Organisational Leadership

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Contents

A leader is one of more people, willing to inspire, educate and select a group of people to help achieve a vison which can be resonated with their followers (Winston and Patterson, 2006). This essay looks to depict the leadership challenge of educating a new group of employees within an originally successful sales team, within a SME looking to restructure for expansion. The SME in question was a marketing software company near Guildford and the sale job in question predominantly involved calling potential prospects via the phone, on the back of various levels of perceived interest. The challenge was not only therefore to train new employees amongst a field of work they had never experienced before, but also create a working environment which helped to settle new team members while maximising productivity. Great efforts also had to made be made to balance trust within a restructure of power.

This will be looked at through the approaches of transformational leadership and distributed power. It will be referenced through the context of placement experiences obtained by myself to highlight how the use of two such distinguished approaches collided for the worse of a company after the title challenge was presented. Specifically, two members of the original sales team were promoted to 'team leaders', as the group expanding from five salespeople to twelve, which were then split into teams. This was implemented by the business at a time of success, looking to continue the expanding rate of both financial and physical company growth. Education of the new employees was key to continue momentum, looking to be tackled through distributed leadership while transformational leadership was used by the commercial director (often referred to as CD) to implement such changes, while sharing the burden of education with the said team leaders. The commercial director looked to encompass a transformational leader through the traits of idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation (Zehndorfer, 2014). Attempts of authentic transformational leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999) were also witnessed, however an eventual lack of fundamental transparency saw this crumble. Distributed leadership is used by hierarchy to share the burden of responsibility and power (Bolden et al, 2008: 11), it was used here to help manage a growing sales team. Although a lack of trust meant that a once seemingly transformational leader neglected advice from distributed power sources and ultimately saw a dwindling source of both loyalty and success from a team who ultimately did not know who to follow. Ending in the dismissal of both appointed team leaders, which signalled the end in this phase of attempted leadership.

Exploration will be divided into evaluation of each leadership theory juxtaposed against the title challenge, while final cross referencing of theories will be used to highlight how the leaders did not address this challenge successfully. Other relevant examples and theories shall also be drawn upon.

Section 1. Transformational Leadership.

Transformational leadership inspires and appeals to the serving individual to try and appeal to their emotions, transforming their behaviour to that which suits the organisation (Gill, 2013). Jacobsen and House (2001) stress on the theme of influence through a prominence of charismatic leadership to to get the best out of employees. Steve Jobs is a common example for such a leader (Marketing91, 2019), inspiring the co-workers at Apple to innovate and achieve beyond their means to the success of technological evolution. As highlighted by this, transformational leaders are directly effective of an organisation's performance (Podaskoff et al, 1990) it is no wonder why it is such a commonly sort after teaching. Through the challenge of

settling an educating this newly formed team, the CD had a wider place in the creation of a suitable environment. While training was still a key part of his role, as the founding member of the new leadership team it was his task to set the standard. To explore this concept further I will look at the theory in its most distinctive quarters, and how it is applicable to the placement example as well as the presented leadership challenge.

Section 1.1. Idealised Influence.

This first trait suitably focuses on the influence of a transformational leader, a key ingredient to the transformational mix (Bas, 1985). It is a necessary sub-section (Bass and Avolio, 1993) used to stimulate emotional connections between workers and ultimately encourage trust (Yukl, 2013). Placement experiences saw a charismatic leader emerge mainly through the theme of experience. Disregarding existing employees, a young in-experienced team was assembled, who all needed to be trained from the reality of no existing practical knowledge for the task at hand. Charisma came into to play through the lack of initial pressure on employees, and instead a focus on learning, daily training was personally held by the CD despite a busy and indeed important schedule. Trust is built by this charismatic style through a belief that the leader has a secure vision of core values, which they themselves believe in (Frese et al, 2006). Taking time out his day also showed compassion and presented a further level of trust which showed the team that they were being willed to succeed. Yukl (2013) highlights that idealised influence and indeed charisma comes through a notion of an 'appealing vision'. The vision of success for new employees in an environment unknown was daunting over placement, however through initial charismatic leadership it was shown possible.

Section 1.2. Inspirational Motivation.

Bass and Riggio (2006) argued that this theory has been extremely prominent due the importance for the field of motivation. While it is also presented that motivation should be channelled into a group mentality (Carlson and Perrewe, 1995), which is symbolic of the example used through the notion that sales teams work best as just that, a team. With an added emphasis on driving the organisations culture (Yesware, 2016). Within the placement example, initial motivation came through a lack of pressure, targets were lowered from 12 meetings or 'sales' a week to zero within the first month, with an eventual accumulating plus two a week as time progressed. This steadied initial nerves and created achievable aims, realistic goals gave ground to succeed. Entrepreneurial success is of a direct correlation to effort (Bhide, 1999), Davidsson, Delmer and Wiklund (2002) further analysed the said effort as being a direct result of the individual's motivation. The CD therefore showed transformational values through the use of motivation to ease a nervous sales team into success by lowering ambitions to make success more attainable.

Financial incentives were also a source of motivation, especially for those promoted to higher job roles. Increased commission on success exceeding target provided motivation to keep the sales team progression despite the influx of changes. Incentives are rewards based on performance (Elqradi et al, 2015) with a strong positive correlation between the two. The CD used financials motivation to stimulate those already benefiting from promoted job role, needed when requirements of newer staff were weakened.

Section 1.3. Intellectual Stimulation

Weese (1994) points that the transformational characteristic of intellectual stimulation is crucial in developing curiosity and creativity in co-workers. The challenge of job role motivation was not only applicable to the two colleagues appointed as team leaders, but as to the many hired to fill sales roles, as for all it was a first job in the field, therefore a daunting promotion. Creativity would therefore be needed to navigate through a culture of unforeseen challenges. Seltzer and Bass (1990) presented this characteristic as the manager giving ability for employees to look at a problem in new ways. It can also be shown through the inclusion of subordinates in decision making (Chron, 2019). This was true in placement context, employees were asked how they wished to go about their daily routine, from the timings and aims of phone calls to the structure of the ongoing training. A technique also used in the workplace of Etsy, an e-commerce website (Etsy, 2020). Through their implication of 'blameless post-mortem' design to create a culture which didn't hold blame and instead lead to open discussions and solutions (Rohman, 2016). Carvalho and Mota (2010) highlight that creating an environment of trust is vital within the sphere pf education as it develops loyalty towards the organisations. Transformational leadership therefore begin to drive positive results through the flexibility of training resumes through the knowledge that new workers may find original structures daunting.

However, such methods were abruptly scrapped for some new employees while held for others, after barely after a week despite relative success, leading employees to feel unfairly treated and untrusted. Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) demonstrated the positive correlation between emotional intelligence and transformation leadership. Emotions demand a high level of consideration (Yukl, 2013) and are crucial for leadership when managing a team. A façade of intellectual stimulation therefore negatively affected the commercial director's leadership as trust was lost, making employees less inclined to transform their behaviour to the organisations wants through the now overshadowing fear of being insincerely heard. Negatively effecting any outcomes from training for the two team leaders as cracks are shown between the outstanding power source and those they are supposed to be managing. Their efforts were diluted by the uncertainty of the work environment. Teams need to be coherent, and transformational leadership is supposed to inspire a shared vision.

Section 1.4. Individual Consideration.

This trait transcribes as management in the role of a mentor for employees (Bass, 1985), adapting a leadership style best suited for that who is working for them. An example being William Edwards Deming, an American engineer, and his quality management techniques (azcentrel, 2018). The key to his theory being variation, to better stimulate his workers, while the self-named 'Deming's 14 points' had a focus on workmanship and leadership (British Library, 2019). The plan originally considered for car manufacturing has now had a much wider grip on leadership theory due to its success. As with the last trait, transformational leadership was transferred here through the implementation of schedules suited to the team. Zehndorfer (2014) for example explains how a sales manager can recognise how 'salesman A' will respond better to high targets while 'salesman B' may respond better to slowly increasing targets and manage them accordingly. It can be argued that the commercial director implemented this method by allowing the team to choose a training schedule suitable to our needs, and further changed it when some were benefiting from it more than others. However, the important notes in this exchange are that of

time frame and communication. Those given a shorter time frame to achieve tasks take less note of future results and are not given the true means to succeed (Bakker et al., 2013). Only having one week to get to a new schedule will therefore not deem significant results. Paired with the taking away of the prepared schedule by the CD, without explanation, left the team alienated. This may have been the view of individual consideration, although Pillai et al. (1999) explored trust within the leader is a key embodiment of transformational leadership. Some trust was lost here as the commercial director began to work in his own respect rather through consultation of the team he was guiding or indeed the leadership he had distributed.

Section 1.5. Evaluation of Transformational Leadership in Context

Transformational leadership was used by the Commercial Director to inspire and motivate those promoted to new job roles. However, a lack of communication and transparency meant that individuals where left feeling isolated and unaware of their standings. Gardner and Cleavenger (1998) transcribes that this leadership theory is successful through a manager's ability to communicate on an individual level. It was therefore a communication issue which saw transformational leadership fail. Great lengths were taken to settle the team and connect to each new member, however once the work load began, pressure was applied quicker than it was firstly mentioned. The relaxed and personal nature at which work life was instated for all those presented with new job roles during initial training sessions was not followed through with. Transformational leadership is all about transparency, unfortunately the speed at which the team was meant to achieve results was not instated as it should been, from the outset.

Section 2. Distributed Leadership.

Timperley (2006) aligns distributed leadership as a theory depicting of the dividing and balancing of power between a multiple leaders and followers. In placement this theory was used to negotiate the simplified challenge of training and motivation through the promotion of two salespeople to roles of team leaders in order to bear the burden and responsibility of training and motivating success out of a new team. However eventually collapsing through the clash of theories between a transformational Commercial Director and co-workers he ultimately did not trust to distribute his power with. This section will be explored through evaluative theory into distributed leadership in conjuncture with placement and case studies, concluding in analysis into its success.

Section 2.1. Distributed Leadership in Context.

As highlighted distributed leadership was used to transfer power from one to three colleagues in order to get the best out of a new team and get them up to speed in their new job role. As a Commercial Director and the founding leader of the team, he was often out of the office and engaged in other tasks. He used transformational leadership to try and adhere to the new team, however he understood that help was needed, thus the inclusion of two team leaders. Benefits of this theory stem from the expansion of options for the workplace to reiterating a chain of command while also providing both physical and hopeful upwards movement (Future of Working, 2019). The last point being key to the problem of job role motivation. It also gave new employees visions of more attainable success within the company structure. The newly promoted team

leaders were past salesmen who had themselves moved up, so the role of team leader was presented as a realistic upwards aim. Distributed leadership is also a key theory in the realm of education, summarised by Spillane (2006), through its ability to unite a task to many people. Which is critical to this example. Team leaders were made to share the experience of training knowing that, past the first month or so, as the CD could not commit to sustained office time.

The Annenberg Distributed Leadership Project commenced from 2006 to 2010 to explore the effectiveness of distributed leadership in teaching (Supovitz and Riggan, 2012), featuring a selection of leadership teams to monitor the effectiveness of the theory within a learning environment. Supovitz and Riggan (2012) further make note that although this theory may sometimes complicate the chain of command, it works in practice over a prolonged period. Ineffective therefore comes from the placement example as the CD did not give enough time for the team leaders to get a grip of their team, while they were also not given enough independence. Shown by the fact that the CD started to take back control after the initial share. Dragoni (2005) highlights that effective leaders will allow their employees time for themselves. Leadership here was not effective as time was rushed despite the presented challenge of understood naivety in a rightly complex new work environment.

For the first month of work team members would send daily reports to their leaders, they in turn would sign off a report to the CD. After a month the Commercial Director started to ask all reports to be sent to him, cutting out the team leaders. He also began to take full control of training sessions, whilst publicly stating that what the team leaders had taught the team was not the correct. This left the rest of the sales team unsurprisingly unhappy. Hall (2013) highlighted that although distributed leadership can encourage a surge of enthusiasm, this can often be paired with discontent. Here, this came through the lack of transparency as to who to follow. The theory suggests that team members should look to team leaders for guidance, however the will to be a transformational leader from higher sources lead to a confusing mix of distrust and misplaced loyalty. This theory is governed by influence rather than position (Supovitz and Riggan, 2012), its downfall was the use of it aside another theory. Transformational leadership attracts more influence than newly appointed distributed roles and therefore created confusion in the work place as to who to adhere to.

After a period no longer than three months, the colleagues originally promoted to help share power, were relieved of their position. Creating a sour atmosphere of negativity and insecurity. The newly hired sales team unsurprisingly thought they would join the same fate. The sacking of these two team leaders concludes a failed attempt to install growth in a company who were originally hitting all targets. Subsequent actions saw a huge shift in motivation which never rebuilt. Not only did this transfer as a failure in distributed leadership and workers saw a battle for power, it was a failure in transformational skills as all the while colleagues were kept in the dark during decisions.

Section 2.2. Evaluation of Distributed Leadership in Context.

Distributed leadership is most effective through the ability to better monitor movement, and indeed progression, within teams (Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond, 2001). The focus of team leaders was to monitor and train new employees. This theory was therefore foundationally effective the bonds created between new employee and team leader. Each was very close with

the other and the latter inspired the former to believe in success. Such trust however was a downfall of the other transformational Commercial Director as due his proximity to the distributed leadership, new sales staff began to draw more to the team leaders than to himself. He broke up a team he created. Steiner (1986) argues that small groups are an essential element to human life, to tear them apart would therefore see heads turn to the oppressive force. Per the example, as the team could not understand why those who had been educating them could not be trusted, putting strain on every relationship. If the Commercial Director did not trust those who he distributed power to, he would certainly not trust those who the power was for.

There are many arguments that distributed leadership is the most forefront theory for educational leadership, shown through various studies of the theory in the environment of schools. As explained by Harris (2003) with its benefits of collective learning, and development of expertise through the leaders more collaborative work. It was therefore the correct theory to adopt in this leadership challenge. Disruption came from an internal factor. The theory works best when multiple sources of information work as glue towards a common task (Elmore, 2000). This was clearly not the case through a supposed transformational commercial director who could never really relieve his full grip on power through a fundamental lack of trust with those he shared it with.

Section 3. Evaluation of Theories within the Presented Challenge.

Distributed leadership was not successful through the placement example as the Commercial Director was not a true transformational leader. If transformational theory had been upheld success may have ensued, however a lack of trust in those who had appointed married with a lack of communication provided only confusion for the leadership structure of the organisation. Trust is a good measure of social exchange (Zhu et al, 2013). Given that the challenge had a fundamental concern with making sure new group of colleagues felt secure in a potentially daunting situation, one would assume that trust would a founding leadership trait. The SME business environment is dominated by the heroic approach to leadership (Ensley et al, 2006). On a larger scale, Lee Lacocca's leadership of Chrysler is a famous example, through his notion of the 10 C's of leadership (Leadership Force, 2018), while gaining heroic status through success despite previous failures, i.e. his past sacking from Ford. He helped turn around a company through charismatic leadership. Heroic leadership if an extension of transformational theory through the intertwining of inspiration and charisma (Allision and Geothals, 2013). This extension therefore gives reason as to why the challenge was unsuccessfully addressed, as according to Eicher (2006) the heroic ideal relies on a sole leader who believes they hold superior knowledge. A transformational leader would therefore be able to create a training environment of inspiration and motivation through a dividends of power.

Distributed Leadership was the correct theory to carry out within this example. Shown by its relevance within the sphere of education, as with the Annenberg Distributed Leadership Project deployed by Supovitz and Riggan (2012). This has also been shown to transfer into the business world, Jones and Macpherson (2006) highlight that entrepreneurs in small groups offer transferable skills and knowledge while creating an environment of encouragement. Perfect therefore for a new group, all willing to succeed, for they already had the inspiration to apply for a job which was arguably out of their comfort zone. Though distributed leadership, unlike within the practice of education, is very much theory based (Cope et al, 2011). Its application alongside

a very dominant theory is therefore problematic. Gronn (2009) suggests that shared theory is most successful when consideration is made to the follower to leader relationship. Efforts should therefore have been made to consider relationships before the Commercial Director began to take power off the distributed leaders, as it in turn effected workers through sequenced distrust. Distributed leadership did successfully tackle the title challenge through a failure move on from traditional leadership traits of hierarchy.

The ultimate dismissal of the two sources of distributed leadership highlighted the end at an attempt to create an inspirational environment for the benefit of new employees. Failing because of the historic traits found in transformational which were damaging within the context of a modern SME looking to share power. Confusion ensued instead of motivation, new employees were presented with three pillars of motivation, yet one demanded more. The reformed organisational structure therefore crumbled through a lack of balance authority through who was elected to hold it up.

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