

Styles of Leadership in The I.T. Industry



Management

KEYWORDS : Organizational Culture, Attrition, Mindshare, Managerial Grid

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a complex process by which a person influences others to accomplish a mission, task, or objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leadership, as a process, shapes the goals of a group or organization, motivates behavior toward the achievement of those goals, and helps define group or organizational culture. It is primarily a process of influence. Leadership is a dynamic or changing process in the sense that, while influence is always present, the persons exercising that influence may change. Possession of influence depends upon the situation and upon the relevancy of the individual's skills and abilities to any particular situation. Not all leaders are managers, and similarly, not all managers are leaders. Within a team environment, manager and leader are simply roles taken on by members of the team. Most teams require a manager to "manage" -- coordinate, schedule, liaise, contact, organize, and procure -- their affairs. The functions of this role may well be quite different from those of the leader (to motivate followers towards the achievement of team goals). Management roles need not presuppose any ability to influence. A leader, on the other hand, must have the ability to influence other team members. A leader must, by definition, have followers. Leaders must be able to cope with complex technological change in their organizations; general leadership skills are not sufficient in IT enriched environments. Specific technology-related knowledge is required and it must directly relate to the tools, medium, strategies and competencies found within the culture. An IT leader must possess analytical and listening skills as true listening involves insight into what will work today, tomorrow and in the future. The IT leader must take the initiative to try new methods without fear of failure, an enormous task facing the IT leader when deciding on solutions to technology-related issues within his scope of influence. Attrition rate is high in IT industry due to the work pressure wherein managers are not able to spend enough time with their subordinates. In the fast-paced IT work environment, there is very limited time and mind share devoted by a manager to his team member's personal training and thereby, the manager is not influencing the employee's perception of growth. The only key to solving this problem is to improve the leadership abilities of IT managers, to learn how to manage differences in thinking of employees and aligning employee talents to work roles. Therefore there is need to assess the current leadership situation in the industry to deliver appropriate training. This paper focuses on identifying the type of Leadership Styles prevalent in the Information Technology Industry. It attempts to identify the leadership styles of managers in various levels of the organization, using the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a complex process by which a person influences others to accomplish a mission, task, or objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leadership, as a process, shapes the goals of a group or organization, motivates behavior toward the achievement of those goals, and helps define group or organizational culture. It is primarily a process of influence. Leadership is a dynamic or changing process in the sense that, while influence is always present, the persons exercising that influence may change. Possession of influence depends upon the situation and upon the relevancy of the individual's skills and abilities to any particular situation. Not all leaders are managers, and similarly, not all managers are leaders. Within a team environment, manager and leader are simply roles taken on by members of the team. Most teams require a manager to "manage" -- coordinate, schedule, liaise, contact, organize, and procure -- their affairs. The functions of this role may well be quite different from those of the leader (to motivate followers towards the achievement of team goals). Management roles need not presuppose any ability to influence. A leader, on the other hand, must have the ability to influence other team members. A leader must, by definition, have followers.

Leadership is much talked about and discussed about in the field of Management. There are many different models and theories about leadership that highlight the different facets of leadership. It still remains largely an enigma to many managers. They believe that leadership is something a person is born with. It is not so, Good leaders are made not born. If one has the desire and willpower, he/she can become an effective leader. Good leaders develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience. Leaders must be able to cope with complex technological change in their organizations; general leadership skills are not sufficient in IT enriched environments. Specific technology-related knowledge is required and it must directly relate to the tools, medium, strategies and competencies found within the culture. An IT leader must possess analytical and listening skills as true listening involves insight into what will work today, tomorrow and in the future. The IT leader must take the initiative to try new methods without fear of failure, an enormous task facing the IT leader when

deciding on solutions to technology-related issues within his scope of influence. Attrition rate is high in IT industry due to the work pressure wherein managers are not able to spend enough time with their subordinates. In the fast-paced IT work environment, there is very limited time and mind share devoted by a manager to his team member's personal training and thereby, the manager is not influencing the employee's perception of growth. The only key to solving this problem is to improve the leadership abilities of IT managers, to learn how to manage differences in thinking of employees and aligning employee talents to work roles. Therefore there is need to assess the current leadership situation in the industry to deliver appropriate training.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To Analyze the Various Styles of Leadership in the I.T. Industry using the Managerial Grid.
- To Understand the Various qualities of Leadership.
- To Analyze the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid (Leadership Grid).

DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP

"Leaders are individuals who establish direction for a working group of individuals who gain commitment from these groups of members to this direction and who then motivate these members to achieve the direction's outcomes."

"Leadership is the behavior of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal."

"Leadership is the initiation and maintenance of structure in expectation and interaction."

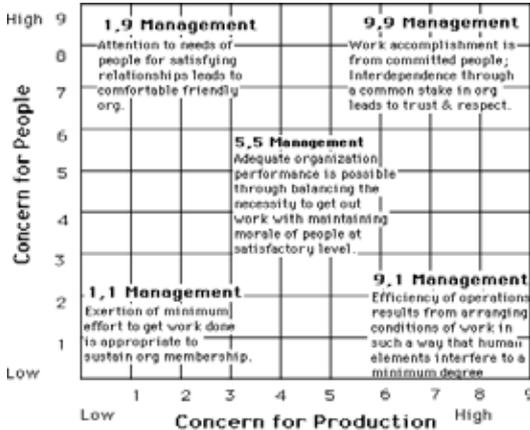
"Leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has more to do with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day-to-day implementation."

"Leadership is a development of a clear and complete system of expectations in order to identify, evoke and use the strengths of all resources in the organization, the most important of which is people."

MANAGERIAL GRID

In the 1940's, leadership studies shifted from a focus on what a leader "has"—often thought to be inborn traits, to what a leader "does"—or the style and behavioral functions of leaders.

Based on the findings of the University of Michigan and Ohio State studies which emphasized task- and relations-oriented behaviors, Blake and Mouton (1964) built a managerial grid—also published as a leadership grid—that integrated a high concern for production with a high concern for people as the one best way to achieve effective leadership.



Managerial Grid from R. Blake and J. Mouton, "Managerial Facades", *Advanced Management Journal*, July 1966, 31.

A leader's answers to statements about management assumptions are plotted on a Managerial Grid, with concern for people varying from 1 to 9 on the vertical axis, and concern for production varying from 1 to 9 on the horizontal axis.

The following five basic cluster styles result from the interaction of task- and relations-oriented responses:

- **Authority-Obedience Management:** (high production; low people). The leader's main concern is in accomplishing the task in the most efficient way possible. A high concern for production is combined with minimum concern for the people. This leader dictates what should be done.
- **Country Club Management:** (high people; low production). The leader shows minimum concern for production and high concern for people. This leader focuses on making the people feel good, even if it ends in slower production or not achieving results.
- **Impoverished Management:** (low people; low production). The leader has minimum concern for both people and production. This leader does just enough to keep his or her job.
- **Middle of the Road Management:** (medium people; medium production). The leader goes along with the general flow of the organization. This leader is happy with the status quo.
- **Team Management:** (high people; high production). The leader integrates a high concern for people as well as for production. This leader attempts to meet organizational goals through the participation, involvement, and commitment of all the members in the organization.

Managerial Grid theory recommends optimum leadership behavior—team management. A study of 731 managers replicated the original findings that 9, 9-oriented managers from a variety of companies were more likely to advance in their careers (J. Hall, 1976). However, without openness, trust, respect, even confrontation to resolve conflict as well as mutual development and change, this apparent 9, 9 orientations can take the form of paternalism. Likewise, this theory allows for leaders to masquerade their behaviors with a back-up style, as some opportunistic leaders do.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF THE EFFECTIVE I.T. LEADER

In describing the qualities of an effective leader, organizations are in need of bold, visionary and spiritually grounded leaders who are prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. Among a list of desirable traits, a leader is one who has the audacity to take a stand on the unpopular or unheard of, takes a creative position for the well-being of his/her team, empowers others to become a part of a vision, and exhibits the faith and stamina to effect a change simply because it is right. An effective leader is a model for the rest of the organization: i.e. self-achiever whom everybody admires, an innovator and an early-adopter of IT. Leaders must be able to cope with complex technological change in their organizations; general leadership skills are not sufficient in IT enriched environments. Specific technology-related knowledge is required and it must directly relate to the tools, medium, strategies and competencies found within the culture.

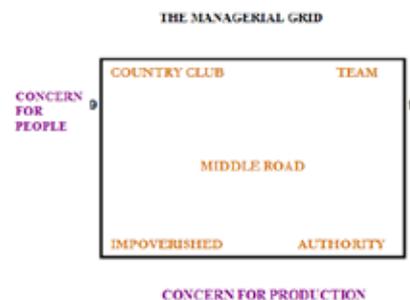
Not only must the IT leader possess the competencies to use and evaluate these tools, but he/she must also have the insight into the impact these tools will have on the future of organizations. The ability to develop a shared vision for technology within an organization is a must for the well being of the organization. IT professionals must be empowered and expected to investigate the enormous potential of technology to bring about innovation and improvement with direct participation and support of an institution's administration. An IT leader must possess analytical and listening skills as true listening involves insight into what will work today, tomorrow, and in the future. The IT leader must take the initiative to try new methods without fear of failure an enormous task facing the IT leader when deciding on solutions to technology-related issues within their scope of influence. Agility to succeed in a rapidly changing world requires cooperation, organization, enrichment of ideals, and strong commitment to change—all important skills that the systems-level thinking IT leader would do well to adopt.

Attrition rate is high in IT industry, due to the work pressure managers are not able to spend enough time with their subordinates. In the fast-paced IT work environment, there is very limited time and mind share devoted by a manager to his team member's personal training and thereby, the manager is not influencing the employee's perception of growth. The only key to solving this problem is to improve the leadership abilities of IT managers, to learn how to manage differences in thinking of employees and aligning employee talents to work roles. Therefore there is need to assess the current leadership situation in the industry to deliver appropriate training.

ANALYSIS OF THE LEADERSHIP GRID

The results of behavioral studies were incorporated into a grid proposed by Blake and Mouton. The Managerial Grid utilizes the Concern for People versus Concern for Production dichotomy proposed by both the Ohio State and University of Michigan studies.

The assumption made by Blake and Mouton is that there is a best leadership style (behavior). The best set of behaviors is assumed to be 9, 9 -- a high concern for production, coupled with a high concern for employees. On the basis of the Managerial Grid, 1, 1 leadership (Impoverished) is the least desirable style. Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid uses two axis -- "Concern for people" (vertical axis) and "Concern for task" (horizontal axis). Both grids have a scale of 1 to 9



ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE ON THE BLAKE AND MOUTON LEADERSHIP GRID

TABLE NO.1

MANAGEMENT STYLE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Impoverished Management	3	5.09
Authoritative Management	5	8.48
Middle Of The Road	17	28.81
Country Club Management	15	25.42
Team Management	19	32.2
TOTAL	59	100

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION (GRAPH NO.1)



CONCLUSION

In analyzing executive opinion it is observed that

- √ 32.2% falls in (9, 9) grid - Team management.
- √ 25.42% falls in (1, 9) grid – Country club management.
- √ 28.81% falls in (5, 5) grid - Middle of the road management.
- √ 8.48% fall in (9, 1) grid -Task/Autocratic management.
- √ 05.09% fall in (1,1) grid – Impoverished management

32.2% of the Managers fall in the team management grid. This is the most ideal leadership style according to this model. This type of is goal oriented and seeks to gain result through participation, involvement, commitment, and conflict solving.

28.81% of the Managers fall in the Middle of the road management, that is they are satisfactorily oriented towards both people and task but with the right training they can brought to team management

25.42% of the managers are people oriented and not sufficient-ly task oriented. This is good news to the employees but it also means that the task orientation of these managers is limited. This could be a problem in terms of meeting deadlines and utilization of resources optimally.

8.48% of the Managers fall in the Task/Autocratic Management Grid.

The leader's main concern is in accomplishing the task in the most efficient way possible. A high concern for production is combined with minimum concern for the people. This leader dictates what should be done.

5.09% of the managers fall in the impoverished management style. It is known fact that very few employees prefer to work under managers who follow impoverished leadership styles. These managers have to be trained to move towards team management style.

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