First Time Leadership

The Leadership Identikit

Much of what we understand about managing versus leadership stems from the research of Warren Bennis and Burton Nanus. Together, they identified the behaviours displayed by managers and leaders as follows:

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| **Leaders** | **Managers** |
| Do the right things. | Do things right. |
| See people as great assets. | See people as liabilities. |
| Are committed. | Control. |
| Are focused on outcomes. | Apply and follow rules. |
| Ask ‘what’ and ‘why’. | Ask how things should be done. |
| Share information. | Comply. |
| Network. | Are secretive. |

Since their ground-breaking work, our understanding of leadership has evolved. We recognise, for example, that leadership is not determined by hierarchy, but by behaviours, relationships and the ability to influence others.

Think about the people you consider to be leaders, and the managers you have encountered. How many of these behaviours do you recognise?

| **Leaders** | **Managers** |
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| Create a sense of energy and momentum. | Ensure the stability of the system. |
| Provide conditions for people to manage themselves. | Are concerned with controlling conditions and others. |
| Transform the way people think and behave. | Are focused on transactions – getting the job done. |
| Inspire people with a vision, sense of purpose and a goal. | Rely on legitimate power to achieve results. |
| Push the boundaries; innovate. | Follow the rules. |

| **Leaders** | **Managers** |
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| Motivate and empower people to achieve results. | Allocate resources to get a job done. |
| Proactively create change and ensure others embrace it. | Implement changes in reaction to events. |
| Tend to take their followers from one place to another. (The word ‘lead’ means to go from.) | Handle things. (The word ‘manage’ means to lead by the hand.) |
| Are courageous enough to create a new path. Acts as a trailblazer. | Focus on proven processes and work methods. |
| Remove barriers and enable others to do the things they know need to be done to achieve a common vision. | Allocate tasks to other people. |
| Focus on relationships: selecting, motivating, coaching and building trust. | Focus on function: Planning, budgeting, evaluating and facilitating. |
| Act authentically according to their values. | Comply and support the status quo. |
| Take a long-range perspective. | Adopt a short-term view based on the ‘here’ and ‘now’. |
| Focus on releasing potential. | Focus on checking things are done right. |

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| Notes: |

Putting on the Style

* Case Study

Introduction

Nicola is a team leader at Surprize!, a company producing prize packs and goodie bags for corporate events. She is relatively new as a team leader and is responsible for a team of eight who assemble very up-market goodie bags for major corporate functions. This end of the company’s business produces high returns, and the company is keen to develop the market more extensively.

Nicola has a number of ideas for improving work processes and re-organising her team. She calls it her “grand plan”. One part of this plan that she is most keen on is a new computer system she has recently had installed. This enables customers to order on-line and provides a tracking system for the progress of each order. She is very enthusiastic about what she regards as “her baby” and is finding it difficult to understand why her team don’t share her enthusiasm. This is causing problems within the team, and recent performance and productivity has plummeted.

This morning Nicola had a regular meeting with her manager who raised concerns with her about her team’s recent performance. He/she has asked Nicola to form a plan to tackle the problems.

After meeting her manager, Nicola met with three of her team leader colleagues, Pete, Steven and Jenny and asked for advice. This is how the conversation went:

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| Pete | Okay Nicola, fire away, what’s the problem? |
| Nicola | There seem to several all rolled into one. Basically, the team’s performance has dropped off considerably of late. As you know Peggy and Eva retired recently and everyone seems to miss them. They had so much knowledge and experience. The new staff I took on to replace them have yet to settle into the team and they’re not up to speed with the work.  Then there’s my new computer system – they’re really struggling with it. I really needed to show what an improvement it had made – I felt I needed a quick win to establish credibility with my boss. But it’s a disaster at the moment and I’m thinking of ditching it. |

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| Nicola | It’s slowing them down and we’re missing things on the order screens like special requests or urgent deadlines. Oh and they haven’t got to grips with the idea of a customer reference number rather than a name. So last week we had a huge mix-up: 100 “beer and skittles” packs were sent to the Marthorpe Festival of Beauty Convention rather than the “Little Luxuries” packs. They went to the Marthorpe Festival of Beer. It’s not funny Pete!  It’s such a simple system I didn’t think they’d need much training so I’ve just done a few orientation sessions, but they seem to be making such a meal of it.  Overall, the amount of re-packing and double checking has shot up and consequently we’re missing dispatch deadlines. As you might guess my manager’s none too happy about it. |
| Jenny | I wondered what was going on. My team in dispatch was tearing their hair out last week when your conference packs didn’t turn up on schedule. We had to put in a whole load of overtime to meet the deadline. |
| Nicola | I’m sorry about that Jen, I really am. |
| Pete | So, what are you going to do? |
| Nicola | I’m not sure. I’d really appreciate some advice. I’ve talked to the team and they’re not happy about their performance levels. They say that they’re willing to learn to use the computer system but none of them have much confidence in it. Really what I think they’re saying is that they haven’t much confidence in me. I think they’d prefer to stick to the old ways of working – they can’t see what great opportunities this system will open up in terms of new business and expansion. I’ve got it all planned out, but I don’t want to talk about it until they’ve settled down again. I just don’t trust them to get things right at the moment. I’m having to keep a close watch on every order, but I can’t sit on their shoulders for ever. I feel really stressed because it’s my reputation on the line. |

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| Steve | Well, for what it’s worth I’d give it to them straight. As you say it’s your reputation on the line. Lead from the front. Set out exactly what you want them to do and how, and by when. Give them some structure and let them know who’s boss. They get well paid for what they do and they’re responsible to you for carrying out your instructions. Give them some training by all means, you could even do it after work so you don’t interrupt their day and pay them overtime. That should provide an incentive. But in the end, if they don’t pull their socks up, individually and collectively, then I’m afraid it’s the high road for them. It isn’t as though they’re doing a specialist job with specialist skills. |
| Jenny | I’m not so sure Steve. There’s more to this than a performance hiccup – all teams get those from time to time. I think you need to look at the bigger picture. Show them how the business is going to develop and what your plan is. Explain how they could be involved and what it would mean to them. Make it exciting and appealing for them. Then plug away at it. Take every opportunity you can to sell them on the plan – in team meetings, at break times, in the canteen and so on. Work with them to map out how you’re going to achieve your plan. It doesn’t matter if you don’t see the detail, they can help you work it out. Part of the detail will be about restoring their performance levels and moving forward to bigger and better things. In some ways I envy you Nicola, it’s an exciting time for you and you should make the most of it. Once you start to implement the plan you’ll need to be seen to be leading from the front – in the thick of it as it were. If you take this approach, you’ll not only be able to quietly monitor their performance, but you’ll also be able to move away from the short-term problem and into the long-term direction that you’re setting. |
| Steve | Whew! You sound very passionate about it and it’s not even your plan! I don’t know where you get your energy from. You’d wear me out in a couple of days. But I can’t agree with you. The issue is here and now, in front of Nicola. She needs to tackle it strongly and firmly. The future can wait a bit longer. She hasn’t time for it at the moment. |
| Nicola | What about you Pete? What would you do? |

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| Pete | I’m a quiet sort of guy. I prefer my actions to speak for me. What would I do? Well, you’ve got a pretty upset team at the moment, and I think you need to acknowledge that and consider their thoughts and feelings. You need to restore some sort of peace and harmony.  You say they’re motivated to get back to their normal level of performance, so give them some credit for that. Now I’m not saying this is easy, but I think a bit of personal humility might be needed – you should take responsibility for their failures. They’ve had little success with “your” computer system. Why is that? Think about it.  You talk of ditching the system but If you really believe in it then you should push on with it. But, put matters in hand to provide training and support for your team. Think about what they need from you at this moment rather than thinking about what you need for a “quick win”.  As far as the immediate problem is concerned, why not discuss with them what they think they need to do. Get them to think about what they value in the old ways of working and whether these values will transfer to the new. Trust them to work out their own improvement plan. Trust is the key here for me. If you show that you trust them, then, when you need them to trust you, they will.  At the end of the day, I think you want the team to say, “we did it” not “you did it”. |
| Steve | So, Nicola, there’s our combined wisdom – what are you going to do? |

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| Notes: |

Leadership Style

Learning Points

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| Notes: |

Motivators

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| A time in my working career when I have felt very motivated, *and why*: |

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| A time in my working career when I have felt very de-motivated, *and why*: |

What Motivates You?

Rank the following by allocating points to each element based on how important YOU think it is to you in terms of motivation. Allocate 10 points to the element you think is most important, 9 to the next most important, and so on, until you allocate just 1 point to the element you think is of least importance to YOU.

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Score** | **Element** |
| A |  | A reasonable salary and good job security. |
| B |  | Not having to work too hard. |
| C |  | A lower basic salary, but the chance to earn significant bonuses. |
| D |  | Recognition for the work you do. |
| E |  | Getting along with colleagues. |
| F |  | Getting on with your boss. |
| G |  | Job satisfaction. |
| H |  | A chance to do something new and challenging. |
| I |  | A good chance of promotion. |
| J |  | Improved working conditions. For example, air conditioning, more space, comfortable chair, and quicker computer. |

This survey is based on the findings of Frederick Herzberg. Herzberg found that, first and foremost, ‘Hygiene Factors’ need to be in place. Hygiene factors do not in themselves motivate, but if they are missing, they can act as de-motivators.

Hygiene Factors

* The organisation’s policy and administration.
* The relationships we have with others at work.
* Salary.
* Job security.
* Working conditions.
* Status.

Motivation is based around the second set of factors, which are identified as Motivators.

Motivators

* A sense of achievement.
* Gaining recognition for the things we’ve achieved.
* Opportunities for advancement.
* The nature of the work itself.
* Development opportunities.
* Responsibility.

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| Notes: |

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| Things I can do to improve my own/others' motivation: |

Action Plan

This is your opportunity to reflect on what you have learnt and identify the actions you will take as a result.

| My Goal | What specific actions do I need to take to achieve this goal? | When will I complete these? | What additional support do I need? | How am I doing? Use this space to monitor progress. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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| How will I know I have achieved my goal? |
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Building Strong Bridges

In this exercise, we looked at some of the fundamental things a leader can do to make a difference to team performance.

Make a note of your top 5 learning points in the space below:

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| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |

Now make a note of the best 5 learning points from others in the group:

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| 1 |  |
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Blind Guiding

- Exploring Leadership and Followership

Learning Points

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| How will I know I have achieved my goal? |
|  |  |  |  |
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