

LEADERSHIP DIMENSION OF MANAGER'S WORK

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During the last fifteen years there is a visibly profound publication boom related to the topic of leadership in scientific journals. It seems that the traditional tasks of a manager are limited, and they do not satisfy modern needs. Calling for leaders does not appear only at the top management level (where leadership is automatically expected), but also at the middle and lower management levels. There is an increased demand for leaders or managers with excellent leadership skills. This situation has been developed by the changes in the environment in the area where managers perform. The dynamics and complexity of the external environment have increased greatly. The external environment creates many new situations which need fast and intuitive reactions. Excellent managers have to find effective solutions in this complicated environment. The corporate internal environment has changed as well, and companies employ more educated and skilled employees with higher levels of self-activity and assertiveness. Work performance is more complicated and sophisticated, but there is also more information, more work, and more psychological pressure on employees in the company. The solution to this complicated and changeable environment, which is full of conflicting concerns, is to strengthen the leadership dimension of management, enabling it to find simplicity in complexity and the right direction in dynamics. Leadership, as a management function, is exceptional among other management functions, because it comprises individualism, skills, and gained leadership competencies that are closely connected to their holders. Therefore, there is a question as to how to cultivate and develop leadership skills not only in potential managers, but also in current executive managers.

1. The Allegory of Leadership in Modern Management

In management literature many expressions occur, such as: management, human resource management and sometimes leadership. Considering the leading role of management literature (which is written in English) and its utilization of the word „leadership“, it is best to apply the same word in domestic language which is the exact equivalent of the original term leadership. Expressions, such as „leadership methods“ can be considered as avoiding the best tailored expression due to their unpleasant, mostly historical associations. The ideas and definitions of leadership were influenced by historical evolution, where they denied and also connected with each other to a certain level. In the beginning, there was a theory about a brilliant figure who contained inherent and extraordinary abilities at a heroic level. The theory of attributes was less ambitious, and it tried to isolate the attributes of leaders, but an overall and unified file of attributes has not yet been formed. The theory of power and influence applies to the construction of power leadership, and it does not take into account other factors of successful leadership, e.g. gaining disciples. Behavior theory probably represents a leadership topic in the best way, because it analyses more of what leaders do in reality than in investigating their attributes. A practical extension of behaviorism is situation theory which takes into account that the situations determine the kind of leadership. In various

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situations, we can find different kinds of leadership. A contingent theory tries to rationalize the situation theory, and it identifies the situational variables which could determine the leadership suitable for specific (existing) situations. Transaction theory is newer, and it focuses on relations between a leader and his followers. Those relations sometimes have a kind of trade-off nature. For example, a leader offers a kind of allowance or interesting job (work) as a trade for adherence and respect. Attributive theory shifts the attention from the leader to the followers, and it observes the reasons why the followers award the leadership to a certain person. Transformation theory focuses on internal incentives of the followers in order to be involved in fulfilling the corporate objectives. Leadership concepts have been developed from simple and predetermined attributes of leaders to the description of leadership activities and factors that can influence them. The concepts have reached the level of examining the quality of relations between leaders and followers. The allegory of leadership has been constantly expanded by more or less connected approaches.¹

Leadership does not develop only as a theoretical image of reality, but it contains gradation also on the level of a concrete person. J. C. Maxwell has arranged an approach of five levels of leadership which enables us to realize a level of leadership evolution and also an area for improvement²:

1. Position – law. People follow a leader, because they have to.
2. Acceptance – relations. People follow a leader, because they decide to.
3. Productivity – results. People follow a leader, because they know what he has done for the organization.
4. Human attributes development – extension. People follow a leader, because they know what he has done for them.
5. Personal power – respect. . People follow a leader because of who he is and what he represents.

On the first level there is a fear, and on the second one is sympathy (affinity). On the third level we can find admiration, and the fourth one is adherence (attachment). The highest level is charisma, which can be achieved by whole-life experience and effort. Leadership is not only a static summary of attributes, situations and activities. This summary is dynamic, and it is developed in the interactions of all its factors.

An important and relatively recent paper about leadership gradation was written by J. Collins. He studied leaders in business who have changed their average companies to long-run excellent companies. The way to top leadership he divided into five levels³:

1. Extremely competent person: He contributes to the company by his talent, knowledge, skills, and his very good work habits.
2. Team contributor: He contributes to the team by his individual attributes, and he works effectively with his team members.
3. Competent manager: He organizes people and sources toward effective fulfillment of corporate objectives.
4. Effective leader: He is an accelerator of commitment and fulfillment of a bright and excellent vision. He motivates higher performance standards.
5. Leader of the fifth level: He constructs permanent brilliance and finesse through a paradoxical mixture of personal submission and professional will.

The significant finding of Collins' study is the time-limited influence of radiant and geocentric leaders with celebrity status for the long-run success of the company. Their influence is time-limited in comparison with modest, obscure (retiring), and arduous leaders of the 5th level. The influence of the leaders of the 5th level lasts for a long time even after they leave the organization.

A leader's expectations are that he can find fast and effective solutions for all situations, even from dead-end situations. The leader should also manage everything in

uneasy situations without being given extra resources. He should find a break-even point (a transition point or a kind of recoil or break point⁴) where the highest concentration of factors affecting the organization is. In all companies there are people, arrangements, and activities that have disproportionate effects on corporate performance, considering their quantity, amount, or intensity.

Among many leadership definitions and descriptions we can find in literature many leadership styles, but less attentive readers can change these styles with the attributes of leaders or with the activities which leaders do. Leadership style has its own content, and that is the way of leadership performance. The key question is: "How does a leader realize leadership activities?" That means that the same activity can be done in different ways. He can choose one of the basic leadership styles from among the autocratic, democratic, liberal, or laissez-faire styles⁵. He can also be inspired by Likert's styles, and he can choose from among the exploitive-authoritative, benevolent-authoritative, consultative, or group-participation styles⁶. For both taxonomies, there is a similar range from a rigid style up to a liberated behavior. The choice of the style can be affected by a person, but it is better to make that decision through a situational approach. Another interpretation of leadership styles is offered by Blake and Mouton. Their research identified two priorities of a leader, such as work performance and employees (his relations with employees). An ideal leader is a leader who maximizes his interest for both priorities. However, it is not excluded that the situational approach is evaluated as an more effective combination of priorities.

Many time-related leadership definitions are offered by G. Yukl⁷. According to him, each definition takes into account a kind of key moment. The only accordance can be found that leadership is a meaningful influence made by one person on other people in order to regulate and lighten activities and relations in the organization. Complex leadership characteristics will have an eclectic character, but with a pragmatic idea of eloquent description. The question is: What does a leader do?

* He inspires (gives direction). He comes up with an attractive idea that is admired by employees. They participate in the development of the idea. He is a creator of perspective and hope.

* He influences (obtains others to his side). He commands (manages) employees' attitudes and changes them for the sake of the organization. His influence can be related to his power, personality, personal example, and arguments. He is the creator of an atmosphere and corporate culture.

* He persuades. He explains and argues for the sake of vision and also for partial objectives. He clarifies his approach and opinions in order to ensure mutual understanding.

* He encourages. He is a source of energy and positive example. He promotes and appreciates positive results and loyalty. The leader gives his employees (higher) self-esteem, and he believes in people. He is an agitator (for positive change and action.)

* He motivates. A leader identifies incentives and obstacles, and he motivates or even demotivates in an effective way. He gives a space for self-execution (realization) and he offers feedback. He defines the appropriate level of gratuity (reward) and sanctions (consequences).

* He develops the confidence of others. (He gives a feeling of security, and he eliminates distress). He offers support and help together while being reliable. A leader determines a tolerant range of work freedom and has the same working conditions as the others. He is always visible; his words and acts are in accordance. He is a protector.

* He unifies his followers. A leader is in the centre of what is happening. He gains respect due to his personal, professional, and work attributes. He identifies interest and motivational group stratification. He is able to orient on moods and feelings. He can understand needs and wants. He is a politician.

2. Rebirth from a Specialist to a Leader

The role of the manager and of the leader cannot be separated, and even it is not important to separate those two roles. Even a manager on the lowest level has to apply some leadership abilities, and he has to have at least a minimum of leadership abilities. It is obvious that from the bottom to the top (from lowest to highest) the leader's competencies are expanded and deeper as well. This transformation from the manager role to a leader role is not simple, and not everyone can deal with that, because it shows a profound difference in the management. Old competencies are not so important, or not important at all, and new competencies are not developed yet. According to J. Kotter⁸ (who deals with leadership changes), management consists of planning and budgeting (cost calculation), organizing and staff selection (employee selection), controlling and problem-solving. The task of a manager is to create an order and anticipation which are important for achieving short-run results in the company as well satisfying interest groups. According to J. Kotter, leadership content contains a direction (a future vision) as well as employee recruitment (such as communication, cooperation, teams and coalitions). Leadership also contains motivation and inspiration (how to overcome barriers and the bureaucracy of stated rules). The objectives of a leader are to form changes and to create coalitions for their implementation. A leader also creates and communicates a vision, he leads his employees, and he achieves short victories. He applies these victories into other changes which he integrates into corporate culture. While the role of the manager is understood more technocratically due to standard situations, the role of a leader is perceived to be more political and ideological due to nonstandard situations. Managers try to find assurance and lean toward the past and present. Leaders look forward; they create a perspective and they take hold of the future.

If the rebirth of a manager to a leader is difficult, we can say that the rebirth of a specialist to a manager and a leader is even more complicated. A specialist with a desire to be a manager should realize if he really wants that role. He will have to create good relations with people of various interests and perspectives. He will also have to be responsible for other peoples' work, and he should delegate it successfully. This person should coordinate all employee efforts, motivate others, and keep work ethics as well. He should also be able to deal with conflicts and stress, and he should be successful in solving personal problems. While previously the career of this person was based on his own personal results, in the manager position his work will be evaluated through the work of his employees. As an expert (specialist) he was given direct work instructions, but as a manager he will deal with vague objectives, and even sometimes he will have to come with them and create them. The time limit for decisions will be limited, and he will have to make decisions based on imperfect information. Furthermore, everybody expects pragmatic decisions. The speed of making decisions has the same importance as the decision-making process itself. His overall understanding the role of being a boss often can be unpleasant. An excellent specialist moved to management is responsible for his colleagues who expect brisk and brave decisions, and a critique of inefficient colleagues. He delegates tasks, and he gives allowances. Sometimes he can expect not the best response, or even sometimes he has to give up a friendship. Working in a permanently uncertain context can be a source of stress from possible mistakes or errors (especially for a former specialist who has been always informed at the highest level). After a former specialist achieves a certain management routine, still he realizes his experience is relative. The experienced leader knows that the length of experience can vary, and there is not a guarantee that experiences are valid forever. A leader learns constantly during his professional career. He reregisters his experiences and competencies, and, if necessary, he changes his skills and his understanding of the environment.

A leader is expected to have the right orientation in a dynamic, difficult, and non-linear world. He is also expected to detect and select the right opportunities. He should keep a creative organization anxiety and a leader should build an internal environment of the organization friendly to changes. An active and long-sighted leader increases the sensibility of the organization to the external world. He finds short-cuts and intuitive acts to complex problems emphasizing the fundamentals. This leader generalizes difficult clusters of information, and he does everything with the sense that his acts can be measured by real and measurable results.

3. Leadership Professionalism

Leadership is a part and especially an extension to the management profession. Leadership is a component of management, but it is not realized (in comparison with planning, organizing, the decision-making process, motivation, controlling, and other functional areas of management) in organizational norms, directives, codes (formulas) and regulations. It cannot be programmed or put into a kind of software as well. The leader's activities cannot be formalized, and they are connected with a concrete person. Experience and actions accumulated in the organization can play the role of an example and an appeal, but they have to have an addressee with similar personal and career assumptions. In spite of these reasons which question the transfer and expansion of leadership competencies, it is necessary to find ways and methods which would lead to higher leadership professionalism in order for leadership to have the level of professional qualification.

Education and leadership training do not represent a strength of academic research or of the literature about leadership. Even J. Collins⁹, who focuses on permanent excellent companies in his research, does not devote his full effort to leadership of the 5th level. He writes that lower leaders use their work effort to *obtain* fame, wealth, public acknowledgement or power. Lower leaders are not able to control their egocentric needs for higher ambition that would overcome their personal interests. Leaders (with assumptions) from the 5th level *construct and contribute*. In the right conditions, their assumptions start to develop the right conditions such as self-reflection; conscious personal development; influenced by good mentors, teachers, or parents; profound life experiences; or other factors). Leaders from the 5th level are currently (with high probability) in the environment and situations where excellent results are achieved, but no person claims a recognition for that. There are not existing reliable (authentic) proofs about the way to get to the 5th level. It is visible that the company remains excellent even after the long-run leader left. These leaders give their ambitions to company development. They care about the corporate success more than their own personal sake and fame. These leaders are not egocentric; they are humble and decisive, and furthermore they are able to do whatever for the company to be famous. There is a strong need which pushes them forward to achieve *results*. Almost all successful leaders came from the core of the company; they were quiet, determined, and hardworking. They considered their responsibility for any failure, and they appreciated their colleagues as the biggest contributors for any success. These leaders considered their unspoken leadership as a service. It seems that leaders grow up where there are higher expectations in work results, which encourages and motivates their personal development.

Other research shows¹⁰ that leadership can be educated by training. Leaders have become effective due to permanent learning, and they constantly analyze and explore everything. If it is necessary, they change their skills and abilities to all kind of impulses in order to move forward. Their education is individually and practically oriented. This education should help at the right moment when it is needed to react to real and urgent appeals. Traditionally leaders grow in a natural way if there is an excellent mixture of

personal attributes and external situations. There are no schools or competitions where there could be leadership education or selection. The need to have leaders, or at least leadership in management, has increased. It is not possible to rely only on born leaders, extensive education, or on luck. Leadership professionalism focuses on a systematic preparation of the right candidates who show elementary leadership attributes and abilities which they can develop. Due to the development of these abilities, they lead groups with work results above standard levels. Leaders with ambitions and direction should be supported and helped, although the elite in our society does not have the right sound and tradition. Leadership is related to skill and competency. Their improvement requires more live and practical activities than book education.

Leadership training takes place through behavior role-modeling (demonstration and role play) and discussion about case studies. If the training is more difficult and complex, business games and simulations are often used. The training is time-limited in advance, and it is done under out-of-the workplace specialist supervision. **Experience learning**, in spite of many action and target techniques, still has an irrecoverable impact. Its quality is influenced by the size of appeal, variation of tasks, and the quality of the feedback. In the last decade many so-called development activities have appeared. Among them we can find source feedback, work rotation, action learning, mentoring, coaching, outdoor programs, and personal development programs. These development activities can be an organic part of work tasks, or they are executed in a combination with them. Individual or **self-preparation**, without a coach or instructor, help is an asset as well. It includes literature study, video program watching, listening to sound records, and using interactive computer programs.

Among these explicit methods leaders leave some kind of "memory footprint" in the corporate culture. They are interested in their followers, and they cultivate the organizational environment for the leader talents to appear and develop. Leadership should eliminate the need for being unbeaten up to a certain level. It should be more civilized and formalized, although in its highest performance it will always be exceptional and original. Descriptive education about leadership makes sense in conditions of expanding knowledge about this phenomenon. This education should also understand the importance of leadership itself. There is a way how to get from the essence and forms of leadership to its real application. This way is a combination of various approaches where leadership skills training will dominate and their verification and development in everyday and even critical situations. This training is done under personal feedback and the feedback of various people, such as employees, tutors, coaches, or other external observers.

Literature

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