

Lesson 13.10

MOTIVATING KNOWLEDGE PROFESSIONALS LEADERSHIP TRAIT THEORIES

Motivating the “New Workforce i.e. Knowledge Professionals.”

Another current motivation issue revolves around motivating the “new workforce.” These special groups present unique motivational challenges to managers. These professionals possess specialty knowledge of markets, of customers, of supplier, of software, of hardware, of technology and are very important to run the organizations smoothly in 21st century.

1. Motivating professionals is one of these special challenges.
 - a. Professionals are different from nonprofessionals and have different needs.
 - b. Money and promotions are typically low on the motivation priority list for professionals. Job challenge is usually ranked high as is support and the feeling that they’re working on something important.

Special challenges in motivating professionals include their long-term commitment to their field of expertise, with greater loyalty to their profession than to their employer. Money and promotions are typically low on professionals’ priority list. Contingent workers lack the security that permanent employees have and do not identify with or display much commitment to the organization. Temporary workers also typically lack benefits such as health care and pensions. Low-skilled minimum-wage workers typically have limited education and skills; offering higher pay is usually not an option.

Leadership

The recognition of the important role that leadership plays in organizational performance is widely acknowledged by managers everywhere. Leadership is what makes things happen in organizations.

MANAGERS VERSUS LEADERS

There are distinctions between managers and leaders. Managers are appointed and have legitimate power within the organization.

Leaders are those persons who are able to influence others and who possess managerial authority.

Leadership, then, is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals.

How leaders influence others

Leadership, the foundation of the management function of leading, is the process of influencing others toward the achievement of organizational goals.

Power is the capacity to affect the behavior of others.

There are different types of power depending upon their sources originally identified by French and Raven.

1. **Legitimate power** stems from a position’s placement in the managerial hierarchy and the authority vested in the position.
2. **Reward power** is based on the capacity to control and provide valued rewards to others.
3. **Coercive power** is based on the ability to obtain compliance through fear of punishment.
4. **Expert power** is based on the possession of expertise that is valued by others.

5. **Information power** result from access to and control over the distribution of important information about organizational operations and future plans.
6. **Referent power** results from being admired, personally identified with, or liked by others.

The different types of power can engender different levels of subordinate motivation.

1. With commitment, employees respond enthusiastically and exert a high level of effort toward organizational goals.
 - a. Commitment is the most common outcome of referent power and expert power.
 - b. Commitment is least likely to result from the use of coercive power.
2. With compliance, employees exert at least minimal efforts to complete directives, but are likely to deliver average, rather than stellar, performance.
 - a. Compliance is the most likely outcome of the use of legitimate power, information power, and reward power.
 - b. Compliance is a possible outcome of coercive power if used in a helpful way or of referent power or expert power when some element of apathy is present.
3. With resistance, employees may appear to comply, but actually do the absolute minimum, possibly even attempting to sabotage the attainment of organizational goals.
 - a. Resistance is a likely outcome of coercive power.
 - b. Resistance is a possible outcome of other types of power if used inappropriately.
4. The effective manager is one who does not have to rely on a single power base but rather, has high levels of power in several (all if possible) of these six power types.

Searching for Leadership Traits

Researchers began to study leadership in the early part of the 20th century. These early theories focused on the leader (trait theories) and how the leader interacted with his/her group members (behavior theories).

A. **Trait Theories**

1. Research in the 1920s and 1930s focused basically on leader traits with the intent to isolate one or more traits that leaders possessed, but that nonleaders did not.
2. Identifying a set of traits that would always differentiate leaders from nonleaders proved impossible.

B. **Traits** are distinctive internal qualities or characteristics of an individual such as physical characteristics (e.g., height, weight, appearance, energy), personality characteristics (e.g., dominance, extroversion, originality), skills and abilities (e.g., intelligence, knowledge, technical competence), and social factors (e.g., interpersonal skills sociability, and socioeconomic position).

C. A number of the early research attempts were reanalyzed in the 1950s and concluded that there is no set of traits which consistently distinguish leaders from nonleaders.

- D. Recent efforts suggest that the trait approach may have been abandoned prematurely.
1. More sophisticated statistical techniques are now available.
 2. Several rather predictable traits have now been suggested such as
 - a. intelligence
 - b. dominance
 - c. aggressiveness
 - d. decisiveness
- E. The question of whether traits can be associated with leadership remains open. Recent research work has looked at communication skills, human relations skills, resistance to stress, tolerance of uncertainty, and others.