Management Philosophy

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Given that I had worked in the corporate world for almost 15 years (I'm currently a full-time student), I have a reasonable amount of experience with different management styles and organizational structures as well as experience managing people. My thoughts based on this experience are included below. Certainly, I expect my opinions to continue to evolve over the course of my future career.

The organizational structure that I find most supportive is one where I am allowed variety and flexibility in my current and future work. I don't appreciate structures where the lines between roles are very stark and exclusive. I enjoy being able to learn and contribute in multiple ways to the overall success of the department and the organization. For example, I was previously a project manager in a marketing communications department, but I was also welcome to provide input on the copywriting and design work for the projects I managed. Copywriting and design were technically other roles within the department, but I wasn't prohibited from contributing my thoughts, comments, and constructive critique. As an extension of this idea, I appreciate organizations that allow for movement between departments should employees have an interest in expanding their skills and experience. Generally, I prefer smaller organizations or smaller departments because the hierarchy tends to be a bit flatter and my responsibilities tend to be more varied. Also, with smaller organizations and departments, I tend to be welcome in higher level or strategic planning meetings than at larger organizations, and my contributions are appreciated, if not always implemented. This participation provides a better understanding of the organization's goals, the strategies for achieving them, and how my work contributes. Finally, I value a learning culture where mistakes are seen as opportunities for improvement, not as errors necessitating demerits.

To create the type of organizational structure mentioned above, as a manager, I would encourage my team to participate and voice their opinions and suggestions in an appropriate manner, even if the comment was not directly related to their daily tasks (e.g., during a meeting where comments are requested, or during a status meeting with me, or directly with other members of the team as long as the other member is open to the feedback). During status meetings, I would be sure to ask each employee about their interest in work outside of their current role. Was there perhaps another role within the department or company that they'd be interested to know more about? I'd be sure that each person had access to appropriate training opportunities to expand their skillset. Finally, I'd would pay special attention to any mistakes and talk with each employee about how to correct them and learn from them rather than feel defeated by them.

I would be pleased if people working for me described me as encouraging, trustworthy, honest, diligent, professional, approachable, responsible, organized, understanding, and productive. I strive to be a manger that is capable of doing the work of each of her employees, or at least understands what it takes to do that work. I find that this increases my team's respect of me and allows me to lead by example. I feel it's very important to manage each person differently and according to their needs, so they are productive and happy. Because of this thinking, the contingency theory that Evans and Ward (2007, p. 30) describe makes the most sense to me, and I think it works best in my experience. I also greatly appreciate the ideas of the composite approach (Evans & Ward, 2007, p. 33-34). Exposure to a wide variety of thinking across multiple disciplines can only be helpful in generating new ideas for dealing with particular people, projects, or situations.

Finally, a description of how I would like to be managed includes most of the aspects detailed above. In addition, I enjoy working with managers who discuss an assignment with me and then allow me the leeway to develop and execute a plan to complete the assignment. Micromanaging is exhausting not only for me, but for my manager as well. I like to have scheduled biweekly one-on-one status meetings. Weekly is too often, and monthly, too infrequent. The meetings must be scheduled in advance to ensure that we actually make time to meet. Besides a simple overview of project status, achievements, and stumbling blocks, I also appreciate constructive criticism and feedback and do regularly ask for it. If a manager is too emotional or makes destructive comments, I'm very likely to begin looking for another job. I appreciate professionalism and a positive, can-do attitude—especially when a department's workload is/seems overwhelming. I like managers who can break work down into phases or sections and lead the department through stressful times.