

Leadership: Do everything to your people, but don't expect return

By V PRADEEP KUMAR

Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something that you want done because he wants to do it. The definition is simple and easy to understand, but leadership is a serious business. As very appropriately described by Peter Drucker, Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights,

the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.

Increasingly today, in whichever business, it's all about managing and leading people. This task is challenging and multifaceted because of complexities in human behaviour and attitudes. We all live under the same sky, but we all don't

have the same horizon. A human being is a bundle of emotions governed by complex psychological factors.

There are various categories of emotions such as conceptions, sensations, reflexes and expressions, each having a purpose and a trigger leaving mental or physical effects.

Further, emotions are characteristics of individual, genetic and group fac-

tors. While the science behind the theory of emotions is indeed complex, experienced leaders are aware of the subject, in the context of leading people. In corporate environment, the followings are some common behavioural trends seen by all of us:

- A feeling of pride with promotions or high increments
- A feeling of humiliation

with demotions, terminations

■ A feeling of jealousy when a peer is promoted or sympathy or humour when a peer is demoted

■ A feeling of humiliation when fired in public

■ A feeling of anger and frustration with personal problems being brought to office and vice versa.

Such feelings or emotions can cause different effects, either voluntary or involuntary such as horror or humour, anger or laughter, smiling or blushing etc.

Conflicting issues

An employee always has several conflicting issues bothering him such as career vs family, matrimonial issues, financial problems and inter personal problems. However, it is a pleasure to give advice, humiliating to need it, normal to ignore it. A humane leader understands this through extreme sensitivity and empathy.

Empathetic listening is not easy and comes with a lot of sacrifice and practice as empathy has two parts — the skill [the tip of the iceberg] and the attitude [the mass of the iceberg].

A leader has to be a good empathetic listener to provide vent for an employee's frustrations. A leader also needs to do this genuinely allowing an employee to open up.

It is almost impossible to smile on the outside without feeling better on the inside and hence all feelings have to be genuine and originating straight from the heart. For an employee to open up, it's also necessary that a



leader always shows the same face of his personality whether in private or public so that trust is developed. In other words, a leader has to understand, before being understood.

Thus a leader understands an employee, counsels and plays a constructive role in his professional and often personal life.

Balancing act

A leader focuses on people without losing the focus on results, balancing the two all the time tactfully. Being humane, he manages to stay

in the circle of influence of an employee, thereby having a very high emotional bank account.

However, such leaders are not always popular but respected for being humane and result oriented.

A simple check list for a humane leader:

- Be a good empathetic listener
- Understand an employee before being understood
- Be genuine and sincere
- Create an atmosphere of openness and trust
- Have patience and tolerance in plenty

Focus on results but through people

Praise in public, criticise in private

Perceptions are more important than facts

Exceptions made if any, shouldn't create wrong precedents

Finally, it's good to remember the lesson in Bhagavad-Gita: Do everything to your people, but without expecting any returns.

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Networking



Buddy Up for Success
Just as people lose weight more effectively with a workout partner or earn higher grades if they study in groups, your efforts to build great relationships for your career and life will be much more successful if you team up. Get yourself a buddy or two — or more — and try these four ways you can enhance your success together.

1. Ongoing Support

The most obvious things a buddy can provide are some accountability and motivation. Agree to create a list of your goals and how you're going to achieve them by a certain date, and when the time rolls around, check each other's work. Compare notes, and copy best practices. Then establish another deadline to set up a certain number of meetings with your target contacts each month. You'll need this ongoing exchange of support, guidance, and motivation to build relationships consistently and effectively throughout your life.

2. Sharing Networks

My friend Lisa, who runs a hotel in Toronto, and I use this tactic all the time. We plan a series of dinner parties, one per month, and alternate the location between her hotel and my home. We each invite half the list, and we split the tab for each event. The result: Not only do we introduce each other and our friends to entirely new groups of people, but we also save a bundle of money and headaches each time, because we're working together.

3. Job Hunting

This may seem counterintuitive, but job hunting can be easier and more effective in groups of two or more. When I advise business school students to join up with classmates who want to work in the same industry to do their job search, they look at me like I'm nuts. Their natural inclination is to do everything alone so their "competition" won't benefit from their research or good fortune. This is obviously narrow-minded. Do they really think there's only one or two investment banking jobs out there?

You and your buddies should work together. Split up the research work to save time and individual effort. Reach out to industry professionals you admire for group informational interviews. They'll be more likely to spend time with you because in your group you'll seem far more genuinely interested in learning about the work than begging for a job. And always look for ways to help each other. Maybe one company seems like a better fit for Lisa, while Joe prefers another. Point them in the right direction. Work together, and everyone wins.

4. Crashing Conferences

Having a wingman never hurts when you go to conferences or other events. Share with each other your real reasons for attending the conference, whether it's to look for a new job, to fill your sales pipeline or maybe even to seek a romantic relationship. From scouting the attendees to endorsing each other to new people to running interference when necessary, you'll love the benefits. You'll be more confident than ever at these events if you go with a buddy.

CareerAdvise

How to Increase Internal Visibility

Growing and maintaining an internal network is partially about improving your visibility in the workplace. You don't have to be a chatty person or a sociable person to learn about your colleagues.

Become a good listener.

Grow cauliflower ears without eavesdropping. Ask questions and show an interest. While gathering all the poop on everyone, shift the chaff from the grain and keep talents in mind that may help you out in the future.

Get to know people at all levels of the organization.

Get to know people at all levels of the organization - their titles and what they do. Know your organizational chart. Become familiar with all the people you work with whose work relates to yours. Take the initiative to bring people together to solve problems. You don't have to have all the answers; you just need to know where to go to get the answers. Drop by and say hi to people even when you don't need anything from them. Wear or carry conversational clothing or props like colourful or corny coffee mugs, interestingly-titled books or magazines, or unique ties or jewellery.

Volunteer.

Volunteer to sit on committees, task forces, and communities of practice groups. Work conferences, social functions, and trade shows where you play a role visible to top decision makers or where you come into contact with decision makers.

Meet face to face whenever possible.

Forget email and voice mail when complex problems, conflicts, areas of responsibility, and authority and decision-making are the issue.

Know what career options may be available in case your job becomes obsolete.

Keep a file folder of all your professional wonderments to be presented at performance evaluations. Don't take for granted that senior management knows exactly what you do day-to-day or have done. Exhibit skills that go beyond or outside your job description.

Introduce your contacts to others.

Become known as the person who knows everyone. Collect resources of contractors, technicians, equipment and transportation providers, caterers, travel deals, and anything else that may help someone in your company some day, sometime.

WorkLifeBalance

Holiday "Nocations"

When you go away on your vacation, are you really taking the time to recharge? Are you spending that promised time with your loved ones, creating those memories that you will cherish for years to come? Or are you spending your time checking emails, taking calls from the office, and stressing about your deadlines. If so, welcome to your Holiday "Nocation".

The reasons for vacations are obvious: They help you recharge, reconnect with family and friends, and develop interests outside of the office. They put a jolt of "life" back into work-life balance. From an employer's perspective, vacations are also important: upon return you will attack your responsibilities with a fresh perspective and new energy. And while you are away, others will pick up new skills covering for your absence.

If you insist on taking a Nocation, then none of this can happen. And while you might feel that spending your vacation doing work is the smart thing to do, in the long run it takes a toll on your career - and your health. Turning your Nocation into a Vacation isn't that hard:

- Spend a bit of time beforehand prepping your colleagues to handle your responsibilities.
- Let others (colleagues, suppliers, customers) know that you'll be away, and who to contact in your absence.
- Set your voicemail and email to let people know when you'll be back.
- Lock your work cellphone and your BlackBerry in a drawer, and give the key to someone else. Only take them out the night before you return.
- Don't even think about checking your work email from your home computer.
- If you insist on doing work while you're away, focus on a career-building activity instead, such as reading the latest business best-seller.

If you are one of those people that finds it really difficult to "unplug" from the office, choose a vacation travel spot that has spotty cell coverage and no internet access. If travel isn't on the agenda, then choose a messy project (room painting, furniture refinishing, etc) around the house that makes it tougher to quickly check in on the office.

This week's action item: While you might not be able to do everything on the list on such short notice, choose at least two. You've worked hard, and you've earned your vacation.

Mapping competencies

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The primary objective of PCMM is to improve the capability of the entire workforce. It can be defined as the level of knowledge, skills and process abilities available for performing an organisation's current and future business activities.

There are five maturity levels under PCMM like initial, managed, defined, predictable and optimising. The PCMM was basically designed for knowledge-intensive organisation and

workforce management process. Nevertheless, it can be employed in almost any setting either to guide implementation of workforce improvement activities or as a vehicle for assessing workforce practices.

Ample planning

Competency mapping requires ample planning from the organisation. Identifying weaknesses of the individual and building them to strengths would actually mean draining their energy levels. Instead, the individ-

ual could be deployed positively in areas of developing or using the current strengths.

Competency mapping is one of the most powerful self-marketing tools available for both individual and organisation talent management professionals of the present day.

A well managed firm should have a clear organisational structure with well defined roles in terms and have mapped the competencies required for each role. High performing work-

places achieve numerous objectives, including attracting good employees and being innovative and productive.

Attractive workplaces include those that promote good work-life balance, have good health and safety systems, balance the interests of employers and employees, encourage career development, and have a large proportion of staff with high job satisfaction.

Creative workplace

In a rigid labour market, workplaces that are not attractive may have difficulty in recruiting and retaining good staff. Without good staff committing themselves long-term, workplaces may struggle to be innovative and productive.

Creative workplaces achieve superior output and fruitful workplaces provide greater opportunity for innovation. Utilising the individuals in the appropriate roles matching their competencies would enhance the performance of individuals.

"There's a common misconception that a person's skill is his talent. Skills, however, are not talents. Talents, on the other hand, require skills.

People can have skills and knowledge in areas where their talents do not lie. If they have a job that requires their skills but not their talents, organisations will never tap into their passion or voice," says Stephen Covey.

"They'll go through the motions, but this will only make them appear to need external supervision and motivation. If you can hire people whose passion intersects with the job, they won't require any supervision at all. They will manage themselves better than anyone could ever manage them. Their fire comes from within, not from without. Their motivation is internal, not external."

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