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Effective Followership

There are many books and articles that have been written about leadership, and how to become a great leader, but what about "Followship", how can you encourage people to become great followers?

It is important to recognise that successful leadership can only be achieved if there are meaningful interactions between those who lead and those who follow. Many organisations focus their attention on developing their leaders, with what appears to be an

assumption that their staff will instinctively know how to follow.

So what are the characteristics of effective Followership?

Interestingly they share a number of elements that are similar to effective leadership. For example followers:

- Are highly participative.
- Lead and manage themselves effectively.
- Show commitment to the organisation and what it's trying to achieve.
- Continuously learn and develop.

Followers are not simply "sheep". "Sheep" are passive and uncritical, lacking in initiative and a sense of responsibility. Effective followers are highly participative, and independent thinkers.

Research suggests that those who prove able to follow effectively, usually transition to formal leadership positions over time. This demonstrates the interactive nature of the leader follower relationship.

For organisations to be truly successful they need both effective leaders as well as followers, but how can organisations develop effective Followership?

Effective followers are committed to high performance. For example followers:

- Work (effectively) with others. They balance personal interests with the interests of others to achieve a common purpose. They collaborate to accomplish the organisations goals.
- Are competent. Followers know what's expected, strive to be the best and gain a sense of satisfaction from applying the highest personal standards.
- See themselves as a useful resource. Followers understand their value to the organisation.

Effective followers share the responsibility for good relationships with their leaders and work to increase openness and understanding between them.

For example effective followers:

- Build trust. Followers invite and give open and honest feedback.
- Communicate clearly. Followers tell unpleasant truths that serve to benefit and improve the organisation.
- Identify with the leader. Followers are loyal to their leader, they recognise that it is a partnership style relationship, if they win then so will the leader.
- Adopt the leaders vision. Followers have a clear understanding of priorities and what needs to be achieved.

The question therefore is how do we develop Followership?

There are a number of points to consider here.

Firstly organisations must promote the idea and concept of Followership by:

- Adopting a management style that recognises that effective leadership is dependant on the actions of the leaders, their followers and the quality of their interactions.
- Building effective Followership into the performance management process.
- Recognising and rewarding outstanding examples of Followership.

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Are bosses worse at motivating since the recession began?

During a recession logic dictates that managers need to work twice as hard at keeping their staff motivated, and not surprisingly, recessions cause people to be concerned about their jobs, security and future and as a consequence can become distracted at work.

However, a recent survey in the UK suggests that over half of all UK Bosses are worse at motivating their staff since recession began.

The survey identified that one in three bosses have increased their criticism and blaming of others, while one in six have started shouting and raging.

High levels of motivation and engagement from staff is even more important during a recession. These are precisely the times when you need people to go the extra mile, be a bit more flexible and adapt to changing conditions.

Therefore organisations do not want managers who crumble under the pressure, shout, scream, blame others and demotivate them. They need managers to:

Effective Followership Continued

- Encouraging leaders to model the way.

Research suggests that followers learn most effectively by observing the actions of the organisations leaders. If the organisations leaders display effective "Followship Behaviours" then others will tend to follow.

Secondly organisations should develop and implement specific training programmes.

Training and education is key to the introduction of successful Followership within the organisation.

Employees need to be given the opportunity to explore effective Followership characteristics in depth. They need to understand what "Followship" means, what the role of a good follower is,

and be able to develop their skills, such as taking responsibility, demonstrating initiative, working collaboratively and managing themselves effectively.

In parallel, development programmes also need to be run for managers, supervisors and team leaders to educate them on how to encourage and manage effective Followership.

Finally, it is vital to measure the effectiveness of Followership and leadership training.

More forward thinking businesses recognise that leadership is a "distributed" activity throughout the organisation and proactively take steps to enhance the Followership capabilities of their staff.

Poor conduct - how should it be dealt with?

From time to time some people have difficulties with their attitudes, behaviours and conduct at work. The problem for managers is when this behaviour has an impact on the work performance of that employee or on others working with them.

These difficulties can express themselves in many different ways, for example, anger or frustration, bad language, withdrawal of communication, non-cooperation with colleagues, inappropriate actions or negligence in performing the job tasks, disregarding of reasonable requests or instructions.

The impact of these inappropriate or unreasonable behaviours can be felt by work colleagues, customers, suppliers, and possibly but less obviously by their direct management. Any of these are warning signs that a manager could spot and then pick up on.

Often the behaviour is not exhibited directly for a manager to experience and observe but information about it is brought to your attention by a formal complaint from a customer, supplier or colleague or by informal feedback given to you. So what action do you take as the person's line manager?

Should you just ignore it until unless a formal complaint reaches you or should you wade in and confront the employee directly about it?

The first thing to do is to make an objective assessment of the nature, seriousness and probability of the complaint having some substance.

You need to consider who has given you this information, why have they done so, what behaviour have you observed from the individual, how well are they performing in their job, who else might have observed or experienced this behaviour who you could discretely ask about it.

Of course if the allegations are of a serious enough nature to constitute gross misconduct or endanger the health and safety of any employees, customers and suppliers then you should take action immediately, and launch an investigation into the incidents.

Fortunately most examples of poor conduct do not constitute gross misconduct but none the less they do need to be assessed and followed up.

Ultimately if the employee needs to change their behaviour then they need to be made directly aware of the examples of their inappropriate attitude or behaviour, their impact on others and on the work and what your expectations of them are. You should also ask about any other personal or work difficulties that may be affecting them.

Often this type of direct feedback and supportive conversation is sufficient to allow the employee to become more aware of and able to adjust their behaviours. What ever approach you take you do need to make the employee aware of their responsibility to conduct themselves properly at work and set out what these standards are - you shouldn't just ignore it and hope that it will go away!

Are bosses worse at motivating since the recession began? Continued

- Demonstrate confidence and self belief that while times may be tough now this will pass.
- Have a clear and positive vision for the future of the organisation –something that everyone can hang on to and focus their efforts on.
- Lead by example – if managers want their staff to make sacrifices the have to be the first ones to do so.
- Communicate clearly - listen and understand staff concerns and try to action them.

- Collaborate with staff and help them to adjust and adapt to change.
- Continue to challenge everything that the organisation does, looking for ways to improve and reduce costs.
- Search for opportunities for further leaning development and growth.

Improving motivation will ultimately lead to greater productivity and help people make the most of any new opportunities, which should give the organisation a much better chance of long term survival.

Why is change management important?

Research indicates that organisations undergo major change approximately once every three years, whilst smaller changes are occurring almost continually. Many factors cause businesses to review how they currently operate, such as:

- challenges of growth
- changes in strategy
- technological changes
- competitive pressures
- customer pressure, particularly shifting markets
- government legislation/initiatives.

For change to be successful managers have to be able to introduce and manage the change to ensure that the

organisational objectives of change are met, and to ensure that they gain the commitment of their people, both during and after implementation. Also, at the same time, they have to ensure that business continues as usual.

The impact of failures to introduce effective change can be high: loss of market position, removal of senior management, loss of stakeholder credibility, loss of key employees.

For these reasons, it is important that the way change is managed is carefully considered by businesses. Whilst each change situation will be unique, there are still a number of common themes that will help ensure that the change process stands the greatest chance of success.

HR and Business Consultancy Services Offered

<p>Employment and Industrial Relations Provide support and advice on workplace relations and the relevant legislation that affects the employer-employee relationship. Development of employment agreements and documentation that best suits your relationship and situation with your employee.</p>	<p>Change Management A structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organisations from a current state to a desired future state. Change is a part of every project we undertake, encompassing a number of techniques to achieve sustained improvement through change management.</p>	<p>Psychometric Assessments The strength and productivity of successful organisations lies with people. We use a range of assessment tools to accurately identify an individual's talents, strengths and weaknesses, and to diagnose organisational problems.</p>
<p>Performance Management Designed to be future-focused, support pay for performance programs, monitor milestones of goal achievement, and systematically improve the measured results of your employees and organisation. We facilitate the development of core organizational competencies, influence SMART goal setting, and clearly articulate expectations in order to have a measurable results-oriented tool for effective implementation.</p>	<p>Project Management Training, and resources to help organisations improve performance and deliver critical projects successfully. Project management is the discipline of planning, organising and managing resources to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals and objectives. The primary challenge of project management is to achieve all of the project goals and objectives while honoring the project constraints.</p>	<p>Process and Systems Development Professional human resource advice, policy solutions and job description writing and evaluation services. Development of employment policies and procedures and employee handbook. Provide practical guidance on administration of policies and pre-employment or post-employment duties required of the company.</p>
<p>Talent Management Developing and integrating new workers, developing and keeping current workers and attracting highly skilled workers to work for your company. Companies that are engaged in talent management are strategic and deliberate in how they source, attract, select, train, develop, retain, promote, and move employees through the organisation.</p>	<p>Health and Safety Offering both practicable and achievable health, safety and environmental Sustainability solutions to suit your organisation. from a wide range of experience in health, safety, quality, environmental and sustainability (HSQE) management.</p>	<p>Professional Supervision and Mentoring A customised programme for Managers and Team Leaders to provide practical hands-on guidance as well as theoretical knowledge in relation to all aspects of management including leadership, performance management, delegation, communication & effective time management.</p>
<p>Career Transition/Outplacement and redundancy Managing change and redundancy in a fair and procedurally correct manner. Management Coaching through restructure and redundancy; Managing Change Workshops; Internal and external Job Search, CV Preparation and Interview Coaching; Budgeting and Financial Planning; On site consultation and redundancy support; Identifying the 'at risk' employee.</p>	<p>Investigations We investigate and report on the facts of a case to the person or body charged with making a decision, under the procedure relevant to the case and to the member of staff concerned. Any serious allegations or formal complaints require investigation to attempt to determine as objectively as possible the relevant facts on which decisions can be based. Ensuring that the investigation process is completed correctly enables you to make the right decision with continued support thou ought the process to reduce the risk to your company.</p>	<p>HR Audits Comprehensive report of the audit findings with recommendations prioritized, actionable work plan. Improves compliance, reviews ROI with Human Capital. Targets the organisational development and human resource practices including: Staffing and Hiring; Benefits Administration; HR Administration; Employment Practices; Education and Training; Time Off and Leaves; Health and Safety; Performance Management; Compensation; Terminations.</p>