

CHAPTER 13

BASIC APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

Leadership

- What is leadership
- Toxic leadership
- What are the impacts of toxic leaders on the organisation and the victims?
- How do victims of toxic leaders react to the victimisation?
- How victims should deal with a toxic leader?
- What is HR's role in dealing with toxic leadership?
- How does management deal with the dilemma of toxic leadership in organisations?
- How should HR and management deal with toxic leaders?
- How HR and Management should deal with a toxic dilemma
- Can a toxic leader change?
- Conclusion

What is leadership?

- Difference between Leadership and

Management	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coping with complexity• Bringing order and consistency through formal plans• Designing rigid organisation structures• Monitoring results against the plans• Use of authority inherent in their designated ranks to obtain compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coping with change• Establishing direction by developing a vision of the future• Aligning people by communicating the vision & inspiring them to overcome hurdles

Defining leadership

- Ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision/set of goals
- Source of influence may be formal (possession of managerial rank)
- Due to the authorityship of rank, many assume the leadership role. NB: not all leaders are managers or visa versa.
- Therefore, rank of manager/management role does not guarantee/assure good leadership
- Nonsanctioned leadership: ability to influence arising outside the formal structure of the organisation (often found to be more important than formal influence)
- This implies that leaders can emerge from within a group as well as by a formal appointment to lead the group

South African business world has changed forever

- Issues that stand out by Brand Pretorius
 - It is ever changing, fast moving, and complex
 - It is very similar to what is happening internationally
 - It is volatile, very sensitive to international and local turmoil
 - It is ultra-competitive because of global competition and local deregulation
 - It is being affected to a greater degree by the power of IT and the Internet
 - Customers want it all
 - Staff members have high expectations
 - There is a deluge of new threats and opportunities everyday
 - The challenge is to become globally competitive or perish

Trait theories of Leadership

- They differentiate leaders from nonleaders by focusing on personal qualities and characteristics
 - E.g's. Bhuddha, Napoloen, Mao, Churchill, Roosevelt, Magaret Tharcher, Reagan, Mandela (described by their traits)
 - Virgin group CEO Richard Branson, Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, American Express chairman Ken Chenault are recognised as leaders and described in terms such as charismatic, enthusiastic, and courageous
- Research resulted in relating trait theories to the Big Five Persornality Traits
- Literature confirmed: extroversion from the Big Five is the most important trait of effective leaders
 - Sociable, dominant, assertive nature
- Consciousness and openness to experience:
 - Showed strong and consistent relationships to leadership, though not quiet as strong as extroversion
- Emotional Intelligence
 - Advocates of IE argue that without it, a person can have outstanding training , highly analytical mind, a compelling vision, and an endless supply of terrific ideas but still not make a great leader
 - IE shows positive relationship with transformational leadership and negative correlation with transactional leadership
 - Core component of IE is empathy : it allows a leader to sense other's needs, listen to what followers say (and don't say), are able to read the reactions of others

Toxic Leadership

- What is toxic leadership?
 - A pattern of destructive and generally deliberate, repeated demeaning or mistreatment of subordinates over a period of time
- What they do:
 - They create their own destructive behaviours and dysfunctional personality qualities
 - Serious and enduring poisonous effect on the individuals, families and organisations they lead
 - Normally believe an atmosphere of fear and intimidation is best in achieving the organisations and their own goals while destroying organisational morale, team building and employee confidence and competence
 - They enjoy putting others in their place and show them who's boss

Toxic leadership behaviour includes

- Rude, foul and abusive language
- Repeatedly threatening of dismissal
- Constant criticism, no one can deliver as he/she can
- Lack of trust in employees
- Sticks to his or her guns regardless
- Badmouthing employees
- Blaming employees in open forums
- Assigning meaningless tasks
- Unreasonable job demands
- Humiliating and demanding conduct in front of others
- Ridicule taunts
- Confusing and contradictory instructions or constant changing instructions
- Undermining subordinates
- Cont...pg292

Impact of toxic leaders to victims

- Affect victims health, well-being and productivity to an alarming extent
- Suffer depression, aggression, stress, anxiety, insomnia and stress related illnesses
- Other workers nontargets may also be drawn into the conflict and suffer personal stress affecting their productivity as well
- Long term effect of victims may result in post traumatic stress disorder
- Worst case, it leads to suicide
- Impact to the organisation
 - Organisations will experience reduced productivity, commitment and creativity
 - Increased absenteeism and turnover, and possibly bad publicity due to court cases
 - Loss of qualified individuals, getting alternative employments
 - May be very costly to the organisation due to human capital

How victims react to victimisation of toxic leaders

- Most often they are scared to report incidents
- Feel extremely disempowered and are afraid that if they do report, the victimisation will escalate
- May perceive the barriers to escape the victimisation as too high, and just live with it
- Enter a circle of demoralisation and feel incompetent to even combat or confrontation
- As victim become less confident, the toxic leader escalates the behaviour
- Circle continues till victim resigns
- Most often they find reporting to HR or management is not taken serious
- There's usually lack of procedures and policy guidelines on how to deal with toxic leadership issues
- Most often, the offender remains in the organisation and the victim leaves (illness, resignation, dismissal)

How victims should deal with a toxic leader

- Confront the toxic leader: speak to him/her to solve and the issues
- If it doesn't work: either decide to accept the situation, live with it and try to avoid the toxic leader or
 - Avoidance may lead to low commitment, detachment and heightened levels of employee stress
- Decide to take it further
- 2 ways of taking it further:
 - Escalating it to management/HR
 - Planning an exit strategy
- Take a stand: even at some risk, do not let the toxic leader get away with it
- Scared subordinates, passive bystanders are as much to blame as bad leadership
- Empower yourself, you do have a say and rights, and the right to be respected and valued
- Easiest way for the powerless to become powerful is to find other like-minded souls with whom to work (in numbers there is strength)
- Know what processes to follow and where to turn to

Role of HR in dealing with toxic leadership

- In less severe incidents: can be the peacekeepers in calming the waters and smoothing over the emotional ripples
- Can coach toxic leaders into improving their interpersonal relations, and also victims in how to deal with toxic leaders
- Take disciplinary steps or implement corrective action
- Investigate and intervene in response to incidents or complaints about toxic leadership
- Have a policy, process and procedures in place and need to advise victims on policy
- If HR reports directly to toxic leaders, complaints need to be escalated higher
- In extreme cases, outside interventions like a consultant, lawyer, or court may be necessary to resolve conflict
- Psychotherapy might be needed for the toxic leader, to change his/her behaviour, and some of the traumatised victims

How does management deal with the toxic dilemma

- All top management are ultimately accountable and should also react
- However, they're usually reluctant to deal with toxic leadership since it reflects on their recruitment and placement processes, and their appointment decisions
- Therefore, they become inclined to protect their own
- In most instances, they hear the toxic leader's side of the story than the victims'
- This most often results in the toxic leader remaining in the org, and the victim leaving or silenced
- This is however regarded as toxic leadership being condoned or rewarded

How should both HR and Management deal with toxic leaders

- Take claims seriously
- Prevent and monitor attempts to retaliate against the victim for reporting victimisation
- Confront toxic leaders using feedback from staff and peer groups
- Monitor turnover and absenteeism
- Conduct confidential employee satisfaction surveys and exit interviews to locate problem areas
- Train all leaders to understand the effect of their behaviour on others and in interpersonal communications. Helps in giving feedback in a non-threatening productive way
- Implement an employee hotline for reporting incidents of victimisation
- Implement an anti-harassment policy that specifically addresses toxic behaviour

Can a toxic leader change?

- In some cases they act out their psychological games and agendas consciously and intentionally
- In others, it appears they're out of touch with their own behaviour and its destructive path
- Research revealed: It be due to the environment (dog-eat-dog world) while building their career path
- Sometimes they have no idea that their behaviour is destructive or offensive
- Coaching may suffice to modify their behaviour, in extreme cases psychotherapy may be necessary

Conclusion on toxic leadership

- To eradicate toxic leadership:
 - Both leaders and followers need to defy bad leadership
 - Everyone in the organisation is responsible (all to take a stand)
 - Toxic leadership is not a figment of the imagination of employees in attempt to cause trouble or resistant to change
 - Toxic leadership is real and can destroy employee's lives and careers
 - Best way to deal with it is through prevention strategies:
 - Recruiting practices
 - Early interventions
 - Taking complaints and early signs seriously
 - In SA cultural diversity, rified with social identity conflict, special note should be taken that toxic leadership does not get conflated with, camouflaged by, or blamed on racism
 - Remember, toxic leader can be more than just a toxic leader, it can be the death of an organisation