge gaps. But such efforts can also reveal unique ways of looking at the problem.²³ This, in turn can refocus the group's efforts in more promising areas. Smart, innovative companies give such individuals the freedom and creative space to test out new ideas and working concepts. A culture of innovation means taking risks and with it -- the very real possibility of product failure. It's part of the DNA of what it means to be to be innovative.

Followership

The leader must have someone to lead. Or, as John Gardner says, the leader needs constituents.²⁴ Followership deals with effective upward management. The manager at every level of an organization must develop procedures, behaviors and initiatives, which result in effective upward management. According to Warren Bennis, "The longer

I study effective leaders, the more I am persuaded of the underappreciated importance of effective followers."²⁵ Simply put, a leader is only as good as the group's commitment, confidence and belief in what he/she is trying to accomplish.

Anyone who has ever worked on a television news set, knows that there's more to directing than simply framing the next shot or having the video news insert ready-to-roll at a precise moment. If the director can get his/her production crew to buy into the concept of *program*, the entire production staff will be looking for ways to make the newscast better. The camera operator will be looking for a shot the director hasn't considered; the technical director will suggest a new visual effect. The program will be qualitatively better and the audience and the advertiser will respond accordingly. What is the difference? The difference in quality is the result of a director (or leader) who cares enough to create an environment in which the production staff wants to achieve the best possible outcome. In the end, the director creates a strong sense of teamwork, where everyone feels a part of something greater than themselves.

How followers (or members of the team) respond is critical not only to the welfare of the organization (or project mission) but to their personal and professional development as future leaders. The experience gained at one level of management provides the foundation in preparing that person for the next level of management responsibility within the organization. Indeed, it is impossible to be a leader without first learning how to be a good colleague. So what does it take to be an effective colleague? Let's consider four important attributes. They include the ability to:

1. Take Responsibility
2. Communicate Openly

3. Translate Vision into Action

4. Balance Priorities and Get the Job Done

Take Responsibility

Effective followership requires the manager and his/her support team to take responsibility for an assignment (or problem) when it is given to them. The effective leader owns the problem and does not look to deflect it to someone else. As former President Harry Truman once said, “the buck stops here.” Taking responsibility is the sign of a true professional. This is where you establish your credibility whether as a skilled athlete leading a sports team in a comeback situation in the final two minutes of a game or as a telecommunications professional who has to lead a technical team into action in order to offset a major network power failure. Managing in a high-tech environment means having the ability to say cool under pressure. The combination of right technical skill coupled with the ability to develop fast and efficient solutions to an emerging problem – soon makes you the go-to-person whenever such situations arise.

Communicate Openly

An effective manager keeps the senior administration fully informed with reliable information. At the same time, the same manager has the responsibility to keep his/her own department or professional staff equally informed. As any experienced manager can tell you, there are few secrets in any organization; particularly in a media and telecommunications environment. The problem is that a lack of reliable information often breeds uncertainty, insecurity and rumors. The rumor mill can be a serious detriment to the successful operations of a team.

We recall one instance of an advertising agency staff that knew they were not going to receive end-of-the year bonuses because rumor had it that the agency was in financial trouble. There was even some talk among the staff that the agency might have to close. When management realized the magnitude of the problem, they called a meeting to indicate that there would indeed be no bonuses that year - but that the company was not at risk of closing. While the information was not good news, the facts were not as bad as the rumors suggested. The takeaway is that most professional teams or staff members are remarkably adept at dealing with problems, even bad news. Open communication generates trust and an attitude of moving forward.

Translating Vision into Action

The mid-level manager is often the person responsible for translating the senior administration's vision into action. As mentioned in Chapter 10., strategies sometimes fail because they aren't executed well.²⁶ Strategy implementation is the process by which strategies are effectively put into practice. One of the difficult challenges is that everyone agrees to the plan, but no one is responsible for results. This is where effective followership comes into place. It is the project or mid-level manager who must execute on the details. He/she is ultimately responsible for making sure that the job gets done.

Translating vision into action involves five things.

- Communicating the goals and objectives of senior management
- Assembling the project team in order to execute on a proposed strategy
- Establishing the proper budget where appropriate
- Setting up the time frame for implementation

- Working through the operational support issues necessary in order to get the job done (i.e., scheduling issues, technical and equipment support etc.)

Balance Priorities and Getting the Job Done

Planning is about staying organized and balancing priorities while at the same time making sure that the job gets done. As with most organizations, the mid-level manager is regularly working on a number of projects at the same time. At issue, is the fact that he/she must balance specialized project tasks against the day-to-day assignments of writing reports, doing personnel evaluations, meeting with vendors etc. Add to the mixture the occasional brush fire such as a major equipment failure, an unexpected call from the news media and/or a senior manager wanting a piece of information in two hours time; this then becomes the basis for a challenging day at the office. Balancing priorities is just that; the ability to meet the demands of senior management while being responsible for supervising a departmental staff. The manager must routinely try and navigate two sets of employees whose issues are quite different. At the end of the day, that same person is responsible for making sure that the job gets done.

The Challenges of Being a Leader

Managers are routinely faced with organizational challenges that tests their leadership skills on a day-to-day basis. The issues can range in size and complexity from employees missing a project deadline to highly destructive organizational conflict. Each situation is unique and requires good managerial insight. Let's consider some of the routine work challenges of an employee that can sometimes test a manager's leadership skills.

They include:

- Destructive Conflict
- Not Getting the Job Done
- Not Taking Responsibility
- Putting the Manager in a Corner

Destructive Conflict

Conflict and differences of opinion are a natural part of any organizational setting and it should not be assumed that they are necessarily bad. In fact, just the opposite may be true. A spirited discussion can provide fresh and creative solutions to an otherwise difficult problem. The general manager who assembles a group of ‘yes persons’ for department heads is on the fast track toward mediocrity. The key to such discussion is that it be constructive. That said, if one or more members of a project team cannot get along; it creates a tension that becomes slowly corrosive toward the well-being of the entire organization. Over time, team members avoid wanting to attend departmental meetings. Organizational conflict can occur for a variety of reasons that pertains to a fellow employee’s work style. The person may be loud and obnoxious. The person regularly shows up late to meetings. The person doesn’t carry their full weight in a project assignment. Sometimes organizational conflict is more subtle due to a person’s religious beliefs, cultural attitudes or sexual orientation. In the end, no organization can tolerate destructive conflict. The manager himself/herself has to navigate these differences and find common meeting points.

Not Getting the Job Done

All too often, followers simply fail to get the job done. Author Hyrum Smith suggests that when people use the phrase, "I've been too busy," what they are really saying is that I have a different set of priorities.²⁷ The follower has to be aware of the managers' set of priorities. To do otherwise, undermines organizational performance in direct and indirect ways. At issue, is the fact that when a job goes unfinished; someone else has to step in and finish the assignment. If no one else is available, the manager may have to put aside what he/she is doing to complete the task. In the final analysis, it is the manager who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that a major project or assignment gets done. Are there times when a colleague cannot realistically finish the said project or task assignment? Yes! However, building a strong track record of proven performance goes a long way in reassuring the manager that the occasional missed deadline is an exception and not the rule.

Not Taking Responsibility

Personal responsibility in the workplace means taking responsibility for one's actions, words, and performance at work. As can sometimes happens, employees who are part of team will fail to take responsibility for their actions. The reasons can vary from simple time wasting behaviors to a lack of adequate training and preparation in order to do a skilled job. Sometimes the issue is that the employee can find himself/herself overwhelmed by the scale of a problem or a situation. In order to compensate, the employee might engage in a number of self-defeating behaviors such as:

- Blaming others for mistakes and failures
- Missing deadlines
- Avoiding challenging tasks and projects; not taking risks
- Regularly complaining about unfair treatment by team leaders and team members and engaging in self-pity

Whatever the reason, if the individual fails to take responsibility, it has a direct consequence on the person's job performance as well as the group as a whole. It then becomes the responsibility of the manager to address the problem with the said employee. The starting point is to have an honest and direct conversation. The manager needs to demonstrate through clear examples of how failing to take responsibility affects the successful performance of the project team or group. In the best case scenario, the situation becomes a teachable moment; whereby, the conversation (or set of conversations) leads to professional development and improved performance. Sometimes, however, the manager might choose to reassign the person to a different task and responsibility. And sometimes, the manager might have to take the employee into disciplinary action.

Putting the Manager in a Corner

Good managers do not allow themselves to be put in a corner. What this means is having an employee say something like, "Either you do this or I quit" or similar ultimatums.

Being an effective colleague recognizes the value of providing one's boss with viable options, not ultimatums. Delivering an ultimatum to one's boss is rarely a positive or productive way for an employee to deal with a problem. The need to engage in an ultimatum is usually an indication of a mismatch between two people. The reason for the poor fit could be either the manager or the employee. The result, however, is that an

ultimatum will most typically result in the employee's resignation. Providing options is more constructive than delivering ultimatums. The advice to the person who is inclined to give an ultimatum is *be careful*. Just be prepared to accept the most serious consequences for your actions.

Discussion

Managing in a Time of Change

In his book, *Good-to-Great*, author Jim Collins explores the question what makes good companies great? Are there certain identifiable characteristics and business processes that enable companies to sustain greatness over time? According to Collins, great leaders are not necessarily high-profile individuals with big personalities. He is quick to point out that leadership skill is not about charisma. Celebrity leaders are too often more concerned with their own reputation than they are for establishing and securing the company's future success. Instead, great leaders (or Level 5 leaders) are often times self-effacing, displaying a curious blend of personal humility with a strong, professional will to get things done.

Collins argues that effective organizational leadership begins by developing a culture of discipline. Successful outcomes depend on building a culture of highly disciplined people who are both knowledgeable and steady in their approach to product development and innovation. A culture of discipline evokes a kind of paradox. On the one hand, working professionals have to adhere to a consistent, structured environment. On the other, it gives people tremendous opportunity and freedom to create within the parameters of that system.²⁸ Therein lies the possibility for sustained growth as well as the potential to advance innovative change.

Today's media and telecommunications environment is characterized by change. For a young working professional just starting out, he/she can expect to change jobs seven or eight times throughout their career. The challenge for modern business leadership is how to work with change; that is, to make it a point of organizational strength rather than something to be avoided. Throughout this book, we've discussed the kinds of external and internal pressures that can affect an organization, including changes in the competitive marketplace, changes in technology, changes in global competition and changes in the organization's management structure to name only a few. In short, there is no such thing as a steady, predictable work environment. In order to compete in the new world of work, the successful manager must be able to exhibit strong leadership skills while staying flexible in the face of corporate turbulence and international business pressures. Put another way, successful managers must be fluent in change; ready and able to adapt to a variety of changing circumstances. Change is a natural process and not something to be feared. Great leaders, like great companies, stay disciplined while remaining flexible.

Endnotes

- ¹ Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader*. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1989), 45; Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. (New York: Free Press, 1985), 20.
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