

RE-ENGINEERING ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

The article is an attempt to highlight the importance and significance of good leadership in organizational success. The central argument of the work is that effective leadership is not only pivotal and necessary for organizational success, but in itself determines the success. The work concludes by attesting to the fact that the quality, mission and vision of the leadership to a large extent determine the degree of the success or failure of an organization.

Key Words: Re-engineering; organizational success; and effective leadership

Introduction

When one hears of leadership as a concept for discussion, one is likely to conceive in one's mind, numerous ideas. Probably, one may think of it in terms of power, authority or influence. He may equally, conceive some internationally acclaimed great names like Napoleon, Churchill, Lincoln, Washington, Ghandi, Azikiwe, etc., and use the records of those men as a yardstick to measure requisite traits effective leaders should possess and how they should behave. This indicates the multi-facet nature of the concept of leadership. However, in this work we are confining the concept of leadership to the *Realm of Work*; that is organizational leadership.

The issue of leadership is primary in the discussion of modern organizations. Differently put, discourse on leadership occupies a central position in the modern organizations, be it governmental, individual, or jointly owned business concern. The impact of leadership style on the progress of any organization becomes manifest through the performance of the workforce shown through the productivity level of the outfit towards the attainment of its corporate objectives.

Leadership has to this end become so pivotal that both success and failure of any organization are attributed to the leadership style of the person, or body of persons that pilots the activities of that system. It is in realization of this fact that Ikejiani-Clark et al (eds.) (1995:174) assert that where leadership is incompetent,

... bankrupt of ideas, goal setting becomes a luxury or at worst the articulation of the epileptic fits of the leader. Under such a situation goal achievement becomes elusive, and performance evaluation an exercise in futility.

This concept has grown in importance in modern organizations that identifying and developing leaders poses a major concern of industries today. For example, according to Muchinsky (1990:300),

In Greensboro, North Carolina, there is an organization called the center for creative leadership whose purpose is to enhance, through training, the leadership abilities of key industrial and business personnel.

Leadership from the above explanation can stand as a way of inducing compliance, the exercise of influence; a kind of persuasion or a tool for goal attainment. It involves dispensing out management function from the position of a planner, organizer, coordinator, controller, supervisor, motivator, etc. The leadership of an organization should not only be able to influence the members to act willingly towards achieving organizational goals, but should also structure the activities of the organization in such a way that members, in the process of achieving the overall organizational goal, will equally achieve their personal goals. The leadership should ensure the job satisfaction of the members of the organization, their job security, their acquaintance with organizational policy and their direct or indirect participation in policy decisions. These roles required of a leader is embedded in

democratic leadership style as against the autocratic style since according to Makin et al (1939:10) “great leaders have their effect by increasing their followers’ feeling of power, not by subjugating them.”

The problem of this work is to examine ways and means of developing ways and means of developing effective leadership qualities for organizational success.

Methods of Developing Effective Leadership Qualities for Resourceful Management and Organizational Success

For a leader to be able to develop effective qualities for resourceful management, the leader should understand the qualities of a good leader; the theories of leadership, the styles of leadership and the relationship between leadership, motivation and workers’ performance. We would therefore, examine the ways and means of developing effective leadership qualities for resourceful management under the subheading mentioned, namely:

Qualities of a Good Leader

Discussing requisite features, which a leader should possess, is not only perilous, but is equally problematic. This is because many individuals occupying executive or leadership positions have been found to exhibit different traits that are sometimes contradicting. It is in realization of this fact that Peter Drucker (1967:22), a renowned business writer and management consultant, reports that:

... Among the effective executives I have known and worked with, there are extroverts and aloof, retiring men, some even morbidly shy. Some are eccentrics, others are painfully correct conformists. Some are fat and some are thin. Some are worriers and some are relaxed. Some drink quite heavily and others are total abstainers. Some are men of great charm and warmth; some have no more personality than a frozen mackerel.

Leadership is therefore an all-embracing concept that has a lot of management features as its characteristics. This is why Alvin stipulates various perceptions of leadership thus:

- A focus on group process.
- A set of personality characteristics.
- The act of inducing compliance.
- The exercise of influence.
- The act of behaviour.
- A form of persuasion.
- An instrument of goal achievement.
- An effect of interaction.
- A differential role, and
- The initiation of structure.

It then implies that what constitutes effective leadership under a particular circumstance may possibly not be adequate in another situation. If this contention is agreed upon talking of a universal characteristic of a leader becomes out of order. It is in cognizance of this fact that McGregor (1966:73) asserts that: “It is more fruitful to consider leadership as a relationship between the leader and the situation than as a universal pattern of characteristics possessed by certain people.” It is equally in line with these situational variables that William C. Redding (1970:35) maintains that “... no single style is naturally more effective than others. Effectiveness depends on a style’s appropriateness to the situation in which it is used.”

It then follows that different situations require different leadership styles as different organizations require different styles of leaders. Moreover, different organizations may need different types of leadership at different stages of its existence. According to George E. Berkley (1975:170), “revolutions, for example, often bring to the fore vastly different kinds of leaders depending on the stage they are in. Thus, a fiery Trotsky may give way to a crafty Stalin, and a charismatic and flamboyant Marat may be replaced by a stolid and ruthless Robespierre.”

Through from the above discussion, the relationship that exists between leaderships and the situational variables makes enumerating qualities effective leaders should possess difficult, yet there are still some characteristics that appear common to majority of the leaders.

Firstly, a leader should abhor pessimism. He should always appear optimistic which he greatly needs to be able to move his men into action. According to Cleveland (1975:179) “prophecies of doom do not in fact move people to action.” One thing is certain; for a leader to excel in his position, he should believe in himself. He should believe that he has what it takes to achieve the target objectives.

Secondly, a leader, irrespective of the situation, should be intelligent. It is a ‘near impossibility’ to see a leader who is ‘dumb’ and ‘dully and yet successful’.

Another leadership quality, which cut across all situations, is the verbal ability, which is an important intellectual skill. The power of the tongue is very crucial to a leader, and doom awaits any leader who lacks this essential quality. This is because his ability to influence and stir his subordinates into action does not lie only on his leadership behaviours, but equally on effective use of his tongue.

The next important quality, which a leader should have, is reasoned judgment. This will enable him to analyze the work of his subordinates with the aim to spur them into greater efforts.

Equally important is that a good leader should be emotionally stable. This will enable him to check the expression of both his happiness and sorrow. However, this does not mean, that a leader should be clammy, devoid of all empathy and warmth. According to George Berkley (1975:181), “it rather indicates that he is able to keep his personal feelings in check and to appraise objectively the needs of the situation.”

Another quality attributive to good leadership is technical proficiency or what some scholars call technical know-how. In John Adair's (1988:16) usage, this refers to the "Authority of knowledge – technical, professional." One needs an extensive understanding of the actual work done by his subordinates to be able to direct them. From the studies done by Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn on the railroads, power plants and heavy industry revealed that those foremen with higher technical competence were those whose work teams were the most productive. Technical competence is vital to a leader so that he can win the respect of his subordinates. It is incongruent with this contention that Michael Johnson (1989:72) asserts that a good and competent leader must possess "... the ability to manage people who have professional skills, an appreciation of their professional skill and contributions they make..." A leader can only achieve this if he is technically proficient.

Some scholars have, however, contended against this 'specialist syndrome,' arguing that the indispensability of a professional administrator in relating the organization with external environment has undermined the relevance of technical proficiency as an attribute of a good leader. This contention becomes significant when we take cognizance of the fact that failure to reach the external environment has often been disastrous to many organizations. This school of thought argues that technical proficiency leads to favouritism of some activities and some people since "... the technically trained and experienced leader has usually built up a network of prior associations and preferences" (George Berkley, 1975:184).

Another quality that could be attributed to a good leader is quick decision-making. Nonetheless, experiences have shown that speedy decision does not always lead to a good decision as it may discourage broad participation of organizational members.

A good leader should also possess the requisite charisma so that he can, according to George Berkley (1975:186), "... store the emotions of men and capture their hearts and minds..." However, charismatic leadership cannot only be disadvantageous, but equally dangerous, if not handled with caution. This is because charisma reduces democracy and equality in an organization since the subordinates put their trust in the leader who they believe will take care of things. In the words of Katz and Kahn (1966:328), "... charisma requires some psychological distance between leader and follower." This results from neglecting the needed regular interaction between the leader and his subordinates since the latter believe that the former is naturally endowed with the magic to accomplish the desired organizational ends.

Other qualities like initiative, independence and inventiveness which enhance perception of need for action and the urge to do it have been identified as inclusive in the qualities a leader should possess. These qualities are necessary in that some leaders have not been able to achieve the level of success expected of them simply because they have failed to display them. Consequently, their subordinates refused to accord full respect, obedience and cooperation them.

The exigency of these qualities does not make them sufficient conditions for effective leadership; yet complete lack of them would likely produce incompetent leadership. In other words, according to Ezeaku, L. C. (1989:107) "... there is no guarantee that when once one possesses them, one is bound to be a successful leader, but whoever lacks them completely is very unlikely to succeed as a leader."

Theories of Leadership

Considerable volumes of theories and researches have been carried out on leadership because of its relevance to group action. It is, therefore, no surprise that when in 1974 Stogdill completed his research on leadership, he analysed over 3,000 books and articles in the field.

Though legion of leadership theories have been propounded, we are going to discuss briefly those considered popular and relevant to this work. The following leadership theories are discussed:

a) *Trait Theories of Leadership*

The trait theory of leadership argues that there are certain traits which effective leaders should possess. It maintains that leaders are born or that certain leadership traits are innate in leaders which differentiate them from non-leaders.

Characteristics like decisiveness, charisma, intelligence, enthusiasm, strength, bravery, integrity, self-confidence, etc., have been suggested as relevant traits which leaders should possess.

Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King (Jr.), Adolph Hitler, etc., were all leaders, but for sure, they were individuals with utterly different characteristics. Herein lies the futility of the “Trait Theory”. If this theory were to be valid then all leaders should possess specific characteristics that could be identified in each.

Right from the 1940s, emphasis on the trait theory began to wane and by 1960s the behavioural theory became the preference of scholars of management studies.

b) *Behavioural Theory*

If the trait theory had been successful, it could have provided the basis for selecting effective leaders for various organizations. But its futility led to the emphasis on the behavioural theory.

The behavioural theory argues that effective leaders have distinct ways of behaving. It emphasizes the training of the leaders. This implies that leadership behaviour could be taught and learned. Experiences have, however, shown that the behaviour of each leader is determined by prevailing situational variables. This implies that a leader can act in divergent ways at different situations. The demise on the behavioural theories is its inability to clarify such situational factors.

c) *The Situational Approach to Leadership Theory*

This theory is, in some academic quarters, called the “Zeigeist” theory; *Zeigeist* is a German word meaning spirit of the times (Igboeli, 1990:158).

This theory of leadership maintains that a leader is a product of time or situation. This implies that one will be called a leader if one is able to meet up with the demands of a situation or time.

d) *The Path-Goal Theory*

The path-goal theory was developed by Robert House of the University of Toronto. According to this theory, the subordinates accept a leader’s behaviour once they view it as a source of their satisfaction, either immediately or in the future. It could also be stated that a leader becomes acceptable to his subordinate once his behaviour appears motivational to them.

According to Stephen P. Robbins (1988:30), “The path-goal model proposes that leader behaviour (providing consideration or initiating structure) depends on the degree of task structure in the job, the subordinate’s perception of his or her own ability, and the subordinated locus of control.”

This theory, therefore, identifies two basic dimensions of leadership as (i) initiating structure, and (ii) consideration. “The term *initiating structure* refers to the leader activity of structuring the work of group members and guiding them through the path of goal attainment. The term *consideration* refers to the leader activity of showing concern for the individual group members and the satisfaction of their needs.”

In other words, the leadership should be motivational when the task structure correlates effective performance with the satisfaction of the subordinate needs, as well as provide the requisite training, guidance, support and rewards that would enhance the effective performance.

Even though this theory has received warm attention of researchers, there are however some attendant problems. For example, the predictions of workers' performance are inconsistent because of numerous intervening variables at the work place, systematic and rational prediction is necessary for effective planning in an organization.

e) The Contingency Model

This model was first developed by Fred Fiedler (1967). According to this model, effective group performance is dependent upon the compatibility between the style of the leader in interacting with his subordinates and the degree to which the leader is controlled and influenced by the work situation. With his least-preferred co-worker (LPC) questionnaire he purportedly measured if a person is task or relationship oriented. He further isolated three situations criteria – leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. He believes that these criteria could be manipulated to create the proper match with the behavioural situation of the leader (Robbins, Stephen, 1988:390).

f) The Managerial Grid

This theory was developed by Blake and Mouton (1984), depicting two-dimensional framework of leadership styles. One dimension depicts the concern of the leader for production. Blake and Mouton identified five basic management styles on the grid as follows:

- 1.1: Impoverished: The leader exerts a minimum effort to accomplish the work.
- 9.1: Task: The leader concentrates on task efficiency but shows little concern for the development and morale of subordinates.
- 1.9: Country-club: The leader focuses on being supportive and considerate of subordinates to the exclusion of concern for task efficiency.
- 5.5: Middle-of-the-Road: Adequate task efficiency and satisfactory morale are the goals of this style.
- 9.9: Team: The leader facilitates task efficiency and high morale by coordinating and integrating work-related activities (Stephen Robbins, 1988:376).

The significance of the managerial grid is that it enables the leader to assess his style of leadership with the aim of attaining the 9.9 team management style of leadership.

Styles of Leadership

It is administratively difficult to isolate theories of leadership from the styles of leadership or behaviour of leaders. Study on leadership is somewhat incomplete, According to Harold Koontz (1980:670), if styles of leadership is omitted since the "... ability to lead and willing to follow are based on leadership styles."

Leadership styles refer to different philosophies adopted by leaders in the piloting of the affairs or activities of an organization. Samuel Eclon (1992:134) maintains "these philosophies often find expression in the way the enterprise is organized and in the design of lines of demarcation of authority, accountability and responsibility."

The exercise of authority forms the basis upon which many researchers classify the styles of leadership. Experiences have shown that these leadership philosophies as well as their perception of constraints and opportunities have immense influence on corporate performance.

There could be numerous styles of leadership, but for academic convenience, most scholars in the study of corporate management have compressed them, and categorized them into three major kinds, namely: laissez-faire, autocratic/despotic and democratic styles of leadership.

i) *Laissez-faire Style of Leadership*

The assumption here is that there is no need to keep people under control, dictate for them, or direct them towards a given action. Rather, the leader should give the subordinates free hand to discharge their functions as they deem fit. Without any sort of control as this style of leadership presupposes, there will be no discipline and where there is lack of caution, people will not know their limits, and anarchy soon sets in.

ii) *Democratic Style of Leadership*

This style of leadership implies the participation of both the leader and his subordinates in decision-making. The leader presents an issue and then requests for opinions, suggestions or recommendations from his subordinates. He then takes a decision after a careful assessment of all the divergent opinions and facts that are presented to him. The presumption here is that there are personal initiatives in the subordinates which could be beneficial to the leader in his formulation of intelligent corporate policies. Instead of assuming that the leader knows all, it rather accepts that two heads are better than one. Consequently, democratic style of leadership maintains that the best decision emerges when many heads are participating.

iii) *Autocratic or Despotism Style of Leadership*

This style of leadership assumes that the consummation of intelligence needed for the formulation of corporate policies lies in the leader. Consequently, the leader does the thinking and takes all decisions while the subordinates are duty bound to concede and implement his policies without any objection. This style of leadership relies on intimidation and coercion to win compliance.

The major demerit of this leadership behaviour according to Ray Wilkinson (1994:260) is that “... it may waste worker’s creativity and expertise, and it will fail to motivate and make workers feel committed to their tasks.”

Functions of Leadership

Though a lot of managerial duties qualify for leadership functions, yet we have decided in this work, to categorize them under the following headings:

1) *Motivating*

The leadership of any organization should be motivational so as to be able to influence the workforce to contribute maximally towards the accomplishment of the organization target objective. Discussing the managerial functions, William Coventry (1970:4), asserts that “... their principal functions are planning, organizing and controlling, and that leadership is essentially the motivating force.”

2) *Coordinating/Integrating*

Coordinating and integrating of the efforts and activities of all the members of the organization towards the realization of the target organizational objectives is a major function of a leader.

It is expected of a leader to make “... the members of his or her team or department feel that they identify with the goals and want to achieve those goals themselves. They can then be said to be fully integrated into the organization” (Roy, Wilkinson, 1994:260).

3) *Organizing*

It is duty-bound on a leader of any organization to forethought plans before others take action. The leadership of any organization should plan ahead what strategies the organization should apply in

realizing its goals. Structuring, which is a key issue in organizing, forms the framework through which the activities of an organization are carried out. If the leadership of an organization fails to initiate adequate structure, there will be faulty allocation of roles and this will impede organizational performance.

4) *Representing*

The leadership of any organization should represent effectively the organization as well as to the outside world. This is very important since the degree of effectiveness with which the leader discharges this role determines the respect and recognition accorded to the organization and its members. To perform this role effectively, the leader should possess the necessary communication skill. This is why some scholars like Roy Wilkinson (1994:260) have suggested that this function "... may be shared with others because one person may not possess all the necessary communication skills."

5) *Controlling and Directing*

It is the duty of the leadership of an organization to control and direct the activities and work behaviours of the members of the organization. This is to ensure that roles are discharged in accordance with the laid down plan. Any deviation from the agreed procedures will be corrected by the leader.

Incorporating almost the points discussed above, Robert House and Mitchell (1971:82), maintain that for effective organizational performance the leader should embark upon the following strategic functions:

- (1) Recognizing and/or arousing subordinate's needs for outcomes over which the leader has some control.
- (2) Increasing personal pay-offs to subordinates for work goal attainment.
- (3) Making the path to those pay-offs easier to travel by coaching and direction.
- (4) Reducing frustration barriers.
- (5) Helping subordinates to clarify expectations.
- (6) Increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction contingent on effective performance.

Leadership, Motivation and Workers' Performance

The contention here is that there exists interrelationship between the three concepts under review – leadership, motivation and workers' performance. Where organizational leadership is motivational, workers will work with enthusiasm, which will in turn enhance greater organizational performance. In contrast, given all requisite technology and skill, organizational performance might still remain low if the leadership is incompetent and cannot elicit the best in the workers towards the realization of organizational target objectives.

The leadership of any organization should, therefore, ensure a conducive organizational climate that will facilitate optimum organizational performance. This climate should be one that will be a conducive motivation in the worker, to willingly contribute the best of his quota in accomplishing the goals of the organization. The needs of an individual worker influence his motivation, which in turn affects his performance. Thus, it is leadership task for the leader to motivate the worker and thereby according to Leonard A. Schlesinger (1983:221), "... obtain effective behaviours that provide positive outcomes for both the individual and the organization."

A grudging employee would usually have his mood at the workplace reflect on his job output. It is a near impossibility for a demotivated employee to perform as good as a motivated subordinate, both facing the same intervening variables. It is, therefore, beneficial to any organization if its

employees work with enthusiasms and optimism. And according to Harold Koontz (1980:662), “only then can their morale be said to be high: only then will they achieve greater efficiency.” Good leadership positively influences workers’ motivation, which, hopefully, would affect positively his performance. It is in realization of the relatedness that exists between leadership, motivation and performance that Roy Wilkinson et al (1994:260) assert that: “If leadership standards are high, the motivation and performance of members of the organization are high.” It is, therefore, duty-bound on the leadership of any organization to stir the workforce into action towards the realization of its corporate objectives. Through this means, an organization succeeds which is consequent upon the realization of its target objectives. Thus, it becomes expedient according to Ezeaku et al (1986:107) that: “... management has to be constantly conscious of the fact that it cannot succeed in getting much to be done by the people if it does not succeed in motivating and inspiring them into positive and constructive actions.”

Conclusion

Indispensable to organizational performance, amongst other determinant variables, is its leadership. The effect of leadership on organizational performance becomes manifest through the management philosophy obtainable in that work situation. In other words, the style of leadership at work in a given organization dictates the organizational performance. Leadership is so pivotal in any organization that good leadership is said to be the bedrock and sine-qua-non for all organizational growth and development.

Bad leadership breeds poor organization performance. If the leadership of an organization is incompetent, the activities of its component individual members will be paralyzed. All hands might be on the wheel but none will be steering it. The structure will be weak, and role allocation faulty. Coordination and control of activities of individual members of the organization will become problematic where there is absence of teamwork, organizational performance would be on continuous retrogression.

It is therefore strongly emphasized that in re-engineering organization success, leaders should develop effective leadership qualities that would make their administration purposeful, positive and visionary. This is the best way to move organizations forward and ensure sustainable development.

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