

LIS 650

Leadership and Management: Final Treatise

Final Assignment

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I. Your Leadership and Professional Model

1) Leadership Mission and Values

Leadership Mission Statement: My goal as a leader is to ensure that I bring the people who will follow my directives a clear vision that is coordinated with “servant leadership” as I manage their needs.

In order for leadership to be effective, it should never be used as a weapon for superiors to be used against those who follow them. It has been demonstrated that reactions to authoritative leadership, no matter how well-intentioned, leads to a workplace environment of animosity and rejection (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). My goal would be develop a leadership style that avoids this approach by making it more collaborative in nature.

By doing this, I would be emotionally connected with those who would be working with me and I would be able to inspire them to give their best (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2004).

The key to establishing a successful vision for an organization requires not only a communication of that vision but also a receptive body of individuals to receive it. An old military saying has been that “a lack of information can kill you”; in the library environment, life and death is not on the table for implementing any changes in procedures, but it is important nevertheless. I will often be faced with changing existing procedures and it will be important to not only understand the impact those procedures not only on workflows but on the people who will execute those workflows on a daily basis. Having an emotional intelligence toward any

situation will be vital; that way, I will never be insulated from my employees at any time while keeping an “ear to the ground” about daily operations (Goleman et al., 2004).

During an my interview with the associate director of the Professional Center Library at Wake Forest University, he made a unique analogy about leadership: the leaders are the architects, the managers are the engineers, and the workers are the builders (Burris, 2009). I feel that this is a commendable way to approach leadership, because it places all of the elements of a successful operation in a direct relationship with one another, and it would be a concept I would reflect upon often.

Leadership Values

The values I would embrace would come from an amalgamation of the principles learned in the course. Each of these values would work in concert with another in order to build my vision of leadership as a whole.

Creativity. The ability to “think outside by the box” has frequently cited as a trait to making a good leader. I would take this concept even further as being able to look beyond “what is” and look forward to “what could be”. I would maintain a fresh perspective as I approach any task to see how it may be integrated into the operation as a whole.

Flexibility. I would never view any procedure or policy as “set in stone” and incapable of being changed. Rather, I would not be afraid to remove the trappings of how things have been done to see if there was a method to do it better and more efficiently. Further, I would have to recognize those items that could be easily changed in contrast to those that cannot without more effort and more players at the table.

Integrity. I want to be seen as a person who is reliable, dependable, and capable, and I would be as consistent as I could be on any decision that I would make. Further, I would not be

afraid to admit any mistakes I have made while working toward finding ways to prevent them from happening again in the future. I would also try to remain as impartial as possible while leading discussions about contentious issues, realizing that compromise would have to be the manner to settle any differences in viewpoint.

Listening. In the past, I have been frustrated by people who pay no attention to what I have had to say about any given situation. I would never make any significant change without understanding the culture and climate that would surround it, and I would guarantee that I have accounted for all points of view when I make a decision, especially if that decision was contrary to some I have heard. To those who would fall into that category, I would be certain to communicate why their ideas could not have been included at that time, while not closing the door to future involvement altogether.

Openness. I would provide every avenue for my employees to make their feelings known with any change in policy or procedure, particularly those that would affect them. Even though the final decision would rest with me, I would allow them to contribute to the conversation before that moment came. I would also maintain an “open door policy” to literally keep the flow of communication open at all times.

2) Your talents and personal/professional development plan

Currently, I have held a leadership role within my workplace before I began this course. As covered in *First, Break All the Rules* (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999) the talents that I have developed over the years were not necessarily what I have born with; rather, they have been developed with training, study, and experience over time. My talents- which from one perspective, could also be considered strengths, include:

- Good listening and communication skills.

- High cognitive and analytical skills.
- A fastidious nature, trying to use “I give up” as a last resort.
- A diplomatic perspective toward new situations.
- A willingness to try new ideas and/or technologies.

After having this course as a foundation to develop my skills further, I feel that I have a plan toward my future professional development. One of my favorite books has been *Creating the Customer Driven Library* because of the emphasis as people as the center of library operations, and I believe this is something that should not be ignored (Woodward, 2005). To that end, I would continue to hone my talents to keep people at the center of them, because any action would be incapable without people to shepherd and nurture them toward any satisfactory conclusion.

In this manner, I would continue to gird my role in leadership based upon these talents and the how they all relate toward the overall strengths of being an effective leader. Listening and communication skills are necessary to send out any ideas and receive the feedback as others absorb and reflect on them. The ability to rationalize and incorporate any changes would be the direct result of being able to have the cognitive abilities to incorporate them into the workplace. As a hard worker, I would not accept any difficult situation as one that could not be solved; instead, I would look at it as a chance to evaluate all sides to discover where the parts that do not work can be excised for ones that can. When dealing with library staff, vendors, or the library governing authorities, I would understand the field how a measure of diplomacy would have to be used effectively in order to achieve any results that would be favorable to the library as well as all interested parties. Finally, I would resist the call of continuity and the ease to fall back on procedures for workflows that cannot be continued in a changing environment. By combining

all of these talents, I would create a perspective that would continue to look toward the overall picture and future that would benefit all parties and create an environment of fluidity instead of stagnation.

II. Your Top Five Questions

At the beginning of this semester, I wrote down five questions that I hope to have answered by the end of the course. As the semester has reached its end, I can reexamine these questions again with a perspective that suggests that I can answer these questions for myself.

Question One: How does one establish a positive culture in one's environment?

Building upon the First Secret of “Deciding What You Want” from *Raving Fans* (Blanchard & Bowles, 1993), this is truly one that I have to decide that I want for myself. If I want to have a workplace that is truly positive and rewarding, it is my responsibility to make it happen. As a leader, I would have to establish this clearly in my vision and communicate it effectively in order to establish that culture from the very beginning (Lakos, 2007). Measuring the implementation of these ideas on a continuous basis would be the best way for me to measure if this is what I wanted to achieve and how it can be reached by continuous improvement (Lakos, 2007).

Question Two: How does one bridge the differences in generational philosophies?

As the library profession continues toward a multi-generational composite, there will be an ever-evolving landscape of library workers. Trying to get the “Baby Boomers” to relate to the “Millennial” generation can be a challenge at best and a conflict at its absolute worst. In addition, the changes in library technology and the approaches toward working life can be vastly different. A good manager would be able to incorporate the best of all of these generations together by focusing on their individual strengths while not emphasizing the fundamental

differences (Coulter, 2006). By recognizing that two people should be treated the same way because of differing needs, this would be another method to ensure that the concerns for each generation is addressed on a unique basis without an across the board approach (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

Question Three: How does one deal with inflexible people? Some people are not willing to bend on any issue, regardless of how it is presented. This can be traced to whether or not they can be a the “right fit” for an organization (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999) or whether or not they know what they want (Blanchard & Bowles, 1993). A critical factor, however, can be whether or the needs of these people have been successfully communicated to the leadership. For example, individuals who are part of “Generation X” may find themselves at odds with the leadership that does not share their views on what their goals and expectations should be, particularly if they do not match their own when they were once that age (Young, Hernon, & Powell, 2006). Emotionally intelligent leadership would be able to see past those differences and address them in a manner that would resonate with those individuals and regard their viewpoints as valued within the organization (Goleman et al., 2004).

Question Four: How does one collaborate across “silos”? A goal to foster more collaboration within the library or between the library and academic departments can present another set of challenges. Library departments can frequently regard their perspectives as paramount, incapable of being challenged by outsiders. Further, academic departments can view themselves as the authorities on a particular subject and one that does not need the perspective from those who do not share their scholarship within a particular discipline. To bridge these silos, library leadership must frequently communicate its expectations toward these projects (Fitsimmons, 2007). This will help to allay some of the ambiguities from such a partnership as

well as remind the group of the true goal of this type of collaboration: to serve the needs of the patrons. When the patrons are able to find the materials they need to reach their own goals of study or curiosity, then the library has indeed fulfilled its mission (Woodward, 2005).

Question Five: How does one “flatten” the chain of command? Library organizations should never be viewed as static entities; they should be able to adjust and evolve as the collective culture within the parent institution changes over time. The organizational structure of a library should also remain fluid, but this is clearly dependent upon the leadership to respond to this idea. The so-called “graying” of the profession has led to a new type of leadership to enter libraries, and their perspectives toward a current structure may differ with past practices (Hernon, Powell, & Young, 2003). It is important that those persons who make leadership become fully acclimated to the library culture before making significant changes, and a strategic plan would be the best tool to make this happen (Chow, 2009).

III. Applying principles of leadership and management laterally or upwards

As emphasized during the course, the chances of being hired into a senior leadership position immediately after completing library school are remote at best. In any case, the concepts that had been introduced in this course can be incorporated into the workflow of even an entry-level librarian. These concepts can become a foundation for potential leadership opportunities for the potential to move upward in the organizational structure.

Leading laterally. The concepts of the Three Secrets (Blanchard & Bowles, 1993) and the Twelve Questions (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999) can be applied to simplest of needs within the basic framework of a library department. By communicating within this workgroup, I can work to implement these ideas within a staff meeting, a smaller group meeting, or even on an

individual basis. By discovering my needs own needs as well as my co-workers, I am able to communicate them to the direction that they need to be heard, whether to another co-worker or to the head of the department. I can hope to build an area of trust and reliability as a person who is willing to learn about any situation or procedure and then aid in its delivery or implementation.

I can also serve as a change agent on other fronts. I can submit ideas toward the strategic plan, participate in budget planning sessions, give feedback in meetings, and be able to ask questions that would make a collective difference. I would also recognize when I may have gone too far with a perspective that could be considered too brash or extreme, and make amends when someone may have been offended. Also, I would be able to understand that not all of my ideas may be used for a project at a particular time; I could hold them in reserve for a later time and work to make sure that the project as presented is successful.

Leading upwards. I would plan to keep these concepts as I continued to advance through the profession. I would move outside the library itself serving on committees of significance on the local, state, or national level that would involve people who I would not work with on a daily basis. Still, I would not forget the foundations that I had learned, especially in terms of collaboration and organizational management: even though I may not be the overall leader, I may the leader within a particular area and I would have to make certain that I would have all of my affairs in order for the moment I have to present them. This would demonstrate that I could be tasked with any new responsibility and deliver on it, while being able to work with others in any new setting.

Within my own library, I would be able to serve a variety of roles in library leadership. I may be given the opportunity to lead a library committee, serve as a liaison between the library and an academic department, participate directly with the development of a strategic plan,

become heavily involved in budgetary planning or personnel searches, or even design new procedures and workflows. Regardless of all of this, it still comes back to the concepts of the Three Secrets, Twelve Question, Four Keys (Goleman et al., 2004), and placing people first (Woodward, 2005).

In order to regard these concepts as the culmination of a career, they must be built one at a time and constantly revised. This is where true growth and experience begins for the future.

IV. Final thoughts about your leadership and management potential and future

This course has presented many concepts and challenges that I will carry with me into my future career as a professional librarian. However, there were two concepts that particularly stuck with me in terms being a current manager and a potential leader. First, the concept of having a best friend at work, as described in the Twelve Questions (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999), may not be of a direct consequence since no two working situations are exactly the same. Rather, it is good to have people who can be those who relate to me the best in any given situation and I can turn to at difficult moments. That network can be invaluable as a person moves upward in levels of responsibility.

Next, the perspective of hiring for talent is something that every manager should embrace. No person can know it all, so it is always good to hire for the best interests of the company as well as the mutual benefit to a manager. A manager should never be afraid to hire someone who may be smarter than people than he or she is; this person may bring a skillset that can benefit the organization in ways that have cannot be calculated. A wise manager can nurture these talents to their best outcome, and the reward would be to let those individuals go on to make a difference in a new area of their choosing.

Managing is not so much of a science as an art, and I have known some poor artists in my time. Still, I feel that this course has made me a much better artist to create a work of art based on my own vision. The medium may not be one I get to choose, but I can make it the best, regardless of what it happens to be.

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