

Responsible Leadership Outline

BUS 6937 – Responsible Leadership Consulting Practicum

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Introduction

Topic:

CULTIVATING RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AT MICROSOFT

GOALS:

This project encompasses the analysis of Microsoft's policies and practices related to responsible leadership. This analysis encompasses various dimensions mentioned below:

- Assess Microsoft's leadership approaches, practices, and outcomes to understand how they contribute to organizational success.
- Evaluate the company's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within its workforce.
- Analyze Microsoft's ethical practices, its use of technology for innovation, and its impact on society.

COMPANY OVERVIEW:

- **Founded:** In 1975 (Facts About Microsoft - Stories, 2024), the American multinational corporation and technology company Microsoft Corporation was established. Redmond, Washington, serves as the company's headquarters. (About - Company, n.d.)
- **Products:** Microsoft is well-known for its Edge web browser, the Microsoft 365 productivity suite, and the Windows range of operating systems. (About - Company, n.d.)
- **Mission:** Microsoft has been a major force in the computer industry since its creation. Their mission statement is: “At Microsoft, we are dedicated to advancing human and organizational achievement” (About—Company, n.d.).

- **Market Dominance:** With Windows and MS-DOS, the corporation first took the lead in the operating systems market in the 1980s and 1990s. (Facts About Microsoft - Stories, 2024)
- **Sustainability Commitment:** Microsoft is expediting the journey towards a more sustainable future by actively supporting our customers in crafting sustainable solutions and championing policies that foster environmental well-being. Microsoft is dedicated to sustainability and plans to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. (Sustainability - Source, n.d.)

DATA GATHERING:

- We reviewed the Company's official website to review the information about its mission, values, DEIB reports, leadership styles, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and other publications.
- We were able to find news articles, press releases, and media coverage related to Microsoft. This enabled us to get diverse insights into recent developments and industry trends affecting the company. We found areas for improvement in external sources that Microsoft did not publish.
- We were able to find a podcast from Worklab, where Dr. Britt Aylor, Director of Leadership Development at Microsoft, shared about their adaptive leadership framework.
- We found academic papers, HBR articles on leadership practices, and peer-reviewed research articles on Sustainability and Business Transformation in Light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which will help us mitigate potential biases in our analysis.

ANALYSIS

LEADERSHIP APPROACH

1. INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

- How does Microsoft's growth mindset culture align with inclusive leadership? (About This Inclusion Journey Site | Microsoft.com, n.d.) by understanding the impact of inclusive leadership on proactive behavior (Zeng et al., 2020)
- We will break down the Microsoft inclusive behaviors (Tierney, 2021) and see how they align with the inclusive leader behaviors from the theoretical model (Northouse, 2021, p.331)

2. ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Analysis of adaptive leadership and its relevance in the context of integrating AI into organizations and challenges faced, based on Dr. Britt Aylor, Director of Leadership Development at Microsoft, interview at Worklab's podcast (Aylor. B, 2024 – present)
- Assess the role of leadership in a data-driven culture (Macgregor, 2021) and navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital business environment (Bennis, 2013).
- We will touch upon the Strategic changes and actions Microsoft faced in the tech industry under Satya Nadella's leadership. (Tabrizi, 2023)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

1. Analyze the organizational barriers to inclusion from McKinsey (2020) based on the Global Diversity & Inclusion Report 2023.
 - Identify the critical challenges proposed by McKinsey to establish inclusive workplaces.

- Identify specific barriers relevant to Microsoft's context based on McKinsey's findings.
 - Identify the strategies and initiatives implemented by Microsoft to address organizational barriers to inclusion. (Microsoft Corporate Blogs, 2022)
2. DEI challenges and improvements over the last ten years
 - Identify Microsoft's issues over the last few years (Flitter, 2023; MacDowell, 2019)
 - Case studies and data reports highlighting specific DEI initiatives and programs implemented by Microsoft (Milanesi, 2023; MacDowell, 2019).
 - Emphasis on the importance of continuous improvement and commitment to DEI. (Dover, et al. ,2020)

TECHNOLOGY PRACTICES AND USES AND ETHICAL CONCERNS

1. Microsoft's role as a technology leader in the industry.
2. Case studies highlighting privacy issues, violations, and copyright concerns:
 - Privacy Nightmare: Microsoft will store all your Bing chats if you are a non-enterprise user (Jain, 2023)
 - Testing Ethical Boundaries. The New York Times sues Microsoft and OpenAI on copyright concerns (Gordon, 2023)
 - Microsoft Sued for \$3 Billion over Alleged ChatGPT 'Privacy Violations (Xiang, 2023)
3. Analysis of ethical considerations and responsible AI practices within Microsoft's AI/ML initiatives. (Green, 2021; Heo, 2021)

SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Microsoft has integrated CSR into its strategies and initiatives. We will examine the 2023 Impact summary by Microsoft Corporation. (2023) on how the company recognizes technology and innovation's role in advancing the SDGs.
2. We will address the principles that guide Microsoft's approach to sustainability (Our Sustainability Journey | Microsoft CSR, n.d.) and how it aligns with multi-stakeholder dialog explained in Multi-stakeholder Dialog for Business Transformation considering the UN SDGs (Sebhatu & Enquist, 2022)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Based on Tabrizi's (2023) article on Satya Nadella's leadership and the role of leadership in a thriving data-driven culture, we know that Microsoft's previous approach prioritized protecting its assets and making incremental improvements rather than embracing innovation. Therefore, we recommend that Microsoft prioritize innovation and risk-taking by empowering its engineering talent to explore new possibilities and invest in emerging technologies and partnerships.
- Establish Evidence-Based Learning processes, regularly conduct stress tests on assumptions and beliefs, and reflect upon them based on the challenges outlined in Dr. Aylor's podcast (2024).
- Recommendations for future strategies and initiatives to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion within Microsoft. This could include implementing blind hiring practices, establishing partnerships with diverse talent pipelines, and creating inclusive work environments where all employees feel valued and supported. (Garrik et al., 2024)
- Emphasize the importance of creating psychologically safe environments more explicitly by incorporating elements from Northouse's (2022) model to foster team trust and openness.

- Recommendations to prioritize upholding ethical guidelines and standards for developing and deploying technologies as technology permeates our daily lives. Recognizing the significance of transparency, fairness, and accountability in AI and ML algorithms, the company should ensure that its products and services strictly adhere to these principles. To these principles.
- Recommend Microsoft to collaborate with industry partners, academia, and policymakers to address ethical challenges and promote responsible technology use, ultimately fostering trust and confidence among users and stakeholders.

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