**LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND STYLES FOR GLOBALIZATION**

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**Introduction**

The salience of leadership in any organizational context cannot go unnoticed. Nevertheless, establishing a standard definition of leadership to fit all the contexts has presented a major challenge to senior personnel within organizations. Managers are faced with a great challenge of consolidating the differences in terms of skills and proficiency among the employees and the available resources in meeting crucial organizational goals. Leaders and managers are thus posed with the sole responsibility of determining the people they can work with towards achieving organizational goals, based on the strong operational and emotional involvement of such individuals (Bolden, et al., 2011, p. 65). As such, among other qualities, leaders should have the ability to amass energy, ability to analyze, ability to identify and exploit opportunities, ability to effectively operate in challenging situations, maintain firmness, integration, be enthusiastic, imaginative, and understanding of others, be with the desire to work, and be able to assume risk. The following sections are going to discuss the significant aspects of leadership required among senior organizational leaders in the automotive industry in view of the popular styles and theories of leadership.

**The five phases of leadership**

Leadership is a process and a competency that comprises of other competencies and hence requires individuals to effectively understand their context in order to be able to understand the best approaches to pick when dealing with different individuals. As such, the leadership mechanism is constrained to five distinctive but successive phases. The first phase involves preparation among leaders. In this case, leaders are required to set goals that they look forward to achieving, and to determine ways through which they are going to achieve volitional and emotional availability and build self-confidence required to apply specific behavior in facilitating every necessary action (Carroll, et al., 2015, p. 114). The second step involves the leader’s expression of their ability to listen and to trigger the generation of ideas and development of emotions among the participants, important in achieving the desired goals (Iszatt-White & Saunders, 2014, p. 20). Leaders are also expected to effectively connect their goals, opinions, and ideas with those of other personnel that they work with. In this case, the leaders are expected to understand that there are differences in terms of such views and stances and that they are required to objectively address any opposing views in order to establish the based possible positions. The other phase of leadership involves inspiring other persons to think, behave, or feel in a level that is appreciable and in consonance with the organizational view (Ladkin, 2010, p. 29).

**Senior-Level Leadership Theories and Styles**

Emerging markets are defined with growing and fierce competition, high costs of labor, and the increased need for profitability, which provide both opportunities and challenges that face most industries today (Ijioui, et al., 2010, p. 158). It is certain that strong and innovative leadership is important in effectively managing the rapidly changing business conditions. Nevertheless, for organizations to ensure that their leaders are well equipped to face the future, it is important that they adopt proper leadership development and succession planning efforts that will ensure that they effectively impart the necessary experience and skills required by their executives for the new order. Considering the short term efforts, some organizations may be required to recruit new executives with experience outside the industry to bring additional valuable expertise (Nieuwenhuis & Wells, 2015, p. 71). Profound change is being consistently registered within the automotive industry. With the increased rate of globalization, the high costs of labor in the traditional markets, and the changing consumer demand patterns, automakers are left with no room for inefficiency and error. It is paramount for them to accurately bet on product development, technology, cost management, and market expansion. There are various areas of experience and critical competencies that senior-level automotive leadership require in order to effectively take advantage of the growing international market. These areas of experience and critical competencies include management experience, a strategic orientation, strong capabilities and operational experience, financial acumen, proper people management skills, and a global perspective.

**Management Experience**

Automakers majorly rely on strategic partnerships and alliances to ensure effective development of new technologies and platforms and proper management of component costs (Nieuwenhuis & Wells, 2015, p. 24). As such, for senior-level leaders to establish beneficial partnerships and alliances between their organizations and other organizational in the global market, it is significant for them to establish a substantial knowledge base concerning the industry and its sophisticated networks, to develop a clear understanding of the various forces that propel change within the industry, and to embrace a strategic mindset. It is important to note that the dynamics that define industrial interplay differ from one industry to the next. As such, it is important for leaders within automotive organizations to clearly understand the factors that define operations within the automotive industry for them, to be able to pull the right strings towards organizational success. Partnerships should be strategic, such that they should uphold the principle of mutual benefit whereby both organizations are able to effectively achieve their established goals without compromising each other (Northouse, 2010, p. 198).

The major challenge posed by globalization involves cultural differences (Ijioui, et al., 2010, p. 17). As automotive organizations seek to enter new markets in the global environment, they may be forced to forge partnerships in order to fit into the new markets and to overcome legal and labor challenges that they may face. It is thus important for senior-level leaders to develop a clear understanding of the differences in the cultural dimensions between their organizations and those of the countries or regions into which they are expanding. Hofstede offered six dimensions through which organizational managers can be able to understand the differences in culture as defined by regional differences and hence to effectively implement measures that would ensure effective interactions within individuals from the other cultures (Mazanec, et al., 2015, p. 299). Case in point, in the case of a Japanese automobile company expanding into the US, it is important to note that unlike the collective nature of the Japanese culture, the US is defined by individualism and thus the motives for engaging in business among US based companies will differ with those of Japanese companies. It is upon establishing such an understanding that senior-level leaders can be able to establish point of compromise and accommodation of the other culture in order to effectively integrate the two cultures for organizational success.

**Strategic orientation**

The success of automobile organizations lies within their ability to meet the changing consumer needs. As such, as much as consumers demand for new experiences, it is important for automotive companies to be able to reinvent themselves continually in order to effectively take advantage of new opportunities within the market and to sustain profitability (Rickards, 2015, p. 179). It is thus important for senior-level managers to be able to identify opportunities within the global market and to promote innovation that would allow for proper exploitation of such opportunities within the company. Such leaders should develop a desire for challenges, be willing to take major risks, and to look for highly innovative ideas inside and outside the organization (Zhang, 2009, p. 148). Embracing applicable strategic approaches that would ensure the success of the organization is a start to the success of the organization in a new market. Senior-level leaders should be able to isolate the company’s points of difference and to empower their subordinates towards coming up with the best approaches through which the consumer needs can be met and the organizations can be able to create and meet demand for their products in new markets (Bose, 2012, p. 138).

**Operation experience**

As much as having experience across all corporate functions is important and highly beneficial to senior executives within automotive companies, operational experience is highly distinctive and integral for such leaders given the opportunities and challenges that face the industry. Roles in manufacturing, operations, and quality assurance offer such leaders the required exposure to various areas of the organization, thus equipping them with the skills necessary to lead diverse, large teams (Konradt & Hoch, 2007, p. 18). It is important for senior-level managers to be able to facilitate efficient operation of the business, both in terms of meeting the requirements of the customers and minimizing the use of resources. As such, it is key for such leaders to develop proper people skills, rational analysis, creativity, and technological knowledge as they are key in promoting the meeting of organizational goals (Kreitner & Cassidy, 2012, p. 64). Facilitating technological advancement, coupled with proper division of labor and functions of operation management that would ensure that an organization both meets the needs of the consumers and is able to cut on its cost of operation, especially considering other logistical costs that are incurred as an organization expounds into new markets across the globe (Stanley, 2012, p. 154).

**Finance and Capital Allocation**

Automotive organizations are faced with the challenges of maintaining R&D investment wile streamlining costs, an aspect that requires senior-level leaders to be financially astute (Hill & Jones, 2012, p. 28). It is important for such leaders to be creative about capital spending, to lead initiatives to variabilize costs, and to ensure that resources that fail to provide the company with any competitive advantage are freed (Wheelen & Hunger, 2006, p. 278). Spending on the right things is important in defining the course of the organization in the new markets. Even as automotive organization expand into new markets they are bound to face increased competition both from other multinationals and the local companies in the countries that they expand into. As such, it is upon senior-leaders to ensure that their companies establish competitive differences based on which they can outperform their competitors. In the same light, it is also important for senior leaders to ensure that costs are cut down to facilitate profitability amidst the change process and the increased risk taking (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013, p. 119). In this view, identification and investing into the right areas is important in ensuring that all the organizational departments are well equipped with the required finances and capital to meet their mandate.

**Team Skills**

Another important competency and area of experience that is crucial for senior-level leaders in the automotive industry seeking to propel their organization into the global environment and the effectively exploit opportunities and outclass challenges as they arise involves proper people development and strong team-building skills (Caligiuri, et al., 2010, p. 243). Such skills include effective interpersonal and communication capabilities, team leadership and people management experience, internal networking skills, and the ability to come up with the best team to extract maximum performance from it (Goetsch & Davis, 2014, p. 68). It is thus important for senior automotive leaders to combine a credible and humble approach with personal authority in establishing and facilitating the sustainability of highly effective teams.

**Global Perspective**

Automotive leaders are required to have a genuine global perspective and to maintain intellectual and cultural flexibility in order to thrive in the global environment. The global perspective involves being sensitive to differences in culture and being able to acknowledge and leverage opportunities as they arise in the international environment (Mendenhall & Osland, 2012, p. 101). It is important to note that culture plays a major role in determining the cohesiveness of an organization and the relationship that would exist among the various stakeholders within its context (Carter, et al., 2015). It is thus important for senior leaders within the automotive industry to undergo training on the various aspects of culture and their impact on the success of the organization.

**Conclusion**

It is clear that senior managers ought to develop skills in aspects of Management Experience, Strategic orientation, Operation Experience, Finance and Capital Allocation, Team Skills, and Global Perspective in order for them to facilitate the success of their organization in the global environment. Globalization brings various opportunities of expansion and reaching out to a broader customer base for organizations. Nevertheless, it also presents managerial challenges as organizations enter into new markets that are define by different cultural values and business approaches. It is thus upon the senior-level leaders of the organization to ensure that they develop the necessary skills required for such organizations to penetrate their new markets and to effectively establish themselves as key competitors for the market share.

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