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Organisational development through Team building and team leadership

Excerpts from a talk delivered by DR. K. KUHATHASAN at a seminar on "Team Leadership" organised by the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) held recently at the CEB Training Centre, Piliyandala.

Leadership is the pivotal force behind a successful organisation. An effective leader is one who successfully transforms the organisation from current to the future. He creates the vision for success and mobilizes his followers, empowers them, boosts their morale and generates a sense of meaning in their work. He instills within his followers a commitment to change. He develops a new culture and strategies to focus energy, and optimizes the use of resources.

The most challenging task of a leader is to translate vision into reality and to sustain it. As he, on his own, could not possibly achieve his vision, he needs the support of his team. There should be a symbiotic relationship between leaders and the team.

At the same time, a leader needs to have the capacity to cope with the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty of the environment around them.

Groups and teams

Although some management experts do not make a distinction between groups and teams, in recent years there has been a gradual shift to an emphasis on teams and managing them to enhance individual and organizational success. Some experts now believe that the highest productivity results occur only when groups become teams. They see the two concepts as conceptually different, with groups being the more general of the two. All teams are groups, but not all groups are teams.

A group has traditionally been defined as two or more individuals who communicate with one another, share a collective identity, and have a common goal. Thus, a group can be virtually any size above one, as long as the members engage in some form of communication, maintain that

they are a group, and have some common objective, be it weakly or strongly held. A team is a "small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."

Work groups emphasize individual work products, individual accountability, and even individual-centered leadership. In contrast, work teams share leadership roles, have both individual and mutual accountability, and create collective work products.

In other words, a group's performance is a function of what its members do as individuals, while a team's performance is based on collective products, what two or more workers accomplish jointly.

Team leaders work with followers through delegation, training, feedback, recognition, and rewards; develop visions and missions; maintain health and positive attitude; plan and set goals; work on self-awareness and development; initiate and manage change; use communication skills and model behaviours to others.

Effective team leaders: are compete relative to the content of the team's work; know how things get done and how to get things done in their host environment, and are practical. They make things obvious, not abstract.

They are result-oriented, tough as needed and focused on key issues; understand the importance of "process" (how well team works together) for team success; keep objectives clear and prioritized; set well defined expectation that encourage team members to "stretch" and are reasoned and deliberate, not rash and emotional.

Five critical skills for team success

They are flexible in their own personal style, acknowledge in their own weakness; are comfortable with conflict and skilled in its resolution; welcome diversity and encourage debate; are inclined to help; celebrate team successes

and are ethical.

1. The ability to understand systems:

* To analyze systems and their component parts.

* To see the relationships between systems.

2. The ability to integrate and synthesize information.

3. The ability to take the perspective of others.

4. The ability to identify and use one's feeling in the interest of the group.

5. The ability and willingness to effectively disagree with authority or the majority.

What effective change leaders do?

1. Embrace change when it's needed.

2. Develop a vision for change.

3. Communicate the critical need for change, the change vision, what it will cost in human terms, and results as they occur.

4. Shake things up.

5. Stay actively involved.

6. Direct and review change management planning and implementation.

High Performance Team

Any good leader has a product - a high performance team. A high performance team has the characteristics: clear realistic goals, shared sense of purpose, effective communication, mutual trust and support, resolves, conflict, best use of resources, atmosphere of openness, reviews progress, learns from mistakes, builds on experience.

We can help to build these characteristics in the teams in which we work as team members. Fifty percent of the results depend on you the leader; fifty percent depend upon the quality, training and morale of those who work with you. Leadership exists on different levels. Because you are a good leader on one level doesn't necessarily mean that you will lead well at the next assignment.

The chief executive is today expected to be a leader. Most chief executives receive little or no formal training in leadership. Yet it is the key role

BE A LEADER NOT A BOSS!

. The boss drives his men

The Leader inspires them!

. The Boss depends on Authority

The Leader on Goodwill

. The Boss evokes Fear

The Leader radiates Love!

. The Boss says "I"

The Leader says "We"

. The Boss shows who is wrong

The Leader says what is wrong!

. The Boss knows how it is done

The Leader knows how to do!

. The Boss abuses his workers

The Leader uses them!

. The Boss demands respect

The Leader commands respect!

. The Boss makes work dull

The Leader makes it happy!

in any organization. Strategic leadership is not simply about strategic planning-that's the easy part. The difficult part is making things happen. If your team members are fully involved in the decisions that affect their work they will be committed to carrying them out. You cannot lead without winning their commitment.

Help those who report directly to you to break down aims into clear and specific goals or objective. Remember to review progress at agreed intervals. Try to delegate as much as possible. You will never have so much authority, as when you begin to give it a way.

To create a motivated team you must:

. give the team good working conditions, explain the company's mission, give the team a goal, remember the individual members of the team, promote the team's identity, share suc-

cess, ensure the team members develop positive attitudes, and be a motivational leader.

Teams fail of due to many reasons such as unclear goals and objectives, non-measurable goals, ill-defined boundaries and responsibilities, inappropriate members, so key skills / knowledge that are needed are missing, lack of training in team working and problem-solving for members, inappropriate leadership style and behaviours, ineffective meetings, unwillingness of the team to accept responsibility and individually oriented reward or recognition.

Review your role as a team leader

Purpose

Am I clear what the goal is?

Responsibilities

Am I clear what mine are?

Objectives

Have I agreed these with my sponsor and my manager?

Plan

Have I worked one out to reach objectives?

Working conditions

Are these right for the job?

Resources

Are these adequate (authority, materials)?

Targets

Has each member clearly define and agreed them?

Authority

Is the line of authority clear? (Who am I accountable to?)

Training

Are there any gaps in the specialist skills or abilities of individuals in the team required for the task?

Priorities

Have I planned the time?

Progress

Do I check this regularly and evaluate?

Supervision

In case of my absence who covers for me?

Example

Do I set standards by my behaviour?