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Tentamen 9 November 2016, vragen en antwoorden

Leadership and Technology Management (Technische Universiteit Delft)

Sample Examination MOT1524

Leadership and Technology Management

This is a part of the exam that was officially administered on November 9, 2016

Here you may find the answers to 3 of the open questions

QUESTION 1

Managing knowledge work at EyeEm [total: 10 points]
EyeEm is a company that hosts a community and marketplace for photographers. More than 15 million photographers use EyeEm to share their photos, connect with other photographers, improve their skills through masterclasses, get recognition through missions and exhibitions, and earn money by licensing their photos. EyeEm started in 2010 but has now grown into a devoted group of 15 million photographers across 150 countries. At EyeEm's global photo community, hundreds of thousands of images are uploaded monthly. These images all have to be processed, reviewed, and key-worded by EyeEm. Therefore, Eyem continuously develops and refines automatic image tagging technologies, that makes pictures discoverable through sophisticated indexing or tagging. EyeEm is an exciting place to work and attracts a number of highly skilled engineers to help with the further development of the automatic image technologies. Most of their developers are relatively young knowledge workers.

a) Knowledge workers, like the developers at EyeEm, are sometimes characterized as 'gold collar' workers. What does the term 'gold collar' workers mean and why does this apply to the people at EyeEm? [2 points]

For the definition of gold collar workers (see p.34, chapter 2 of the book[1]): Such knowledge workers need to be managed skillfully, provided with excellent working conditions, and very good employment conditions. Specialists in the area of automatic image technologies are relatively scarce and can find jobs easily. Therefore, EyeEm needs to manage such knowledge workers carefully and to provide them with excellent working and employment conditions.

b) The management at EyeEm believes that their role is primarily to provide the necessary enabling context in order to facilitate knowledge work rather than to monitor and control their work force. What are the reasons why EyeEm works like this? [2 points]

This has to do with the future of management. Most engineers, not just those at EyeEm, want to spend their time designing, not communicating with bosses or supervising other workers' progress. They have a strong sense of autonomy, mastery and purpose (see chapter 2 of the book as well as the lecture 4). In order to deal with an autonomous workforce, strict control does need seem to work. A better way to manage such a workforce is to facilitate them by offering opportunities for autonomy and to emphasize development.

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[1] Course Book: **Managing Knowledge Work** (2nd edition) by Newell; Robertson; Scarbrough & Swan

c) One of the founders of EyeEm, Lorenz Aschoff, describes the organizational structure of the company as 'highly organic, flexible, and generally organized around teams'. Please, describe what this means and argue why EyeEm has adopted such a structure. [2 points]

For organization structures (see table 2.2 as well as lecture #1). A flexible, organic, and team-oriented structure implies that the company may be able to adapt more easily to changing circumstances. The reason why such a structure fits well with EyeEm has to do with the fact that the company is continuously trying to adapt to the needs of the users of their platform in order to compete with other platforms.

d) EyeEm is very much aware of the benefits of team-working for knowledge creation in the area of new product development and innovation. However, team-working is not without its problems. List and explain two team-working problems that are pertinent to knowledge sharing and knowledge creation. [2 points]

Chapter 4 deals with the topic of knowledge creation in teams. The book mentions the following team working problems in detail:

Social loafing (p.84), Conformity (p.86-p.87), Group think (p.87- p. 88), Group polarization (p.88-p.89)

First, you should list two of those and provide a short explanation of these particular two team working problems (see the book).
Second, explain how these two problems will impact knowledge sharing/creation in organizations. All of the four problems above have a negative impact on knowledge sharing yet for different reasons. For example, social loafing may undermine collaboration, conformity could lead to regression to the mean, group think might lead to poor decision making, and group polarization may cause extremes.

e) The founder of EyeEm wants to further promote an innovative environment but he is not sure on how to do this properly. What would you advice? [2 points]

There are many ways to stimulate innovation in organizations. However, in this question it is not so much about single practices that may enhance innovation but rather about creating an environment in which innovation could be further sustained. In order to systematically create an innovative environment it is important for EyeEm to pay attention to establishing the core organizational values in relation to innovative behavior. In order words, EyeEm should sustain a more innovation-based Organizational Culture (see p.42, 43 of the book).

Grading:

In the case you mention one or more single practices (such as establishing communities, introducing brainstorming sessions, specific rewards, etc. a total of 1 point is awarded.

If you are able to go beyond single best practices by showing that on innovation-based organizational culture would be needed, is worth 2 points.

Fill out your answers here:

QUESTION 2

In search of a new Dean [total: 10 points]
The faculty of Technology, Policy and Management (TPM) at Delft University of employs approximately 260 academic staff members and about 60 support staff. The entire faculty is led by the Dean. Unfortunately, after a period of almost two years, the position is still vacant.

   a) Suppose the faculty asks your help with finding a new dean. How would you go about identifying the right candidates and where exactly would you search for them? [2 points]

Lecture 4:
The first step of the recruitment process is to make a profile of the job. What expertise and experience are needed for this job. The next step is to establish where such people may be likely to work. In this case, it likely to contact candidates at universities, research institutes, large innovative firms, etc. If you know where to find your candidates, you should then need to find a way to let them know about the vacancy. The classical way to do so is by advertising jobs in newspapers, magazines, on websites, etc.

   b) How would you successfully try attract your top choices to join the faculty? [2 points]

Lecture 4:
Recruitment two way process. You need to sell the job and faculty to the right candidate (e.g. top 100 university, great place to work, excellent staff and students, good benefits, etc.). Ask yourself the question why would somebody be interested to change their current job for this vacancy.

   c) Suppose you have attracted a number of possible candidates for the position. How would you go about selecting the best possible candidate? Please, explain the goal of selection methods and argue what method you would use to select the best candidate for the position? [2 points]

Lecture 4
The goal of selection is to predict whether somebody will be successful in a specific job! [1 point]

Methods, interview, assessment centre, tests, etc. It does not matter what method you choose as long as you can argue why you believe this method to be effective. [1 point]

d) An important attribute of leadership is power. What kinds of power can be used by the new Dean of the faculty in order to mobilize innovation? [2 points]

p. 204-206 of the book:
Resource Power (deployment of key resources)
Process Power (org. decision making)
Meaning Power (cultural norms and expectations)

e) The search for the new Dean is currently done in collaboration with a specialized recruitment consulting firm. Would it be a viable option to outsource the search to this firm? Argue either why or why not. [2 points]

Outsourcing and offshoring (p.128-130): Activities that are non-core become candidates for outsourcing. Please, argue to what extend you believe the recruitment and selection of the Dean to be core or not . Since the search is going on for a rather long time, one could assume that recruitment and selection are not a very strong and established this faculty. Therefore, outsourcing would be something to consider.

OPEN QUESTION 3
[Max. score = 10 points]

This question is about the "Big Five" theory of personality that was put forward by Costa and McCrae (1992).

a) How would you define this famous five-factor model [**1 point**], and how would you describe each of the five dimensions of personality in the model **[2.5 points]**?

- The official definition is: hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions [1.0 point]
- If this official definition is replaced with a slide-based definition of personality traits as being unique + stable over time, it is credited with [a reduced 0.5 points]
- Descriptions should be as follows:
  O = the extend to which someone is creative, curious, cultured vs. practical and with narrow interests
  C = the extend to which someone is hardworking, organized, dependable, persevering vs. lazy, disorganized, unreliable
  E = the extend to which someone is assertive, sociable vs. reserved, timid, quiet
  A = the extend to which someone is cooperative, warm vs. belligerent, cold
  N = the extend to which someone is insecure, anxious, depressed vs. secure, calm, happy
  [each of the dimension descriptions is credited with [0.5 points]

Singer 1 and 2 are the lead-singers of two different rock bands. They are excellent singers, and they both made their own scores on the Big Five publicly available. The profiles of Singer 1 and 2 are as follows:

	O	C	E	A	N
Singer 1	-	-	+	+	+
Singer 2	+	+	-	-	+

b) Explain which of the two Singers (1 or 2) would probably deliver the best stage performance based on these Big Five profiles [**0.5 point**], and why [**1 point**]?

- Singer 1 [0.5 point]
- Both singers are neurotic, which – in a nice way –can manifest as an unusual, funny and surprising on stage. Both singers do not differ on this dimension, though.
- Credits are awarded for mentioning Extraversion and Agreeableness, and pointing out that Singer 1 scores high on those dimensions, whereas Singer 2 scores low; E & A are important for stage performance, because they are theoretically labelled the social dimensions of the Big Five [1.0 point].
- NOTE: E & A must be explicitly discussed for full points (as they are the defining differences between the singers) [1.0 point]

In recent years, evidence has been collected for the existence of dark personalities in everyday life (starting with Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Originally, a dark personality triad was proposed, consisting of three (3) manifestations.

c) Please list and describe each of these three dark personalities **[3 points]**?
- The Dark Personality Triad has the following three manifestations [1 point for each complete list plus proper description]:
- Psychopath = characterized by high impulsivity and thrill-seeking plus low empathy
- Narcissist = characterized by high grandiosity, entitlement, dominance and superiority
- Machiavellian = characterized by cynical, unprincipled beliefs in manipulation as key to success in life
- The fourth manifestation, Sadism, was no part of the requested triad, and will be credited with [0 points]

Bernard Madoff is a former stockbroker, who in the year 2009 was sentenced to 150 years in prison for having committed the largest financial fraud in US history. Madoff had done so by operating a Ponzi scheme for 30, maybe even 40, years. According to Wikipedia, a Ponzi scheme is "a fraudulent investment operation where the operator pays

returns to its investors from new capital paid to the operator by new investors, rather than from profit earned through legitimate sources. Operators of Ponzi schemes usually entice new investors by offering higher returns than other investments, in the form of short-term returns that are either abnormally high or unusually consistent". Madoff swindled thousands of investors out of billions of dollars, and was one of the 25 people to blame for the global 2008 financial crisis according to Time Magazine.

d) Based on the description above, which of the dark personalities from the triad best describe(s) the malevolent stockbroker Bernard Madoff [**0.5 points**], and what aspects from dark personality theory make you say so [**1.5 points**]?

- Machiavellian [0.5 points]
    o A proper analysis of Madoff as someone who used deliberate, long-term strategies for exploiting others in a white-collar environment, in line with the following aspects of this dark personality theory: Callousness (lack of empathy with his many victims), and Manipulation (managed to keep the game up for 30-40 years) will be credited with [1.5 points] especially, if directly connected with the case description.
- NOTE – The big analytical mistake here is to label Madoff fully and/or partially a Psychopath. This is explicitly incorrect – for Madoff had the self-control to build his Ponzi scheme for decades (which speaks against impulsivity!) and to do so in white-collar environment! [0.0 points]