

## Thinking About Leadership - Leaders for Tomorrow

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### Introduction

Each of us can serve as a leader. And one leader creates another and another, ad infinitum, just as one candle's flame light another and another, until once-impenetrable darkness has turned into brilliant light. "Leadership is an action, not a position". We are in a century of leadership. Leadership, the act of making an impact on others in a desired direction, helps to build organizations through excellence, creativity, vision building culture, mentoring and multiplying empowerment. Leadership is primarily concerned with empowerment which is different from administration. Organizations earlier witnessed a shift from administration to management and are now beginning to see one from management to leadership. These trends are making organizations move from centralized management and decision making to decentralization. These complex and fast changing realities require faster and high quality decision making, which is possible only when there are competent people capable of taking such decisions at all levels. Faster and quality decision making will lead to de- bureaucratization, de-hierarchization and decentralization, resulting in empowerment at all levels. The evolution of various approaches to leadership also reflects such a shift. Past theories of leadership focused on the ability of leadership to get results and develop people. Modern approaches to leadership focus on empowering qualities in leaders. Leadership is increasingly seen as an instrument of empowerment. The influence of power of leaders is in proportion to their ability to confer power on people; such empowerment implies that leaders are prepared to shed their own power in the greater organizational interest.

### Changing Environment

The twentieth century was a century of great leaders. We need effective leaders in large numbers at all levels in organizations, rather than only a few great leaders. This shift from great leaders is a response to the fast changing environment. The changing environment is characterized by:-

- Liberalization (increasing competition).
- Aware and demanding customers.
- Educated and impatient employees.
- High mobility, careerism, and declining organization- 'Loyalty'
- Growing unemployment and unemployables.
- Glamorization designations and consequent meaningless promotions.
- Resistance to radical thinking.

### Why do we need leaders?

Leadership is required for mobilizing people to handle challenging times. In a world that has no challenges, things are fine and you don't require leaders. In such a world, you don't need to mobilize people for handling any crisis. But unfortunately, in our world, we have huge number of challenges in the government, non- profit and business sectors; we have many challenges in the developing and the developed world. Hence, we require leadership in our world. In fact, in our world, the need for leadership is more now than ever before. In our current world of business, we cannot afford to restrict leadership to just the top management positions. Every employee, every engineer should raise to leadership role. They should step in to solve customer problems; they should step in to solve internal company problems. The number of people we need to provide leadership is huge now. The turbulences in life will never stabilise, and the demand for leaders going up steadily. Leaders mobilize people. Their role is to undertake challenging goals that involve change.

### Some of the things that keep the CEO's awake

- Developing bifocal vision - look close & far - short & long time strategy.
- Getting organisational structure right.
- Creating time to maximize impact-support element-sufficient money but taking time.

- Delivering strategy through the top team.
- Managing the board.
- Communicating with stake holders all of the time.
- Meeting the diversity challenge- Managers diversity is important.
- Surviving the global jungle-Marketing/selling your product globally.

### Transactional Functions

Leaders have an obligation to get things done, ensure achievements of targets, and maximize efficiency and effectiveness of various groups. These can achieve by paying attention to the following aspects:-

- **Policy Making**: The leader arranges the setting of priorities and directions for organizational work and creating linkages between various units and organization. These are reflected in the policies developed as a guiding force for the organization. The policy comes out of the organization's vision of its mission.
- **Planning**: The logical step to plan activities in order to translate policies into action. Planning involves working out a detailed and phased action strategy, the resources needed, and a contingency arrangement if the proposed action is not completed.
- **Developing systems**: Organizational leaders work towards the institutionalization of new practices so that effective implementation is not left to individuals. This can be done by developing systems for various processes in the organization. Such systems must economize on energy and speed up action. Management Information Systems (MIS), budgetary systems, human resources system, etc are examples.
- **Monitoring performance**: Managerial control of individual and group work requires effective monitoring. Monitoring is one as per accepted standards and agreed plans. Monitoring also helps in making decisions about rewards.
- **Coordinating**: When individuals and groups work in synergy, duplication of work is avoided and mutual support is ensured.
- **Rewarding**: Managers reward good performance or exemplary behavior by individuals and teams. This reinforces their behavior and also the behaviour of others.
- **Coaching**: One function of managers is to guide juniors through what is called performance counseling or coaching. This includes helping them to know their own strength and weakness and to improve their performance in future.

### Transformational Functions

Transactional functions are primarily concerned with the successful completion of tasks. Transformational functions go beyond the immediate task and build up to achieve targets that the organization or individual would not have otherwise expected to achieve. These functions increase power in the organization by empowering various groups and individuals. The functions fall in this category as follows:-

- **Visioning**: Managers create a vision for the organization. A vision is the dream that inspires people and makes them proud to work in the organization.
- **Modeling**: Another way to inspire people is to set a personal example of a desirable style and behaviour. Action speaks louder than words: people are more influenced by what the experience than by what they are told by managers.
- **Setting standards**: Closely related to modeling is the setting of standards or norms in the organization-standards of individual excellence, mutual support, creativity and innovation, and concern for each other. High standards and norms inspire individual employees to flow them in their own work.
- **Building culture and climate**: Managers pay great attention to building an organizational climate of excellence, commitment, mutual support, etc. They encourage analysis of various organizational practices and pay attention to mechanisms and practices that help to evolve a distinct organizational culture.
- **Boundary Management**: One of the principal functions of good leader is to create conditions conducive to better performance by various groups. This goal can be achieved

by ensuring continuous availability of resources and support from major customers and other external agencies. These functions concerning extramural matters constitute boundary management. Boundary Management also includes developing a strong lobby and inter-linkages for the organization.

- Synergizing: The strength of an organization depends on the strength of its teams. Team building is one of the roles of the management.
- Searching out and nurturing talents: Competent and committed individuals with a vision are the ultimate strength of an organization. Managers must pay attention to mentoring young talented subordinates.

#### Main characteristics of a Transformational leader

- Empowering.
- Risk-taking.
- Clarity of mission.
- Team-building.
- Equanimity.
- Evolving trust.

#### Power Enhancers in leadership

Leadership is increasingly seen as an instrument of empowerment. The influence or power of leaders is in proportion to their ability to confer power on people; such empowerment implies that leaders are prepared to shed their own power in the greater organisational interest. Leaders may enhance their real power by withdrawing somewhat from controlling functions. This is possible only when the leader is released from attending routine tasks. Leaders who spend a lot of time on allotting houses and vehicles to people will not have enough time to plan a new corporate vision. However, when leaders are relieved from attending to petty details, their real power and influence increases as they are able to perform more important tasks of envisioning, engaging in boundary management, lobbying for the organisation, etc. The most significant power enhancers are as follows:-

- Developing the competence of employees.
- Laying down clear rules and procedures.
- Developing systems to generate feed back for individuals.
- Providing intrinsically satisfying tasks.
- Understanding advisory and staff functions.
- Giving rewards determined objectively by a team rather than by an individual.
- Maintaining optimal spatial distance between different key functionaries.
- Building strong and cohesive teams.
- Encouraging self-government of teams. (such as self sufficient branches)
- Encouraging self definition of tasks.
- Defining a formalized and clear organizational structure.
- Initiate schemes to reward employees for ideas/ suggestions/ creativity.
- Nurture a professional orientation.
- Developing systems.

#### Leaders of Tomorrow

The leaders of tomorrow are already emerging. Various organizations in different parts of the world reveal features appropriate to the new era. These organizations have a different kind of culture and a new breed of leaders. The characteristics of such leaders can be grouped under two categories: personal qualities and role-related qualities.

#### Personal Qualities:

Following personal qualities characterize the new leaders:

- Internality: The new leaders take charge of what happens. They make things happen as they want them to happen. These leaders internal locus of control is high. They believe that they can influence most things around them.
- Maverick mindset: The Maverick mindset characterizes leaders who are vision driven and who develop competence, take moderate risks, learn from various sources, and empower their people to experiment and take responsibility.
- Optimism: optimism has been found to be the key element in leadership effectiveness in business.
- Self resistant: The ability to postpone gratification of one's immediate needs for a long term goal is of vital importance anywhere.
- Value orientation: Leaders of tomorrow will be value driven. Values make a significant difference to the image and effectiveness of the organization. Ethical considerations, personal integrity, and a sense of equity and justice are important values for leaders. Effective leaders place high value on empowerment, participation, and sharing of credit and gains.
- Social concern: Leaders with foresight are not only concerned about the success of their ventures and organization but are also alive to the needs of the community.
- Rootedness: While effective leaders become globally oriented, their roots in their own cultures will remain strong.
- Empowering: The main role of leaders will be able to create an enabling culture and empower people at all levels in the organization. This is done in several ways. Sharing information is one way to empower employees. Every month each worker gets a balance sheet, an analysis of profits and losses, and a cash-flow statement for his/her division. Education also empowers people. Workers are taught to read balance sheets and analyse financial statements.  
Participation in decision making is another effective means of empowerment. Employees had to say in their compensation policy. For this setting up of Jan Sabha (people's forum) by the management consisting of representatives of employees and senior top level managers is most essential. Its decisions are binding on the management. Elected representatives of the workers choose the HR manager from among the managers who have been with company for more than three years.

### Role-related Qualities

Characteristics related to the leadership role are:-

- Envisioning: The role of the leader is to create a unified vision out of the diverse visions of various groups in the organization, articulate it, inspire people with it, and concretize it into action.
- Strategy: The role of the leader is to strategize and prioritize. Strategizing involves developing priorities of action in a frame work geared to the direction of the organizations vision. Great leaders develop the capability of strategic thinking at all levels.
- An enabling structure: The new leaders are not satisfied with the traditional hierarchical structure. New structures are necessary to make organizations competitive and to enable them to remain leaders in their fields. New structure empowers people to take decisions and act. New networked organizational forms are characterized by flexibility, self-designing, self monitoring and learning from experiences.
- Customer orientation: All new leaders are concerned about customers. Interaction with customers, feed back from them, and even training of customers is part of their orientation.
- Net working competence: Leaders develop networking within their organizations and with strategic outside groups and organizations. The structure of the new organization is changing from hierarchical to networked, which reduces bureaucracy and empowers people at all levels.
- People first: The new leaders give high priority to searching out talent and retaining and developing it. The mentoring system is one way to nurture talent. Several companies have

strong educational programmes and the idea of corporate universities is becoming more popular.

- **Synergy building:** Team- building is now a high priority for effective leaders. Organisations are increasingly becoming team oriented.
- **Culture building:** Building an enabling and empowering culture becomes the key role of leaders of the new organization. The new organisational culture will promote learning, initiative, empowerment, teamwork and control through a vision. Another important part of the culture is openness. The new leadership is proactive and eager to learn from various sources. It believes in empowering and taking charge. New leaders are both assertive and empowering, emphasizing individual creativity and team performance.

#### Diamonds and Leaders are forever

Just as the diamond requires three properties for its formation-Carbon, Heat, and Pressure-successful leaders require the interaction of three properties-Character, Knowledge, and Application. Like carbon to the diamond, character is the basic quality of the leader. But just as carbon alone does not create a diamond, even character alone cannot create a leader. The diamond needs heat. Man needs Knowledge, study and preparation. The third property, pressure- acting in conjunction with carbon and heat- forms the diamond. Similarly according to General Edward Mayer, (American Army) one's character, attended by knowledge, blooms through application to produce a leader. With this leadership philosophy, our Army produced leaders of extraordinary characters. The Army Leadership Manual can be summarized in three simple words, 'Be, Know, Do'. These three words encapsulate in them the fundamental guidelines needed to create organizations where leadership thrives.

- **Be:** Leadership begins with what the leader must Be, the values and attributes that shape a leader's character. They refer to internal qualities-traits that define an individual and distinguish a leader. The basic set of values and attributes are the same for all leaders, regardless of position, although you certainly refine your understanding of them as you become more experienced and assume positions of greater responsibility. The first step is to yourself understand your values and principles, prioritize, and imbibe qualities that you admire and consider valuable from people around you. This leads to the development of character, which helps you know what is right from your perspective and from an organizational perspective. Character also helps you to translate knowledge into action, giving you the courage to do what is right regardless of the circumstances or consequences. Understanding and developing character is only the first step. Leaders who talk about honour, loyalty and selfless service, but do not live these values- both on and off duty-send the wrong message. A leader has to live the values and principles he teaches. He should set standards through his on conduct and behavior.
- **Know:** A leader must have a certain level of knowledge to be competent. That knowledge is spread across four skill domains. You must develop interpersonal skills- knowledge of your people and how to work with them. You must have conceptual skills- the ability to understand and apply ideas required to do your job. You must learn technical skills- know how to use tools and methods to improve productivity. Finally, leaders must master tactical skills, the ability to make the right decisions.
- **Do:** Character and knowledge- while absolutely necessary- are not enough. You cannot be an effective leader until you apply what you know, until you act and do what you must. Actions are the essence of leadership and they include influencing actions of the things you do to communicate and motivate, operational actions of the things you do to accomplish your organizations immediate mission, and improvement actions of the things you do increase the organization capability to accomplish current or future missions.

#### Successful leader of people

Suggestions for becoming a successful leader of the people are:-

- Setting clear expectations of staff.



- Recognizing excellence appropriately and facilitating staff in overcoming their weakness.
- Leading by example.
- Being able to empathize with employees.
- Showing adaptability to changing circumstances.

### Conclusion

Being a leader is not easy. There are no cookie cutter solutions to leadership challenges, and there are no shortcuts to success. However, the tools are available to every leader. It is up to you to master and use them. With all the day- to-day tasks you must do its easy to get lost in particulars. The Army leadership framework is a tool that allows you to step back and think about leadership as a whole. It is a canopy that covers hundreds of things you do every day. This leadership framework gives you the big picture and can help you to put your job, your people and your organization in perspective. All its pieces work in combination to produce something bigger and better than the sum of the parts.

The century of great leader is over; this is the century of leadership (leaders in large numbers at all levels). Our understanding of leadership is undergoing a drastic change. The past theories of leadership were concerned with leader's ability to get results and develop people. The new approach to leadership searches for empowering qualities in leaders. More emphasis is given to transformational rather than transactional functions. Attempts have been made to help to reduce the discretionary functions of leaders in order to enhance their real power. Organisations that do not attempt to create new leadership at all levels are likely to be left behind in the race of excellence and competition.

Be the leader of Character: embrace values and demonstrate leader attributes. Study and practice, so that you have the skills to Know your job. Then act, Do what's right to achieve excellence.

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