Types of power and influencing tactics

This paper discusses the types of powers and influencing tactics used by effective leaders. Organizations look for great managers and followers in their departments. Learning these influential study guides to becoming a great leader is valuable for people in a large environment; being able to comprehend and put to use these leadership powers to establish their position in the workplace. If used appropriately, leaders and followers can hold strong values from other employees while having good relationships with fellow workers. When approaching an issue it is smart to first develop the ideal leadership power to use and the most appropriate way to utilize that power source in being an effective leader.

Leaders often times find it difficult to influence others in an organization. When it is found troubling to lead followers it is necessary for managers to find ways to deal with issues. Types of power and influencing tactics used by leaders are a good way to sort out the problems at hand. Developing leadership skills and incorporating power tactics with one's job will serve as advantages to overcome any obstacles in the work place. Legitimate, reward, coercive, referent, expert, information, and connection are all types of powers used by effective leaders to establish a good environment as well as proficient followers. It is helpful to determine whether the type of power is derived from position power or personal power. When leaders decide to use these powers as an approach to a certain issue, it is also good judgment by the leader to decide the most appropriate way to use the power to its fullest potential.

There are two power sources in which effective leaders or followers use to determine types of power and influencing tactics to handle certain situations.

These two power sources are position power and personal power. Position power is mainly based on upper-level management positions in which leaders have the ability to use higher authority to influence and persuade others on a lower level. Personal power is based primarily on followers' beliefs towards leaders in the organization. Followers can use this power source to enhance leadership for themselves and leaders use this best when creating relationships with others. Thus, developing these two power sources into leadership will help to develop types of power and influencing tactics in the workplace.

Legitimate power comes from the position power source which demonstrates the influence of leaders passed on to followers. Legitimate power is also based on an employee's position in the workplace and how the responsibilities of the employee are performed. " In the sense that a leader may exercise more power than the limits of legitimate power by accepting additional responsibility from his seniors, (Pilgrim)." Managers assign tasks to their workers expecting the job to be accomplished. In return for the employee's hard work, leaders then move them to a higher position in the organization. " Employees agree to comply with management authority in return for the benefits of membership, (Lussier & Achua, 2007)."

The most appropriate way to use legitimate power is for managers to provide employees' with objectives that can be done within the basis of their job. To be a good leader one must listen to the thoughts and ideas that followers may have to offer, in achieving a certain goal. This type of action will also help with the process of building a project together in hope of obtaining the goals at hand. Another way for leaders to use legitimate power appropriately

would be to use rational persuasion. " Logical arguments tend to work best for people whose behavior is more influenced by thinking than emotion, (Grodnitzky, 2004)." When trying to influence or persuade an employee to perform a task, feeding them valid arguments that are not necessarily true can provide a strong influencing tactic to get the job done.

The next type of power leaders use to influence followers is reward power. Reward power is issued based on the performance of the employee. If the employee is notified of the rewards at stake, the performance will be greater rather than the performance would be if it was a given task without reward. " In a management position, use positive reinforcements to influence behavior, with incentives such as praise, recognition (with pins, badges, hats, or jackets), special assignments, or desirable activities, pay raises, bonuses, and promotions, (Lussier and Achua, 2007)." Honoring employees with these types of rewards shows that the worker is dedicated and proficient in wanting to earn their place in the organization. It also shows the influence a leader has on a follower; putting the rewards out there on the line and seeing who will step up to the occasion. In some circumstances, managers may not have the funds or be in position to disperse raises and might have to resort to other types of rewards. " Studies have revealed that verbal approval, encouragement and praise can very often be very positive substitutes in place of tangible rewards, (Reward power, 2010)."

An appropriate way a leader may use reward power would be to give an employee an objective and if done well reward them with a special reward. In doing so, employees will work harder and the objective will most likely be done with a good attitude. Not only leaders use the reward power to their

advantage but followers do as well. " When dealing with higher-level managers and people over whom you have no authority, you can use the exchange influencing tactic by offering some type of reward for helping you meet your objective, (Lussier & Achua, 2010)."

Similar to reward power is coercive power. Rather than awarding an employee, coercive power demonstrates that the situation may call for a penalty or punishment. If leaders first try to use the reward power and has no effect on the follower it may be better to show animosity or threat. " During these moments the emotional expression of anger or feelings of frustration may engulf the rational perception and benefits provided by reward strategies, (Coercive power, 2010)." In this case, leaders give this type of feedback with hopes of the follower seeing what he or she did wrong and respecting the punishment factors given to them.

For leaders to use coercive power most appropriately they must use it when reward power simply does not work and coercive power is necessary. " When employees are not willing to do as requested, coercive power may be the only way to gain compliance, (Lussier & Achua, 2007)." This power at often times may not be beneficial to some mangers as they use this power too strongly and allow themselves to get carried away; in turn getting their position taken from them or even being fired. So when using coercive power in an organization one must use this trait carefully and wisely.

Referent power is the leaders influence to provide a personal relationship with others in the organization. " This is created when the followers believe that the leader possess qualities that they admire and would like to possess,

(Leadership power)." When leaders do this, it provides a comfortable work environment which makes the workers want to be more like their leaders. This creates a positive atmosphere and allows performance rates to increase. Leaders can use this tactic to be very inspirational and key in to the ideals of followers to understand each other. " Inspirational appeals generally work well with people whose behavior is more influenced by emotions than logical thinking, (Lussier & Achua, 2007)." Followers can relate to the feelings of leaders and need to be communicated to, which will provide them with the skills they need to do well in their position.

For referent power to be used appropriately, leaders need to put emotions into the job requirement and have a personalized relationship with certain individuals. Some employees may not need or want a relationship with their boss, but for the ones who do; this is a great tactic to use when an employee is not a strong individual and needs that solid relationship with whom they are working with. " Some leaders will have referent power over just a few, whilst others such as Ghandi have lead millions through their personality and charisma, (Leadership power)."

Expert power comes from the personal power source which can be based on an individual's understanding and proficiency. It is ideal for one to have expert power as it shows expertise in a certain field or knowledge of a subject. This creates a want for employees to have the same thoughts and ideas a leader might have over them. It is more likely for some leaders to use this personal power for certain situations as it is more accommodating to them. " The interview data revealed that women prefer to use their position power (expert power) rather than their position power to influence others,

(Katz, 2001)." Managers may have more expert power when employees must come to them for questions and answers. Using different tactics as a leader to provide this information is best when followers continue the need for assistance and want of material the leader may have. " Experts commonly use the rational persuasion influencing tactic because people believe they know what they are saying and that it is correct, (Lussier and Achua, 2007)."

There are many appropriate ways individuals can use expert power in an organization to work their way up the chain. Even some followers with a knowledge basis higher than that of the managers at that position can utilize their expertise to show dependability. In turn, this will show the need of that individual in the organization which allows room for a higher position rating. This type of influence is how leaders are developed and gives leaders more power over others.

Information power, much like expert power is knowledge desired by others. Some managers are provided with more information than those within the department. This allows leaders to have an upper-hand in having more control over employees. Some organizations use this information power to give more advantages to upper level management. " The continued globalization and restructuring of drug development activities demands a new approach to scientific knowledge management, and Centrus will finally allow organizations to unlock silos and leverage the information for better decision-making across the value chain, (Instem, 2010)." Here we see an organization using information power as a whole rather than from an individual's perspective. This thought process is developed to maintain

advantages over others in organizations. Some leaders may give out only specific details on a topic so that they can continue to influence followers to reach their goals at stake.

The best way a leader can use information power most appropriately would be to have a full knowledge basis of what the job requirement entails. This will provide leaders with information so when an employee comes to them for help; they are able to give a detailed description of each task. The information managers provide employees with may not always be explicit and true but the individuals will go on believing the message the leader gave them is substantial; giving the leader power over followers.

Connection power is the last type of power leaders should be equipped with when developing good leadership qualities. This is solely based on the individual's relationship with positive motivators. Many people feel the need to depend on others to help influence them to do better. If a leader has this type of influence, then they will always have followers come to them for guidance which gives more power over the individual. Followers also use this power to give themselves a solid position in the workplace. " If people know you are friendly with people in power, they are more apt to do as you request, (Lussier and Achua, 2007)." If leaders and followers use this power to their advantage they can make a strong standpoint for themselves in the organization; allowing the individual to have more power over another. Connection power is also based on many political ideals; the more people that support the idea the better chance there is of having a greater power and influence over followers.

Appropriate ways to use connection power can be described very specifically. When working in an organization, it is the responsibility as a leader to get to know everyone and be friendly. If a time arrives when help is needed, it is good to have a reliable source in the organization to influence others and to support thoughts and ideas one might have. Another way a follower may use connection power to their advantage may be to ask a manager for resources to help provide the individual with more data to accomplish the objective. In this case, one would need that friendly connection with others to receive that type of benefit.

Developing these sources of power and finding ways to use them most appropriately will help in becoming a great leader or follower. When an issue arrives, one will understand the correct tactics to use and be able to handle the situation in a mature fashion. Implementing these ideas in the workplace will only serve as advantages to moving up the chain of command and becoming a wonderful leader.