

Leadership for Performance Excellence

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Abstract: Performance excellence is on the whole, an emerging area nevertheless, leadership is regarded globally as its pre-eminent enabler. Understanding of leadership and leadership system in this context is also emerging and has to date focused more intently on activities than attributes. Leadership for performance excellence is approached from varying perspectives. Included among these are consideration of the contribution of gender differences, the importance of values and ethics, the balance of core values and competencies, identification and deployment of values at the corporate level and application in the public sector.

Key words: Leadership, performance excellence, competency, culture, leadership style, assesment

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, it is known as performance excellence and Europe it is generally referred to as business excellence. Most of the remainder of the globe refers to it by one or the other of these two terms. But whatever performance or business excellence may be, it is generally acknowledged that it is enabled in large by leadership and leadership system, hence the topic of performance excellence is generally employed.

The concept of performance excellence is recognized around the world and is at the core of various national quality award programs, as well as organizational self-assessment models applied by numerous organization entities, whether they be public or private (Conti, 1997). Performance excellence can be regarded as the overall way of working that balances stakeholder needs and expectations and increases the probability of long-term organizational success through operational, customer-related, financial and marketplace performance excellence (Edgeman and Scherer, 1999). But, what is this overall way of working and how can we make it as portable as possible, so that its benefits can be more broadly distributed? More specifically what contribution does leadership have to make to this overall way of working?

These are important considerations, since indeed, highly efficient and effective organizations driven by exceptional leadership and leadership system contribute to communities through exemplary citizenship, to consumers through outstanding products and services and to economies through enhanced competitive position. Of course, not all environments are competitive and this is perhaps more well-known elsewhere around the globe than it is, for example in the United States that is in regions where the public sector forms a greater part of the national social and economic profile this phenomena is more recognizable.

While various elements are recognized as legitimate enablers of performance excellence, its heart and soul is leadership which is herein regarded as systemic to the extent that an organization's ability to anticipate and counter threats on the local level renders it immune to unresolved crises that must be brought to central attention. Transforming systemic leadership from concept to reality is an especially critical performance excellence consideration because it deals with the foremost of the stakeholder segments whose expectations must be balanced, more specifically the customer. As such, systemic leadership is fundamental to customer relationship management.

With regard to performance excellence, one key leadership consideration is the identification and mapping of values and competencies to the aforementioned overall way of working. Further which of these can be deployed throughout the organization and how is the effectiveness of that which is deployed, assessed?

While effective leadership styles may vary dramatically across markets and circumstances, some universal aspects of effective leadership mapping to performance excellence may be identifiable. Once identified, an important issue becomes approach, deployment, learning and integration thereof. Herein, leadership as addressed by the self-assessment models underlying various international quality awards is examined. This is followed by identification of universal leadership core values and competencies and discussion of their relation to performance excellence.

Deployment is critical to systemic leadership and among other means, may be approached via the reward and recognition system and through organizational performance measures. Closure is reached through discussion of the crucial issue of success in the endeavor that is, assessment of leadership for performance excellence.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is one of the eight domains in the achieving performance excellence model and is critical in determining how an organization accomplishes its legal, ethical and societal responsibilities including public safety and responsible stewardship of public resources. Leadership is also concerned with the responsibilities involved in running and guiding the organization and all of its staff members.

Leaders in successful organization are those who are able to master a proactive and comprehensive agenda to address needs and expectations. They communicate this agenda to staff, customer and other stakeholders. A manager knows how to enforce a policy; a leader ensures that staff members understand the policy and instills a willingness in them to comply voluntarily with policy. One can say that leadership is having people do what you want them to do without having to tell them to do it.

Sometimes people are promoted to leadership positions without the skills needed to influence staff. Managers need some skill development to learn how to lead. Without leadership skills, they run the risk of being unable to deal with changing conditions effectively and in a sustainable manner. Conversely, leaders who run their organizations without management skills may lack accountability or consistency. When the leader of a higher performing organization can make the distinction between leadership and management and make sure that all skills are covered, the organization is on its way to being the best it can be. According to Kotter (1996), organizations must be led, as well as managed or they face extinction.

Leaders at all levels must examine the skills they use on the job. Often leaders are promoted from management positions to leadership roles and they are reluctant to give up their management focus to actually lead the organization. When there is an imbalance of managers over leaders, the result frequently is a lopsided organization that forgets its overriding goal for the sake of polishing its immediate appearance (Martin, 1999). Below is a composite of the definitions of leadership and management by various leadership experts.

LEADERSHIP VERSUS MANAGEMENT

Leadership

Provides: Interpersonal aspect is able to change, adapt and sustain.

Establishes direction at the big-picture level: Provides a vision for what the organization can become institutes strategies, goals and measures for getting there.

Aligns people: Communicates the direction and builds a sense of community, elicits cooperation and teamwork and keeps key people motivated to support the initiative.

Motivates and inspires: Mobilizes people to carry out the new vision, energizes people to overcome barriers to change and creates a sense of purpose and meaning.

Management

Provides: Administrative aspects, order, consistency and predictability.

Plans and budgets: Establishes detailed timetables and steps for getting desired results, allocates needed resources and carries out administrative duties.

Organizes and provides staffing: Creates a structure for carrying out the plan, staffs the plan, delegates responsibility and provides policies and procedures.

Controls staff and solves problems: Monitors results, solves problems and makes corrections for deviations from the plan.

Does the right thing: Leadership experts, such as Maxwell (1993) and Kouzes and Posner (2002) define leader as someone whose followers follow by choice, someone who influences staff to creatively contribute to organizational success and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Influence plays a big part in how we live the lives and how the workplace is run. To influence, affect or persuade, a person does not have to be in a leadership position and people who are put into leadership positions are not necessarily the primary influencers.

LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

The growth of leadership influence is an intentional process and leaders need to be aware that (Maxwell, 2002):

- Every time the leader changes his/her job to a new organization, he/she starts over at the base level
- Moving to a higher level requires commitment from both the leader and those who follow
- Change becomes easier as the leader climbs the levels because there will be others to assist him/her
- As the leader builds each level on the previous one, he/she must maintain the levels below to keep his/her influence from crumbling. Simplified, this means leaders need to keep in touch with people as they move up the ladder

To help leaders build a base of influence, Maxwell (2002) has identified five levels of leadership that build on each other:

Level 1: Position; this basic level of leadership is based on the influence a person has because of his/her job title. Leaders who believe that their titles are synonymous with leadership and who continue to operate at this level typically use their authority to get work done and potentially intimidate others in the process. Using this approach, they encounter resistance and lack of motivation among their staff and leadership team because their followers are not followers at all.

Level 2: Permission as the saying goes, people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. The leader operating at this level exercises emotional and social intelligence in developing good interpersonal relationships; he/she knows it is important to deal carefully with people and to put people before procedures.

Level 3: Production when relationships are working well and the needs of staff are being met, production goes up. Leaders operating from level 3 provide a vision, strategy and way for people to be accountable and successful. As goals are met, momentum builds to get to the next level of influence where leadership becomes shared.

Level 4: People development, at level 4 people in the organization feel empowered and want to develop their own leadership skills. The leader places a high priority on developing them and builds a core group of people who complement his/her skills and help disseminate his/her message to others.

Level 5: Personhood; leaders at level 5 are highly respected because over the years they have proved themselves as influencers with high standards and as effective mentors. They have reputations that others want to emulate.

According to Maxwell (2002), as leaders move up the levels, higher performance and change become easier as the level of trust grows. This process is supported by Covey (1989, 2006)'s speed of trust theory in which he maintains that when people trust each other, work and transactions speed up and their cost goes down. A leader's influence is connected with having that reputation of trust.

LEADERSHIP TRAITS

The traits of leaders who are willingly followed by others were identified in research by Kouzes and Posner

in 1987 and revalidated in 1995 and 2002 (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). Their research focused on how leaders mobilize others to create extraordinary results. They noted that the how-tos of leadership the strategies, tactics, skills and practices are insignificant unless leaders understand the value of the social capital built by investing in relationships. Kouzes and Posner (2002, 2008) state that followers want their leaders to be honest, forward looking, competent and inspiring. Bennis and Goldsmith (2010) identified similar characteristics that constituents want from their leaders: Purpose, direction, meaning, trust, optimism, action and results. Notice how both lists overlap to create these four groups of characteristics:

- Honest/trustworthy/ethical/upright
- Forward looking/purpose driven
- Competent/results oriented
- Visionary/inspirational/optimistic

According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), effective leaders also must be intelligent, fairminded, broadminded, supportive, straightforward, dependable, cooperative, determined, imaginative, ambitious, courageous, caring, mature, loyal, self-controlled and independent. Most of these characteristics are emotional and social intelligence skills.

LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

Within the organizational environment, different styles of leadership are appropriate at different times. Clearly defined leadership is necessary to ensure that chaos cannot take hold. Understanding various leadership approaches allows leaders in an organization to move from one style to another, depending on the circumstances, so that they do not become locked into a particular style.

Seasoned leaders know that there is no exact formula for leading that always works. Leaders must read the situation, the people and the environment to determine which approaches are needed to promote the greatest success. In being purposeful, the leader will employ some task-related behaviors and some relationship-related behaviors. For the seasoned leader to master this, he/she must be familiar with the facility, the policies and procedures and most importantly, the personalities of the staff members. As mentioned before, getting to know the staff well and understanding their similarities and differences allows the leader to interact with each staff member in an appropriate manner. This ability is no different than a successful athletic coach knowing what works best with each player. In larger agencies, the importance of the top leader requiring that all those who supervise others to operate in a similar manner cannot be underestimated (Bass, 1985).

Task-related leadership behaviors focus more on the task to be performed than on the interpersonal side of leadership. They include defining, analyzing and solving problems, setting the direction, pioneering new approaches, taking risks, setting high expectations and performance standards, asking tough questions, encouraging candid conversations and focusing on results.

Relationship-related leadership behaviors get work done by building relationships. They include inspiring and rallying people, aligning people, providing encouragement, being approachable, facilitating dialogue, promoting principles and values, fostering collaboration and a sense of belonging and being a servant leader (Avolio, 1999).

A leader's mix of approaches depends on his/her personality and strengths; the personalities, strengths and level of commitment of those being led and the requirements of a given situation. Influential leaders are able to determine the mix of approaches needed for the situation and are able to adapt and modify their approaches based on the circumstances.

SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Situational leadership can enable organizational leaders to learn how to navigate different ways of leading in various circumstances. It can also help them learn how to base their approach on their knowledge of specific staff.

The situational leadership model was first developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1977) to help leaders determine which leadership approaches to use in various situations. It suggests that successful leaders adjust their task and relationship-related behaviors to fit the situation, based on the followers' levels of competence/maturity (indicated below by able or unable) and commitment/self-confidence (Indicated below by willing or unwilling):

- Unable and unwilling; the followers lack the skills necessary and are unable to take responsibility for the job or task
- Unable but willing; the followers are willing to take on the job or task but are still not able to do it
- Able but unwilling; the followers are experienced and able to do the task but may lack the confidence to do it
- Able and willing; the followers are experienced at the job or task, comfortable and confident in their ability to complete it and willing to take responsibility for its completion

Task-driven leadership behaviors include telling people what to do and when, how and where to do it. Relationship leadership behaviors are determined by the

extent to which the leader engages in two-way collaborative communication, such as listening, facilitating and supporting employees. Both of these types of behaviors are found and needed in the chain-of-command structure associated within organizations, even though chain of command is often viewed as more task driven.

The four basic combinations of competence/maturity and commitment/self-confidence are best addressed by different leadership styles as indicated in the situational leadership model. All four leadership styles are necessary to use within an organizational setting depending on the situation.

Participating/facilitating style: This is a low-task, high-relationship approach. When the followers are moderately ready and able to do the job but are insecure, the leader is no longer directive. Instead the leader uses a shared decision making approach to draw forth followers' understanding of and confidence in completing the job.

Delegating style: This is a low-task, low-relationship approach. When followers are at a high readiness level and are willing and able to accomplish a particular task, the leader can let them run their own show. It is considered low relationship because the followers do not need supervision or constant communication with the leader.

Selling style: This is a high-task, high-relationship approach. When followers are at a moderate readiness level but are neither willing nor able to perform at the required level, the leader takes responsibility and controls decisionmaking while building relationships through two-way communication.

Telling/directing style: This is a high-task, low-relationship approach. When followers are least mature and are unable but willing to do the job, one-way communication comes from the leader to give the specific task directions of what, how, when, where and who. The leader also closely supervises the work. This approach is advisable to use during a natural disaster or in crisis situations.

No matter which style the leader uses regularly, there are situations in which one style is more appropriate than others based on the maturity level of followers and the situation. When followers are secure, mature, willing and able to do the work, leaders should provide opportunities for distributed leadership.

These four styles can be viewed through the lens by Cameron and Quim (1999) competing values framework and their organizational culture assessment instrument's four types of organizational culture are:

Leadership styles

Leadership style	Culture type	Behavior focus	Culture focus
Participating /facilitating	Clan	Mentoring, team building	Workplace functions like a family
Delegating	Adhocracy	Entrepreneurship, innovation	Dynamic, innovative workplace
Selling	Market	Producing, driving	Competitive workplace
Telling /directing	Hierarchy	Organizing, monitoring	Formal, highly structured workplace

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

As the demands of leadership become greater and new ways of dealing with organizational challenges are required for sustainability, it becomes necessary to build leadership capacity throughout the organization in the form of distributed leadership. This shifts the leadership from a top-down model to a form of leadership that is collaborative and shared. A leadership mentality is developed within the organization. This means that leadership is not just exercised by the executive/organizational leader but is embraced by many others throughout the organization who take responsibility for initiating and carrying out projects about which they have working knowledge or passionate interest (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). It should be noted that in many of today’s modern facilities and supervision settings (direct supervision), all officers who interact with offenders/clients are in reality, leaders. These leaders also must be able to navigate through the various leadership styles previously mentioned in this section.

Distributed leadership changes the leadership model from the executive having power over to having power with or power through others in the organization. This puts the organizational leader in the position of strategically identifying areas in which leadership is needed and then creating a climate for others to work toward a clear and shared vision (Bass, 1998). The executive is a true leader of leaders who retains responsibility for the overall performance and direction of the organization while growing the skills and knowledge of others within the organization to distribute the leadership throughout (Bass and Avolio, 1990, 1994).

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Being emotionally and socially intelligent gives leaders another way of getting to know themselves and their employees at a deeper level, enabling them to practice more advanced leadership skills and to engage staff in a proactive and mature way. Teams also benefit from using emotional and social intelligence skills. According to Hughes and Terrell (2007), emotional and

social intelligence reflects the ability to recognize and manage your own emotions and to recognize and respond effectively to the emotions of others. This includes understanding your social community from the big picture point of view and the ability to direct change and adapt to that change.

LEADERS

Researchers claim that emotional and social intelligence skills are more important to life and leadership success than IQ, the standard measure of intelligence. The research of Hunter and Schmidt, as well as Sternberg (Goleman, 1998) on the correlation between IQ and job performance shows that IQ accounts for only 4-25% of a person’s job performance. This means that IQ alone at best leaves 75% of job success unexplained and at worst 96% in other words, it does not determine who succeeds and who fails (Goleman, 1998). Emotional and social intelligence make up the difference. People who are socially and emotionally intelligent are people savvy. They have both personal competence and interpersonal/social competence: The ability to understand and manage their own moods, as well as understand the emotions of others; they are able to use this information and can choose ways to better relate to others. Exhibit 3 shows the relationship between personal and social competence and management in this emotional and social intelligence model.

Emotional and social intelligence is also connected to CEO disease which exists when important information is withheld from the executive or other high-level leaders because of fear of being the messenger. According to Goleman *et al.* (2001, 2002), this will most likely happen when the leader uses a commanding style of leadership. Negative information also might be suppressed if a person wants to please the boss or be seen in a positive light and therefore, is afraid to speak the hard truth to the boss. This lack of transparency can be a source of career and organizational derailment for a senior-level leader, as well as leaders at all levels of the correctional organization (Goleman *et al.*, 2002). In a correctional setting, leaders who have developed their emotional and social intelligence skills and know what is going on with their people can address potentially volatile or negative situations before the workforce and potentially the supervised population is negatively affected.

According to a study by the Center for Creative Leadership, three major derailers of a new leader are directly related to emotional and social intelligence: Inadequate team skills, poor interpersonal relationships and inflexibility that is, handling change poorly (Cherniss,

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TEAMS

Working in a team, emotional and social intelligence skills get tested. Team behaviors that consist of critical emotional and social intelligence skills are described as: Trust within teams is affected by empathy (or the team members' abilities to accept each other's strengths and weaknesses).

- Conflict resolution in teams is affected by the team members' ability to be assertive and to tell the truth, to independently make decisions when needed and to be empathetic to the needs of each other. It is also affected by their ability to tolerate stress, deal with uncertainty and define and solve problems
- Commitment in teams is affected by the team members' ability to display social responsibility to the group rather than to focus on their own needs, to have good interpersonal relationships, to be optimistic and to be flexible and resilient
- Accountability is related to assertiveness, self-regard, social responsibility, stress tolerance and impulse control and the ability to delay gratification and manage emotions
- Results orientation is driven by problem solving, stress tolerance and reality testing or the ability to see both the good and the bad of situations

Emotional and social intelligence provide more tools that leaders and those who work for and with them can use to view their organizations and their work from a systems perspective.

SELF-LEADERSHIP

Contemporary leadership experts agree that leaders can be developed and are not necessarily born as such. It also may be true that some individuals have personality characteristics that make them seem like natural leaders and that some people have been exposed to environments that pulled them from their comfort zones to deal with situations that required them to learn leadership competencies. Leadership, however is open to everyone who is willing to do the work. Conscious self-leadership is an essential process for leaders at all levels. Components of self-leadership are:

- Self-awareness; gaining knowledge of yourself
- Self-management/self-development; examining your personal practices
- Self-actualization; fulfilling your potential

Success in each component depends on the step before it. Self-awareness is probably one of the least known leadership skills, yet it is foundational to the success of leaders in higher performing correctional organizations. According to correctional leadership competencies for the 21st century, self-awareness is necessary for correctional executives and senior-level leaders to understand the ways in which their strengths and weaknesses affect how they deal with others and their ability to reach their goals. By understanding the underlying motivations of their actions and seeing themselves as others see them, leaders can capitalize on their strengths and not be derailed by their weaknesses (Campbell, 2005).

PERSONAL VALUES AND ETHICS

Organizational values tend to reflect the values of those at the top of the organization. Through influence and example, leaders can set a high standard for all to follow staff as well as offenders and treatment providers. As there are many ethical temptations in a correctional environment (e.g., introducing contraband, doing favors, sexual misconduct), well-developed values can aid in improving safety and security.

The Josephson Institute has identified several core values that they call the six pillars of character which are common across many cultures and societies. People

use these core values to help them make decisions and govern their behavior in various circumstances (Josephson Institute, 2007). What makes them special is that people in many places set a high priority on these same values:

- Trustworthiness: Honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, fidelity
- Respect: Esteem, courtesy, consideration, civility
- Responsibility: Accountability, dependability, self-restraint
- Fairness: Justice, impartiality, evenhandedness

INTERNATIONAL QUALITY AWARDS

Systemic leadership distributes leadership responsibilities and privileges across an organization's human resource. Most performance excellence models limit the role of leading to CEOs and senior executives and regard it as competence based. The legacy of leaders across human history, however is written in terms of core values, such as courage, wisdom, sacrifice, stewardship, servant-hood and so on. In an act of corporate nihilism, performance excellence models typically ignore such values.

Leadership criteria from various international quality award models indicate four primary areas that are assessed none of which map to the sort of core value based legacies often associated with leadership. These commonly assessed areas include:

- Leadership internal to the organization and particularly as it relates to total quality management, recognition and reward and resource commitment
- Involvement with customers, suppliers and other external organizations
- Leadership responsibility to society
- The system of leadership

LEADERSHIP SYSTEM IN INTERNATIONAL QUALITY PRIZES?

In a move signaling possible integration of leadership core values and competencies, Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (MBCfPE) recently modified the self-assessment model that underlies the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA). The latest being applied and adopts the ADLI (Approach, Deployment, Learning and Integration) method of self-assessment. Enablers of performance excellence, such as leadership are examined for the approach followed and its rationale, how the approach

supports policy and strategy and how it is focused on the needs of the stakeholders affected by it. Further, the extent of deployment or pervasiveness of the approach and how it is managed so as to ensure that it is full and effective are investigated. Learning and integration activities that take place include measuring approach and deployment effectiveness, undertaking learning activities such as benchmarking and based on all these, identifying, prioritizing, planning and implementing improvements. Specific to leadership, the improved model places additional focus on the leaders' personal role in ensuring that the organizations management system is developed and implemented.

The improved MBCfPE model defines leadership as: How your organization's senior leaders guide and sustain your organization. Also examined are your organization's governance and how your organization addresses its ethical, legal and community responsibilities (MBCfPE, business and not-for-profit criteria, 2012). As an enabler of performance excellence, a key issue is how the approach to leadership is developed with particular attention devoted to:

- Defining organizational approach to leadership including: Purpose, direction and objectives
- Integration of the approach to leadership into overall organizational policy and strategy
- Defining the processes that generate the key leadership related activities
- Matching leadership to organizational maturity/structure, changing markets and environment
- Establishing the organization culture and driving values
- Defining role models for leadership
- Stimulating innovative and creative thinking
- Updating the approach based on assessment and review feedback

Deployment the means by which leadership may be driven into the organization that is made systemic is examined in MBCfPE Model according to how the approach to leadership is deployed and mirrored in leaders' behaviors and actions. Among issues addressed are the selection, cultivation and development of leaders and organizational leadership structure. It would seem evident that the MBCfPE perspective on leadership for performance excellence recognizes the time-honored principle that there is no success without a successor (Maxwell, 2002).

The latest MBCfPE Model considers a comprehensive list of leadership behaviors and actions.

These include: Communication and modeling of organizational values, setting and communication of direction and priorities, forging unity of purpose, encouraging empowerment, recognition of people's effort and achievements, promotion of and support for learning and innovation, meeting, listening, understanding and responding to stakeholders, driving ethical behavior into the organization and updating the deployment based on assessment and review feedback.

MBCfPE (Performance Excellence) Model also assesses leadership comprehensively. In fact, assessment and review of leadership addresses implementation of a monitoring system with early warning indicators and measures, identification and evaluation of organizational strengths and opportunities for improvements, active learning about effective and ineffective leadership, use of upward evaluation, appraisal and assessment, evaluation of the role of leaders in driving the innovation and learning process, prioritizing and implementing the learning from all monitoring, assessment and review activities to improve efficiency and effectiveness and validation of the assessment and review process.

UNIVERSAL LEADERSHIP CORE VALUES AND COMPETENCIES

In January, 1998 more than two dozen of the world's most influential executives gathered at CBS studios in New York and the BBC studios in London. Consensus on three strategic and competitive performance growth drivers emerged from this gathering, billed as the first best practices for global competitiveness summit. Mapping directly to leadership as identified in Performance Excellence models underlying international quality prizes, those drivers are:

- Innovation through formal and informal processes for discovering and applying new performance ideas from both traditional and non-traditional sources
- Strategic alliances formation through development and maintenance of collaborative performance efforts that have both high risk and great benefit for all participating parties
- Stakeholder symbiosis an emerging concept that recognizes the mutual interdependence of all stakeholders as related to their success and financial well-being

Vital strands in the tapestry of performance excellence that are consistent with ideas espoused by those executives participating in the summit include:

- Value for the individual and knowledge issues such as training, fast learning, creativity and innovation
- Total engagement of employees through recognition and reinforcement, resource allocation sufficient to employee needs, empowerment and participation in multidisciplinary teams
- A balanced stakeholder perspective that recognizes the link between employee and customer satisfaction that drives success and profitability, thereby creating shareholder value
- Alignment of employee training with customer needs and of mutual interests in formation and management of strategic alliances
- A strong strategic orientation with the ability to integrate an organizations' many concurrent initiatives

Whether directly or implied, various core values where values is meant in the traditional ethical and moral sense map to these drivers of performance excellence and supporting ideas. These include fairness, honesty, respect for the individual and integrity, stewardship of organizational resources including its human resource, servant-hood to the organization's many stakeholders, listening, communication, empowerment and value for diversity and a value for reproduction that is, commitment to the principle that leaders beget more leaders.

LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

Organizations create their own culture and dynamics that may arrest development and create complex issues to overcome in the pursuit of excellence.

In the ideal, the organizational leaders instill the culture through their behavior and practice both formally and informally of the organization's values. It is believed that all organizations have the potential for excellence but why only a few achieve excellence. Here, researchers explore the role of leadership in this endeavor and the systems philosophy that is believed organizations must adopt in order to pursue excellence in a purposeful manner.

The organization must adopt a systems perspective in order to instill a culture of excellence and guide the journey towards excellence. Systems are best understood as structures that assists by creating some order out of the chaotic world every organization exist in and so establish a system that moves the organization forward (Bass and Bass, 2008; Campbell, 2006).

To pursue performance excellence requires a commitment to become a learning organization that values self-understanding (facts) and is process driven. In a process driven organization, the process is (almost) as important as the result. More focus on process allows everyone in the organization that the responsibility to be the first and the authority to be the next. Allowing and learning from errors is a fundamental requirement to creatively adapt and innovative without having to look for person to be blamed.

As an example, let us refer to organizational performance excellence frameworks that are based on the performance excellence criteria from the Baldrige National Quality Program. This proven framework is both flexible and industry generic and provides a system perspective for managing the organization to achieve performance excellence. The framework is important as a unifying mechanism to facilitate progress and assist with organizational learning.

The goals of this system perspective are to help organizations use an integrated approach to organizational performance excellence that results in:

- Delivery of ever-improving value to customers, contributing to market place success
- Improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities
- Organizational and personal learning

System thinking is the corner stone that underlies all learning disciplines. Systems thinking provide the discipline for seeing wholes, to make the full patterns clearer and to help us see how to change them effectively. Systems thinking allow us to see the structures that underlie complex situations and give living systems their unique character. The essence of systems thinking according to Peter Senge1, is the ability to see interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots.

System thinking is both a mindset and a set of specific tools. It requires an overall organizational improvement approach that values knowledge, team work, individual development and planning in the spirit of benefiting stakeholders, including employees, customers and society at large. The organization's leadership must set clear and visible values that balance the needs of all stakeholders. With that foundation, a systems perspective can be deployed to assist in building knowledge and capabilities, stimulating innovation and achieving excellence.

Having the right people, specifically the right leaders in the right positions is the most critical factor for organizational success. Leaders must be assessed for their level of development and placed appropriately within the organization. Problem behaviors and incompetence must be dealt with efficiently since leadership dysfunction is mirrored throughout the organization. The right leadership can address this issue and correct the organizational vision to ensure this ingredient.

The will and ambition of the leadership team will instill passion throughout the organization, if the vision and leadership is right. The leaders must drive performance excellence by:

- Role model, the cross-functional and project nature of the work required to achieve performance excellence, provide a natural stepping stone to display leadership as well as be a teacher and model within organizations
- Even without the entire organization subscribing to a systems perspective, the individual leader can provide leadership by using the performance excellence framework within his or her functional area
- Active in strategic planning, every leader is obliged to take an active role in the leadership and strategic planning functions within organizations. Systems and technology are an intrinsic component of the success of today's organizations and any systems and technology strategy must be closely aligned with the business strategy
- Leadership of performance/process management systems, the leader must drive understanding and evolution of the performance management and process management systems:
 - Performance management examines the measurement and alignment of performance at all levels and in all parts of the organization. This includes ensuring the quality and availability of needed data and information for employees, suppliers/partners and customers
 - Process management examines the key aspects of the organization's customer-focused design, product and service delivery, as well as key business and support processes for all work units

DEPLOYMENT PRINCIPLES

The principle is that what gets measured is what gets done! Based on this idea, the premise is that core value deployment can be facilitated via the following means:

- The reward and recognition system
- A carefully crafted and integrated set of organizational performance measures

Other methods not so keenly tied to measurement that have proved effective in deploying core values are:

- Codes of conduct
- A statement of values and guiding principles

At individual and team levels, performance measures hold the potential of integrating core values and competencies. On this premise, the reward and recognition system provides a vehicle for deployment of both values and competencies, this is a common means of deployment. Deployment through the reward and recognition system is especially promising, since it is here that means and measures for deploying and reinforcing values and competencies can be devised. The reward and recognition system is the mechanism by which an organization's culture is communicated and as such performance measures are a strong force in shaping organizational culture and those measures used should directly reflect core values identified for deployment.

ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

Organizational leadership is often regarded as the supreme function of ultimate arbitration and decision-making and thus is at the pinnacle of the organizational pyramid. In advanced organizations, leadership is pervasive, being embedded in all members of the organization down to the interface with the customer. Whomever is in direct working contact with the customer is empowered to secure customer enthusiasm and in some sense, loyalty in real-time. It is in this regard that empowerment is critical to realization of organizational mission. The person involved in such transactions must be capable of exercising this empowerment, namely; knowing, sharing, being committed to corporate objectives and constraints. That person is in essence, a leader. In this regard, leadership is not constrained to individuals and has no singular place in the organization, it is localized thus omnipresent it is systemic (Edgeman and Scherer, 1999).

How then do researchers measure the extent to which leadership has been driven into an organization, the degree to which issues are being effectively dealt with at local levels? At the organizational level, the issue is in part one of determining the capacity to forgive and forget in those instances where an individual has made an

honest mistake, for advanced leadership systems do not personalize and thus do not persecute failures. There are observable characteristics, measures for which may be derived for assessing progress of a specific enterprise on the continuum from a traditional leadership system to an advanced leadership system. The implicit assumption is that advanced leadership systems more nearly conform to systemic leadership and thus promote performance excellence more effectively than do traditional leadership systems. Edgeman and Scherer (1999) suggest a variety of characteristics, measures for which must be derived that can be used to assess progress toward an advanced leadership system and hence by implication, leadership that promotes performance excellence as performance excellence is herein considered.

MBCfPE (Performance Excellence) Model provides excellent guidance on the organizational self-assessment process, including assessment of leadership. Assessment is critical to characterizing an organization's performance and hence to making progress toward the goal of performance excellence. While many assessment tools and techniques exist, the criteria of various international quality prizes, such as the American Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) or European quality award are generally recognized as being of great value in the assessment process.

CONCLUSION

What is expected of organizational leadership? The answer is simple enough: Abundant foresight that retains its brilliance in hindsight. Leadership as historically conceived indicates that competencies that augment principle-centered core values are also expected. Organizational nihilism has led to increasing emphasis on competencies to the neglect of core values. In an effort to restore balance, this research has suggested both values and competencies that an organization intent on performance excellence should deploy and assess.

Values and competencies identified were derived from a variety of sources. Among these sources were the leadership criteria of the MBCfPE (Performance Excellence) Model that is used to assess applicants for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA).

Identification of leadership values and competencies key to performance excellence is not sufficient. These must be deployed and once deployed, their effectiveness must be assessed. Remembering that what gets measured is what gets done deployment through the reward and recognition system and through organizational performance measures was recommended.

What is imperfectly measured is likely to be imperfectly executed. Still in the spirit of continuous improvement, a legitimate start must be made and imperfect measures can be honed over time. Critical to the honing process is assessment. Assessment within the context of the aforementioned MBCfPE (Performance Excellence) Model was discussed as were ideas intended to capture the degree of progress made toward systemic leadership, deemed herein as leadership that will promote performance excellence.

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