

VIBRANT HARMONIZATION OF LEADERSHIP- A MODEL FOR EXCELLENCE IN 21st CENTURY

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Abstract

True and effective leadership is that in which the leader's behavior and the exercise of the leadership influence process are consistent with ethical vision and moral values. This paper focuses on the emerging trends in the global economy in the 21st century. The contributors consider the effect of those trends on businesses and the new requirement for effective leadership. The paper addresses such topics as leadership in a non-linear world, leading human capital and the global economy and managing for creativity. This paper sheds light on some of the important aspects of leadership in the industry that will go a long way in developing a vibrant & healthy industry with quality agent force to rely upon.

Key words: Leadership, Vision, Integrity, Values, Empowerment.

Era of Improbability

In the past there was general sense of conviction about where we are going and how to get there. Successful corporations, powerful post-war economies and long established institutions were lashing the future like elongated opulence sedans on a wide-open freeway. The future it seemed belonged to them.

The lesson of the last three decades is that nobody can drive the future on cruise control. Today as we look at the future, the unsure future of organizations is clearly detectable. Infact one third of Fortune 500 companies aren't even there in the list seven years later. These all aspects have created a sense of exigency about the quality of leadership at all levels of organization. A series of corporate scandals is one of the forces behind this general concern.

Deregulation and privatization of markets worldwide resulted into cut-throat competition coupled with pressure for improvement in cost, eminence, cycle time and price performance. The appearance of global competition in industries such as textiles, shipbuilding, consumer electronics, semi conductors and automobiles creates new strain for effectiveness because firms must go beyond local standards. For example, Ford can't derive satisfaction by comparing itself with General Motors; it has to compare itself with Toyota, a global standard for efficiency.

Preparing for Tomorrow

Over the centuries, our view of the world has been shaped by Newtonian insight of reality, in which change appears to be linear, constant and to some extent conventional where A leads to B leads C leads D. But as the world becomes intricate and independent, change becomes increasingly non-linear, discontinuous and unpredictable. Therefore, future becomes less lie the past. We find A might lead to E, then on to K and suddenly to Z.

The fact is that future will not be a prolongation of the past. It will be a series of discontinuities. Accepting these discontinuities and doing something about them determines any chance of survival and success in twenty-first century. The exciting thing about discontinuity is that it breeds opportunity. It means that nobody owns twenty-first century. In order to grab the hold of future we have to unlearn the old models, old paradigms, the old rules, the old strategies, the old assumptions and the old success recipes.

Third-wave Companies

An interesting difference between the first-wave, second-wave and third-wave companies was made by Toffler. The first-wave com-

panies were built in the agricultural age. Second wave companies emerged during the industrial age; these were built for growth not for change. The third-wave companies are flexible, creative and innovative. In order to guide the new organizations towards the trail of advancement and affluence, self-motivated players are vital who will work as a team to elevate the success of the organization. Today the organization can't be created through continuous improvement but through drastic transform.

In the present scenario, the winners will be those people who stay ahead of the transform curve, creating novel markets, radiating new trails, continually redefining industries, reinventing the viable rules, challenging the status quo. According to Charles Handy, it will be those 'who invent the world' but not those who respond to it.

To guide these novel organizations and to endow with a sagacity of forethought and visualization, new kinds of leaders are imperative who will not be pleased to sit back and let the cruise control to do the driving. They will be forward looking, scanning the landscape, watching competition, spotting emerging trends and opportunities, avoiding impending crises. They will be explorers, adventurers and trailblazers.

Leader of Today

The foremost chore of today's leader is to help the organization and its members develop a sense of value, meaning and purpose. They should strive to create "a burning platform" for change. They must be value driven and performance oriented. They should lead and motivate people to do things right way, and to do the right things. In today's world we require dynamic leaders who articulate vision, empower people, driven by values and are clock builders rather than time tellers.

Vision

Competent leaders have agendas and they are result oriented. They espouse challenging new visions of what is both possible and enviable, communicate their visions, and persuade others to become committed to these new directions that they are eager to lend their resources and energies to make them happen.

For example, when C.E.O. John Carlzon articulated his vision to make Scandinavian Airline Systems (SAS) the best airline in the world for frequent business traveler, he was not saying anything that every air industry didn't already know. Business travelers fly more consistently than other market segments and are generally willing to pay higher fares. Thus focusing on business customers offers an airline the possibility of high margins, steady business and considerable growth. But in an industry known for bureaucracy than vision, no company had ever put these simple ideas together and dedicated itself to implementing them. John Carlzon did and it worked.

Great leaders thus demonstrate the capability to communicate the grand vision into smaller goals with clear road map without losing a sense of larger purpose and bigger picture. People move with the vision and purpose because it is exciting to be a part of something big. It creates meaning and charge people to channelise their energies. In present world we need leaders who know what is important to the organization and who have a dream, mission and strategic intent.

Empowering People

Empowerment refers to a process in which leader shares power with the followers. In simplest form, it is nothing more than sharing decision making power with others. Leader may empower followers by sharing resources with them allowing them to participate in the decision making process, and by giving them access to relevant and important information. In the words of Warren Bennis leader must create a social architecture that encourages incredibly bright people to work together successfully and to deploy their own creativity.

In INDAL (Indian Aluminum Company) motivation is governed neither by dangling rewards nor by threatening punishment. It is all about people: about placing them at the center of the organization's activities, and then giving powerful reasons to their work at the best of their abilities.

Values

Whatever human beings do is based on values. All business transactions are governed by the underlying value of trust. Value based leadership implies that the leader should follow a set of ethical and moral code. Tomorrow's successful leaders will value principles more than they value their companies.

Selflessness and working for common good is a vital part of value-based leadership. David Packard, one of the co-founders of Hewlett Packard (HP) exemplified this value. After his death, in a touching obituary The Economist observed, "Mr. Packard was always a gentleman, who insisted that his employees respect their competitors and never criticize them in front of customers. Today the business is full of predators, publicly contemptuous of their rivals, who preach such battlefield exhortations as "eat lunch or be lunch" and only paranoid survive...He was generous with his wealth. With his death, the Packard foundation's endowment will grow to \$6.6 Billion making America's third largest charity. He and Mr. Hewlett gave Stanford University more than \$300 millions."

According to Economist these values were reflected in the culture of HP, which is one of the most successful High-Tech Companies in history. HP practices pragmatic benevolence. It had never had a lay-off, and was one of the first firms to offer share options and profit related pay.

Clock Builder not Time Teller

Tom Peters rightly sums up the qualities of great leader. He says, "They concentrate on ticking clock rather than hitting on the market with just a product idea and riding on the growth of an attracting product cycle". Great leaders believe in architectural approach and concentrate on building an organization.

Imagine you met a person who could look at the sun or stars at any time of day or night and state the exact time and date. This person would be an amazing time teller, and we would probably revere that person for the ability to tell the time. But wouldn't that person be even more amazing if, instead of telling time he or she built a clock that could tell the time forever, even after he or she was dead or gone?

To quickly grasp the difference between Clock building and time telling, Jim Collins and Jerry Porras compared General Electric with Westinghouse in their early days. George Westinghouse was a brilliant product visionary and prolific inventor. He had the insight that the world should favour the superior AC electric system over Edison's DC system, which it eventually did. But Compare George Westinghouse to Charles Coffin, GE's first president. Coffin invented not even a single product but sponsored an innovation of great significance, that is the establishment of General Electric Research Lab, billed as "America's first industrial research laboratory". George Westinghouse told time; whereas Charles Coffin built a clock. Westinghouse's greatest creation was the AC power system; Coffin's greatest creation was General Electric Company.

In today's era, we need leaders who can create social architecture in their organizations by empowering their employees.

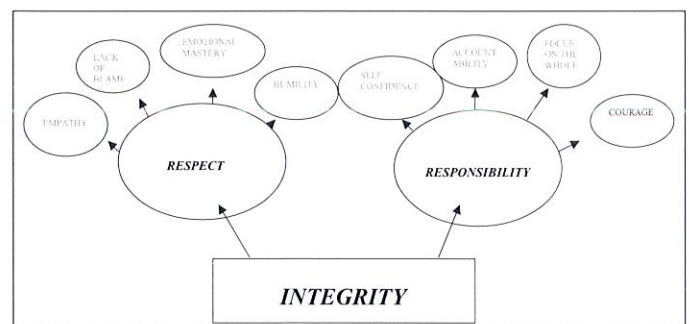
Model of Leadership Character

Today's leadership is hard work. Even those accustomed to power and responsibility will have to lead in ways that support and bring forth leadership from all employees. And those who have not yet accepted the challenge of leadership will have to assume a higher level of responsibility for their company's success. Those who succeed at leadership, at whatever level, will have developed strong leadership character.

As an aid to leadership development, a model of leadership character is proposed. It outlines core qualities that create the kind of underlying character that makes a leader worth following.

The foundation of leadership character – the base of the scales – is integrity. Without integrity, leadership behavior ring is hollow. Also notice that the leadership scale is balanced between the qualities of respect and responsibility. Integrity is reinforced and enhanced by developing those other qualities of character—and particularly by achieving a dynamic balance of respect and responsibility. When there is respect in an organization, everyone feels a sense of partnership in change efforts. There is equality and fairness. When responsibility is prevalent, each person is willing to take up and get behind change initiatives, and, to do so for the good of the entire organization.

Figure 1



Integrity is the most fundamental, basic attribute of character. Integrity is authenticity, knowing who you are and what you stand for, and being willing to let others know it too. It is also honesty – a willingness to tell the truth even when it is painful or difficult. Integrity is developed by ethical choice; to build it, you must be able to recognize ethical choices when they arise, reason your way through them, and stick to your convictions and decisions.

Leaders create a climate of respect when they develop and display the core character qualities of empathy, lack of blame, emotional mastery, and humility. Leaders who are empathetic understand what others are feeling and are consequently better able to connect

emotionally with followers. Change can produce concern and fear among followers, making the ability to understand, connect to, and modulate the emotional tone of the organization particularly critical.

Respectful leaders can also master their own volatile emotions, remaining clear and focused in the face of obstacles and encouraging others to remain courageous and on track. Anxiety in the leader produces anxiety in the follower, and anger in the leader produced resentment and passivity. Humility, which is lack of arrogance, is vital for keeping the communication channels open between leaders and followers.

Respectful leaders blame themselves or the environment for failure; they don't blame others. In Julius Caesar, William Shakespeare wrote, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, brings them on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and misery." This quote highlights the power of situations. Like a tide, situational conditions can determine the success or failure of an enterprise. Lack of blame involves focusing on situational conditions rather than personalities. Leaders must create dissatisfaction with the status quo in order to motivate a change process. To do so without assigning blame will make followers more receptive to the mandate.

The sense of partnership, participation, and fairness created by a respectful leader builds commitment, engagement, and a willingness to follow. When there's a climate of respect everyone may not be equal in terms of salary or position, but everyone's role is viewed as vitally important, and in one-on-one interactions, people are treated as equals. People want to follow a respectful leader. Responsibility is the other side of the leadership character scale. It includes the core qualities of accountability, self-confidence, courage, and focus on the whole. Integrity is greatest when leaders balance respect and responsibility.

Accountability is critical for managing change. Leaders must execute flawlessly and must be especially concerned with sustaining change. To do this, leaders must do more than demand that others be accountable. Responsibility means that a leader must also be accountable. Accountability on the part of a leader can build trust in followers. Leaders who are open about their performance, who are willing to admit mistakes, and who always keep promises, are easier to trust than those who are opaque, never wrong, and inconsistent.

Self-confidence and courage are qualities of responsibility that are at the very heart of change efforts. Think for a moment about the leaders of great societal change. They all had self-confidence and courage. The best leaders today should strive to have the courage of Martin Luther King and the self-confidence of Ronald Reagan.

Focus on the whole means that one is accountable not only to one's own division, or team, but for the organization as a whole. In a change process, this quality of leadership character means that a leader thinks holistically. Responsible leaders take seriously the needs and successes of the entire organization as a whole – thinking like an owner or a shareholder – and that kind of holistic, selfless responsibility inspires followers.

The power and necessity of these traits is especially clear when we consider leaders like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. They had no payrolls to dispense, no available carrots and sticks like hiring, firing or promoting. The only way they could move people to undertake the formidable was through strength of character.

Conclusion

In this age of uncertainty, organizations require new leaders who are capable of creating social architecture. Two constants of organizational life in today's global economy are 1) leaders must constantly grow, and 2) organizations must constantly change. Leaders who work to grow their knowledge are going to be the first to recognize strategic changes and first to point their companies in fruitful directions. Leaders who strive to balance learning and educating, science and intuition will meet their knowledge challenges. And finally, leaders who lead with character will likely be followed and emulated, building leadership character at all levels; strengthening the organization and the bottom line.

A leader of the future must have a compelling vision, a passion and an exciting aspiration. Successful leaders of tomorrow empower people, driven by values and build a ticking clock rather than telling times. These leaders will create enduring organizations, which are built to last.

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