

Organizational Behaviour
ADM2336 (Section P00)
Organizational Behaviour

Case # 6 - SPACE X

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Question 1: Does Elon Musk sound like the kind of leader that you would like to work for? Why or why not? Respond by identifying his leadership style.

Since we are people who believe in his visions and we recognize and admire the avant-garde way of thinking he has, yes we would like to work for him. We believe that even if his leadership style is autocratic, he has proven that he makes things happen, so by working for him we could be part of a big, revolutionary idea. The satisfaction of belonging to such a big idea would be even stronger than the challenges / ups-and-downs that we would be put through. It is mentioned in the case that he dismisses somebody when if he contradicts Musk, he takes over his/her role or position to get things done.

He has a transformational leadership since he convinces people of his vision, this shows he has an Inspirational Motivation behaviour. But because the nature of the companies he develops, definitely there is a part of intellectual stimulation behaviour too since people need to innovate to deliver the final idea Musk has as a goal.

Question 2: Is there a danger to having such a strong, charismatic leader as the head of a company? Would you have reservations investing in the stock of SpaceX if it were to go public?

There are dangers in having a strong charismatic leader. These would be that the leader's personal interests or impulsive actions could get in the way of being an effective leader. A leader with a lot of charisma and a strong personality may project their views onto their employees which could be an issue if an employee's personality

clashes with the leaders. Having a leader that is too charismatic could also provide problematic in the sense that that company, and their goals, would be associated with the person's particular personality. This could make a transition between heads of companies' difficult because when trying to phase in a new leader the company culture may not align with the new incoming person which could cause a dilution of company vision.

I would have slight reservations about investing in the SpaceX stock because Elon Musk is very charismatic and this has the tendency to fluctuate stock prices of his publicly traded companies. This stock instability would provide a potentially unsafe investment which is directly associated with how Elon Musk is acting. This being said, the important work that SpaceX is doing and the vision of Elon Musk would offset the negative risks of stock instability.

Questions 3: Would you consider Musk to be a transformational leader? In what ways does he fit that model and in which ways does he not?

Elon Musk is a transformational leader, in which his behavioral traits of this style are best exemplified through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Transformational leadership is described as a style that shifts employee motivation, morale, and effectiveness, specifically for highly insecure employees. Musk's idealized influence is represented by his respect for his followers. This can be easily misinterpreted as unrealistic expectations, however, he is simply holding

employees to the standard in which he holds himself to, maintaining a strong level of trust for the assignments and projects he delegates. The strongest characteristic of his transformational style is inspirational motivation through the championing the influence that SpaceX has towards the future of technology and travel. The shared vision is clearly transferred to his employees as shown in the failure of the Falcon 1 rocket, detailed by SpaceX recruiter Dolly Singh as “You don’t usually see grown-ups weeping, but there they were”, revealing the passion each employee has for the company that was originally distilled by Elon Musk. Finally, the intellectual stimulation that Musk puts forth is strong, as he gives employees near unrealistic project deadlines and truly expects the best out of them to create solutions to near impossible problems. He believes his assignments challenge employees to innovate but are not impossible. Elon Musk does not fit all roles of the transformational leader model as he does not appear to mentor or pay individual attention to his employees. While he appears to be a strong role model and inspiration for his employees, he does not take time out of his day to visit and coach his employees. Instead his personalized approach is more result based and he has more interest in the job that is getting done and is not concerned with developing the employee working on it personally. This can be seen by his tendencies to say he would rather kick someone off the project and do it himself instead of develop the person.

Personal Ethics Statement Concerning Telfer School Assignments

Group Assignment:

By signing this Statement, I am attesting to the fact that I have reviewed not only my own work, but the work of my colleagues, in its entirety.

I attest to the fact that my own work in this project meets all of the rules of quotation and referencing in use at the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa, as well as adheres to the fraud policies as outlined in the Academic Regulations in the University's Undergraduate Studies Calendar. I further attest that I have knowledge of and have respected the "Beware of Plagiarism" brochure found on the Telfer School of Management's doc-depot site.

To the best of my knowledge, I also believe that each of my group colleagues has also met the rules of quotation and referencing aforementioned in this Statement.

I understand that if my group assignment is submitted without a signed copy of this Personal Ethics Statement from each group member, it will be interpreted by the Telfer School that the missing student(s) signature is confirmation of non-participation of the aforementioned student(s) in the required work.



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