

Foundation Course

Semester 3

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

IMPROVEMENT

Leaders show their team the way to work. He is the source of inspiration and encouragement to the followers. They lead by example. He is held responsible for the entire team's success as well as failure. A team with a dynamic and envisioned leader has higher success rates. Leaders are creators of good teams. It is said that one is born to be a leader. However if a person polishes his qualities and develops right attitude and skills he can grow to become a leader from any stage of his life. Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.

A leader plays several roles according to requirement of situation; he is a task manager, arbitrator, listener and ideology maker. He is the identity of the followers. From personality, behaviour, attitude and skills everything is important to become a leader and maintain that position.

Characteristics of effective leadership

Leadership skills refer to special characteristics of an effective leader. Leadership when forced upon the followers does not command respect. People follow the leader only out of fear or certain obligation. Effective leadership leads to progress of the whole unit, be it a country, a sports team or an enterprise. Following are the characteristics of an effective leader:-

1. Initiative: Many people have plans. However only those can become leaders who take the first step to make their ideas come in reality. A leader shows the way things have to be done to his team.
2. Vision: Leaders have plans and they know where they want to take their team. In the vision it is not only how he leads the way, but how he prepares his team and they together achieve the

goal as a team. He should build confidence among the members in the vision and make them realize that each one's effort will be counted in achieving it. The leader should be focused and passionate about the development of his team.

3. Communication: A good leader communicates with his team members. He proposes a plan, takes opinions and lets others express themselves, even if it means disagreeing with him. He does not impose decisions but explains his decisions to his team members. He informs members of their roles in the team. Communication helps build trust and confidence between the leader and his team. He should be able to hold the team together by helping all members to gel with each other.

4. Administration: Leader is also the manager of the team. He plans, organises, controls and directs the resources of the team.

5. Decision making: A leader should analyse all factors before taking decisions. In times of emergency the team looks up to the leader or immediate action plan. He should be able to handle pressure and take quick decisions in such situations.

6. Persuasion: A good leader uses persuasion to create his influence. He gives demonstration of his skills, builds a strong image of his vision and creates confidence among the team members by positive talk, rewards and by showing trust. A leader who uses force or coercion to establish his influence is not an effective leader.

7. Innovation: A leader should develop new ways to deal with new problems. He should take risks to help the team achieve its goal.

8. Values: A leader with a weak moral base is undesirable by the team. Leaders have power in their hands. This power can shake the values of the leader. However a person with strong guiding principles can deal with any such situation with integrity. The team members trust their leader for their wellbeing. Effective leadership demands accountability to the team members and transparency in decision making. He should be trustworthy. As respect begets respect, he should respect every team member for their qualities. He should be compassionate with them. An understanding leader has few misunderstandings in his team.

9. Responsibility: Leaders have the responsibility of the entire teams' working. This means they have to take responsibility of not only their success but also failure as a team. This means while he should accept that something better could have been done and mistakes were made. He should find ways in which the members realise their mistakes and act upon them positively. He should also appreciate team members for their efforts and motivate them to keep their spirits up even after failure.

10. Development: A leader should devise such methods and techniques which will help each team member to understand their capabilities and perform to the best of their abilities. He should be able to identify weak members and help them get rid of their weaknesses.

Styles of leadership

There are as many styles of leadership as there are leaders. Each leader develops his own way of leading his team depending upon his nature, philosophy and ideas. By analysing important and influential leaders around the world, experts have identified certain styles of leaderships. A few of the important styles are discussed below:

1. Autocratic Leadership: Autocratic leaders use force and coercion to influence the followers. They control all resources and centralise all powers in their hands. They do not consult others while making decisions. The subordinates do not have the power to question the decisions of the leader. Followers remain in fear of the leader and lose respect for him.

2. Bureaucratic Leadership: Leaders who follow the given rules strictly, belong to this style. They do not use their own ideas nor do they consult anybody before making decisions. They do not take responsibility for their actions and blame the system for any failure. Followers do not have respect for such leader and often become irresponsible towards their work due to the attitude of the leaders.

3. Participative Leadership: The leader shares information with the team and invites suggestions and opinions. His decision remains final but he involves the members in decision making process. Such leadership builds a strong informal relationship among the team and its leader. Confidence shown by the leader in the members helps them perform better and feel a sense of

responsibility. Such leadership can be successful only when the leader is influential enough to maintain control.

4. Laissez Faire Leadership: In such leadership the leader adopts the —leave it to them|| attitude. Such leaders allow the team members to work according to their ways. He remains more of a guide, to coordinate the entire team and keep all members in sync with each other. The authority to make decision, solve problems is given to the team members. However the responsibility of the decisions is shared by the leader and the team.

5. Paternalistic Leadership: Leaders who consider their team as a family. The relationship between the leader and the followers is very informal. Mostly all decisions are taken by the leader. He may or may not consult his followers. This style of leadership works successfully in organisations with less number of members.

6. Sociocratic Leadership: For Sociocratic leaders the interest of the members is more important than the interest of the organisation. All decisions are taken by the leader after consulting the members. They tend to encourage good teamwork and creative collaboration.

7. Neurocratic or task oriented Leadership: For task oriented leaders the task or goal of the organisation is more important than any other factor. He may not consult the members if he does not feel the need. Such leaders do not take into consideration the interests of the members. He may also thrust the entire responsibility of the failure of a task on the members.

8. Charismatic Leadership: Leader with impressive personality, great oratory skills and good networking skills attract lot of followers. Their energy and enthusiasm inspires the team members. Charisma sustains followers support only if it is supported by decision making capacity and intelligence. Also if the leader gets over confident and egoistic because of his charisma then he may not think in the best interests of the team.

9. Situational of transformational Leadership: This is a combination of several positive style of leadership. The leader is accommodative, shares information and takes decision after consultation with the team. Depending upon the intensity of the situation he may take complete control of all resources or may let the team members decide for themselves. Such leaders aim at

effective task management, shared responsibility and also motivate the members for better performance.

Team building

Team building is the process of developing effective teams. It refers to the process of forming new teams as well as formatting the earlier teams for better results. Team building is the process of creating a cohesive group of people who work together towards a common goal by sharing ideas and efforts. Teams may be created for long term that is for continuous work over a long period, or for a short term in order to achieve temporary goals. Whatever the purpose or tenure of the team may be, essential factors for the creation and success of the team are fundamentally the same.

A. Stages in team building Keith Davis formulated a five-stage team building process.

Following are the stages of this process:

1. Identification of problem: The very first step is to identify the problem for which the new team is to be created. Depending upon it, members can be chosen and resources can be allotted. If the team exists then identifying issues which are hindering smooth functioning of the team is important. It should be brought to the notice of all members and suggestions should be invited to solve it.
2. Collection of data: The newly created team should collect all data possible related to the given task. In case of an existing team, members provide relevant data relating to the problem. A guide, internal or external helps them to survey all sources for data.
3. Analysis of data: The team members analyse the collected data. The entire team works together. Each member is assigned a particular part of the task. Members are encouraged to think from new point of view and avoid mistakes done earlier.
4. Resolving the problem: At this stage, a solution is sought to the problem based on analysis. Viewpoints of all members are taken into consideration. It leads to a win-win situation to the

conflicting parties. The group members get a new experience in problem solving. They may come across new data or find out areas which lacked efforts. This increases their confidence.

5. Action: The members take suitable actions to put back their team in good performance. Team building process results in high morale of the team and boosts cooperation among them. Some members may be replaced or new members may be added at this stage to give a fresh start to the team depending on the requirement of the goal. The process helps team members to identify potential areas of development in the team.

B. Significance of team building

1. Team building process increases the morale of the team. It brings back the confidence of the team members.
2. It leads to better cooperation among team members. Teamwork thus enhances.
3. Team acquires a new approach towards identifying and solving problems.
4. Team members achieve higher job satisfaction.
5. The process leads to higher efficiency of the organization and better use of its resources.
6. It leads to higher level of trust and support in the organisation.