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Leadership General Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this white paper is to define leadership and to provide some general overview on this topic.

Definition

According to the Oxford English dictionary, the leadership is simply the ability to influence others. More specifically, it is the ability to motivate a group of people to follow common goals and objectives. (<http://dictionary.oed.com>)

Introduction

It is perfectly evident that in the real world of the everyday business operations the term leader and the term manager often get mixed up with one another. However, it is a well-known fact that the functions of the leader and the functions of the manager have always been different in many ways.

Leaders are perceived as individuals who are at the heart of the business. The main goal of the leadership is to inspire a group of people to stay closely bonded and to be eager to move forward particularly towards achieving common organizational goals. The function of the leader is to set a direction, communicate it to every staff member, and to keep everyone motivated to perform at his or her best. Therefore, leadership is all about the people. (Robbins, 2002)

Same time, managers are perceived as the brains of the business. The main goal of the management is to supervise operating procedures, create rules and regulations, establish systems, and etc. In other words, management is all about getting the job done, and its main priority is not the people, but the business. (Robbins, 2002)

It is true however, that despite all the differences among the leadership and the management, both skill sets are necessary for achieving operational success. Because of that, most business executives choose to adopt a mix of leadership and management skills, which they actively use in running everyday business tasks and routine.

As a result, leadership skills provide the business with a strong sense of the right direction; whenever, management skills provide the systems that let a company explore the directions offered by the leadership, and expand its operations with a high level of success. (Robbins, 2002)

Preview

The following paper takes a brief outlook on the several major leadership habits, specifically the ones that are highly important in achieving operational successes. Also, the paper outlines the main mistakes that must be avoided by any organizational leader at all times.

Any business leader who wishes to lead the organization towards the success in business operations needs to adopt a habit of careful business planning. There is a good acronym to remember “Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.” Therefore, a successful leader must carefully plan all stages of his business before the actual operations begin. (Tracy, 2004)

When a complete plan has already been put together, this is the right time for the leader to acquire the habit of organizing people and resources in the most effective ways prior to the start of the business operations.

After all ingredients have been put together, the leader also needs to acquire the habit of hiring the right people. It is a true statement that the best companies have the best people, and that the people who perform the work tasks and the business projects determine the ninety five percent of the operational success. (Tracy, 2004)

The other habit that any successful leader would benefit of is the ability to wisely delegate work tasks. It is vital for the business success that the right person receives the right task and not the other way around. If the leader does not possess enough wisdom vital for correct delegation of the work tasks, then the organization might experience an underperformance and a possible failure in a long term.

When the leader has already learned to wisely delegate the work tasks among the people, the moment is right to acquire the habit of the proper supervision. The habits of delegation and supervision go hand in hand, simply because it is the leader who is responsible for the quality of the work accomplished by the people. (Tracy, 2004)

Performance must be measured, and that is another habit that should be practiced by any leader who wants to achieve a high level of success in the business operations. The most important part of the performance measurement is to set a work schedule by constructing timelines and deadlines for all of the projects and work tasks.

In addition, all the people around the leader must receive regular updates on any progress and on the results that are being achieved by the organization. When the people are regularly informed of the situation in their company, they get effectively motivated to perform at their best. (Tracy, 2004)

It is not only true that the leader needs to adopt the habits vital for organizational success, but the leader should also avoid making the assumptions that are capable of hurting the operations. Among the assumptions that must be avoided by the leaders is the assumption of the total customer loyalty. In real life customers tend to change their tastes and preferences over time. (Ennico, 2003)

People buy your products because your products are within the scope of their current preferences. However, in the case if you move your store out of the area into a more distant and less convenient location, your customers might simply chose to make a switch to the nearest store that still remains in the area rather than take a long drive to buy from you.

Another assumption that the leaders should stay away from is the belief that the people always buy something they need. The study shows completely the opposite. For example, every person knows that smoking might lead to the lung cancer, and still a lot of people keep regularly buying tobacco as if they really needed it. (Ennico, 2003)

The leader should never assume that there is no need to specifically communicate messages to customers due to the fact that customers perfectly understand everything on their own. Assuming that would be very similar to expecting the fish to bite the fishing hook that does not have any bait attached to it.

Another interesting fact is that people do not like to waste their time on talking about the positive experiences they had with their service providers; however, people always discuss and do not forget the negative experiences they had while shopping for their goods and services. (Ennico, 2003)

Also, the leader must never assume that his/her firm does not have any competition just because there are no firms with the similar scope of objectives on the marketplace right at this moment.

Moreover, the competitor could be compared to the mushroom that shows up on its own without having anyone being able to foresee its appearance on that particular spot. The leader must be aware of the possible competition even if it seems like none of it exists at the moment. (Ennico, 2003)

It is not the best idea for the leader to strive to accomplish everything him/herself. Delegating some of the responsibilities to the employees generally has a positive effect on operations. This way the leader can concentrate on the functions vital for organizational success, while the employees handle the secondary responsibilities. (Ennico, 2003)

Ignoring the profits is not a very good idea even if the organization is experiencing a tremendous success. It is very important to know the exact amount of all the operational costs, and to uncover all the possible hidden costs too. Once all the true costs come together, the picture of the profits might shrink. The leader needs to be aware of that.

In addition, all the paperwork even as simple as an invoice form or a purchase order needs to be reviewed by an attorney. Often, the existing paperwork requires to be customized for the needs of the organization, and the attorney is the one who is capable of doing that kind of customization in the most professional way. (Ennico, 2003)

Conclusion

The twenty first century leader is more than just a boss who simply oversees the operations. These days, the successful leader is the individual who sets the direction for the whole company. The company must always keep its goals and objectives in a detailed focus, and the job of the leader is to make sure it stays that way. (Robbins, 2002)

Moreover, big groups of people often lose their sense of common direction especially when they are left on their own for a while. Any organization might end up doing many different projects and none of them well enough, due to a simple loss of the direction among the people who perform the work tasks. The job of the leader is to prevent that by gently bringing all of the people back to common organizational goals and objectives. (Robbins, 2002)

Comments

Have you ever known that the combination of meditation, laughter, and yoga can be used as a stress therapy? According to Sushil Bhatia, the founder of the Laughing Clubs of America, a half an hour spent meditating pays off in a strengthened immune system, relaxation, and a more positive attitude towards the work projects. (Pennington, 2002)

Sushil Bhatia is a CEO and a co-founder of Kriticka, which is a software services provider in Southboro, Massachusetts. However Bhatia is not only a businessperson but also a successful leader. Every morning Bhatia holds a voluntary ten-minute session with his employees where they all do yoga, meditate, and simply laugh out loudly.

Also, Bhatia encourages his employees to take a twenty-minute afternoon meditation break every day. He says that meditation helps people relieve tension and get into a lighter frame of mind. As a result of that, people are much more productive and more creative when performing their work tasks. (Pennington, 2002)

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