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UNIVERSITY

Case Study – HBR on Leadership That Gets Results



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Case Study 3 – Leadership That Gets Results by Daniel Goleman

In considering the individual personalities that go into the makeup of a team, it is only appropriate to imagine that there isn't a "one size fits all" approach to leadership. In the article considered for this case study, author Daniel Goleman shares survey data which show the outcomes of different leadership styles. Each style requires some level of applied emotional intelligence. The article goes into depth to explain the specifics of six different styles and accompanies with examples of when and when not to use the styles. As suggested, discretion seems to be the key. The most promising aspect of the study is that emotional intelligence can be learned. Through self-assessment, leaders can identify lacking abilities and improve through conscientious practice. Once developed, effective leaders will leverage the best style to use for the given situation.

The Makeup of Emotional Intelligence

Toward the end of the article, the author defines emotional intelligence by saying that it is the "ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively—consists of four fundamental capabilities: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skill." Having command of these four dimensions will enable a leader to have control of one's own emotional well-being and motivational focus that drives themselves and others. Additionally, the four dimensions and mastery of all allow them to be keenly aware of their social surroundings and engage effectively to meet satisfy the needs of those they serve. Emotional intelligence transcends self-interests and helps a leader to know and respond to dynamic needs of the environment he or she is surrounded by.

The Less Effective Styles

The evidence conclusively suggests that forced or coercive leadership is least effective of all of the styles considered. "Coercive", itself is an actual style and "pacesetting" derivative form of this style.

Both have self-serving motives to manipulate followers into a desired outcome. The style of each, in a phrase, are “do what I tell you” (coercive) and “do as I do, now” (pacesetting). Between the two, “pacesetting” is more geared on performance expectations but demotivates through unrealistic demands. Both share similarities in that they stifle creativity and discourage ideas from the team. Each has application, but requires specific situations to merit use. More importantly, precise carryout is required to execute effectively.

The Effective Styles

With two styles eliminated, four are left for consideration. These include “authoritative”, “affiliative”, “democratic” and “coaching”. In a short sentence, the author eloquently describes each.

- Authoritative – Mobilizes people toward a vision
- Affiliative – Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds
- Democratic – Forges consensus through participation
- Coaching – Develops people for the future

In consideration of my own leadership style(s) garnered from the leadership measurement instrument (LMI) analysis, my style seems to heavily favor leadership through trusted relationships and consensus. The need for building relationships aligns with the “Affiliative” style and consensus matches the “Democratic” style. Of the four effective styles, the “Authoritative” style shows quantitative data suggesting it is the most effective style.

Considering the premise that we all are individuals and respond better to different leadership styles, it would be beneficial to develop in the other effective styles so that when needed I can adjust my style to fit the individuals leadership preference or use the most effective style that fits the situation. I feel

that I possess a fair amount of coaching ability but can be more effective in using this approach more when opportunities present.

I have a vast amount of room for improvement in becoming effective in exercising authoritative leadership. With my tendency to obtain trusting relationships and consensus across the group I tend to not want to “rock the boat”. A major weakness in this approach is that I don’t often take a firm stance. According to the article text, “an authoritative leader states the end but gives people plenty of leeway to devise their own means”. The style seems very empowering. The articles states further that an authoritative leader “is a visionary; he motivates people by making clear to them how their work fits into a larger vision for the organization. People who work for such leaders understand that what they do matters and why. Authoritative leadership also maximizes commitment to the organization’s goals and strategy. By framing the individual tasks within a grand vision, the authoritative leader defines standards that revolve around that vision. The standards for success are clear to all, as are the rewards.” From this, it seems that a combination of “democratic” and “affiliative” styles contain elements that make up the “Authoritative” style. Instead of gaining buy-in and establishing trust, the key ingredient for the authoritative recipe is vision. The authoritative leader uses their emotional intelligence to “rally the troops” toward a common purpose. In doing so he or she, “states the end” and then empowers the team to exercise freedom in getting to the destination. This type of style embraces innovation and creates synergies. As already stated, the “standards for success are clear...as are the rewards”. This approach empowers excellence!

Summary

In borrowing from the author again, “research indicates that leaders who get the best results don’t rely on just one leadership style; they use most of the styles in any given week.” The challenge

then is to leverage the dimensional makeup of emotional intelligence and improve where needed so that each of our repertoires can be expanded on in the quest to become better leaders.