



Chatsworth Consulting Group

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is essential to an organization's success, but the qualities of a great leader are often difficult to define. Moreover, how an organization can help develop these qualities in its people is often unclear. Leaders that inspire action and commitment have unique outlooks, approaches, skill sets, and practices, and all these can be learned and internalized. It is imperative for leaders to have a thorough understanding of their organizations, their people, and themselves. Those organizations that support and allow learning, emotional awareness, risk, and failure are most prepared to develop strong leaders.

The Three Faces of Leadership

"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it but that it is too low and we reach it."

Michelangelo

- Leadership development must be a priority for both an individual and an organization.
- Developing leaders requires patience, vision, and commitment.
- Effective leadership requires focus and strength in three areas – understanding an organization's systems (both internal and external); connecting with people; and understanding and developing oneself.

Systems Leadership

"The problem is most often in the systems, not the people."

W. Edwards Deming

- Organizations are comprised of many "systems" that affect and influence each other. These systems are made up of and shaped by many parts, such as existing methods and policies, work environment, external constraints, priorities, and individual actions and behaviors.
- Dig deep to truly understand a system by contemplating the system as a whole, not any one part by itself.
- Effective leaders recognize the need to understand the systems within their organization and to consider the interrelatedness between parts of a system in order to effect positive outcomes.



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- The structure of a system influences what happens within it, including individuals' behaviors and interactions. Unless we recognize this, we are apt to blame results either on external forces or individuals' mistakes, rather than on the impact of the system itself.

People Leadership

*“But of a good leader, when his work is done,
they will all say, “We did this ourselves.”
Lao-tzu*

- Effective leaders encourage trust and loyalty in two ways:
 - they are “high say” and “high do” – aligning their actions with their words; and
 - they are both highly skilled (they know their stuff) and highly responsive (they care about their people).
- A leader must create and communicate meaning for others -- sharing a personal vision that is both compelling and inspiring.
- It is essential to lead by asking questions. Make it easy for employees to share information. Seek to understand their point of view. Ask “Why?” five times to drill down deep to “real” causes and “real” issues.
- Encourage commitment and innovation by accepting, expecting, and even rewarding risk-taking, while fully recognizing that it may sometimes lead to failure.
- The most effective way to lead is to model leadership behavior.

Self Leadership

*“This above all: to thine own self be true.”
William Shakespeare*

- Effective leaders are authentic. They lead from their experience and their strengths, and capitalize on what is unique about themselves. They also are able to admit their “humanness” and appropriate weaknesses.
- In order to lead others, leaders must be able to “lead” themselves. And in order to lead oneself, one must truly know oneself. Make self-knowledge a priority and schedule time for reflection. This inner-knowledge and awareness builds trust in one’s instincts and intuition.
- Take advantage of various assessment tools and personal inventories to identify behavioral styles and choices, as well as current strengths and developmental areas.
- Effective leaders take actions even before a problem arises, and they are also able to sit with the unknown.
- Be aware of the perspective one brings to both people and situations. These “mental models” will influence what is seen and will affect outcomes.
- Effective leaders are out in front – they are visible, especially in times of change and/or crisis.
- It is essential to be aware of and able to manage one’s own emotions, as well as to be aware of and considerate of the emotions and reactions of others.

- Effective leadership is truly a balancing act – be able to pull from a variety of responses and approaches based upon a situation, personal strengths, and the audience.

Communication and Leadership

*“Listen to everyone. Ideas come from everywhere.”
Tom Peters*

- Listening is an essential leadership skill. An effective leader listens more than talks, and probes more than pushes.
- If a leader’s words don’t stick, then the leader truly hasn’t spoken. It is the leader’s responsibility to ensure audiences truly hear.
- Communication must be clear, honest, and personal.

Help through the process

*“Wisdom is knowing what to do next,
skill is knowing how to do it, and virtue is doing it.”
David Starr Jordan*

- Make a visible commitment to leadership development by bringing expertise into your life and your organization in order to build a strategy for developing yourself and your leaders.
- Offer leaders the support they need to truly embrace and embody these facets through engaging an executive coach.

SUMMARY

There are specific approaches and actions that an organization can take in order to be more successful in developing its leaders, and there are unique outlooks and practices that an individual can adopt in order to be more successful in his or her own development. It is essential that leaders: 1. understand the concept of systems thinking and thoroughly investigate the systems and structures within which they are working; 2. focus on people and on building effective and supportive relationships; and 3. commit the time and the effort necessary to developing their vision and their authenticity. With proper attention to the Three Faces of Leadership and support from within the organization, as well as from a qualified expert, authentic leadership is more likely to be achieved.