

Week 4 discussion questions



Integrated Business Topics BUS 475 It may be said that the practice of business is not a discipline unto itself but an interdisciplinary endeavor. Seeing it in this way, corporate management must understand the dynamics of applied leadership, leadership selection, and leadership improvement. We will explore why leadership is important in implementing strategy, how sometimes it's more appropriate to fill a key position from outside even if qualifications exist in house, and what improvements might be suggested in evaluating the class so far.

First, why is leadership an important element in strategy implementation? Leadership is an important element in strategy implementation because it provides the vision, the direction, and the emotional impetus to achieve tactical goals. Without it, strategy is naught. An example of a CEO's key role in strategy implementation may be represented in the case of Cofidis headed by Michel Guillois. When Cofidis was facing stiff competition from web based companies, Michel Guillois guided it through the transition from a primarily direct marketing business to a broad range web marketed enterprise. Furthermore, Michel Guillois leadership style helped negotiate the issues presented in the tactical implementation of the strategy by competitors, cross-culturalism, and unpaid accounts. Thus, leadership is an important element of strategy implementation.

Next, under what conditions would it be more appropriate to fill a key management position with someone from outside the firm when a qualified insider is available? There are at least two situations in which this may be appropriate. The first is when all the qualified people in house are needed elsewhere. For example, say Cofidis has the skills to implement a new website full of all of the features necessary to address the current tactical

challenges, but those managers skilled in web development are engaged in a data migration project. It might be more feasible for Cofidis to hire from outside than to divert resources in house. Another example is when hiring from outside ads additional benefits. Say where Cofidis is engaging increasingly in web marketing, it may be more cost effective to hire an advertising manager than to have an information systems professional do double duty. Furthermore, it may bring added insights and innovations of the new blood. These are just two of many possible reasons a company may want to hire management from the outside even if the skills are present in house.

Last, what has gone well and not so well so far in this class? What areas do we need to hit a bit harder during the last two weeks? So far class discussions have been very helpful. To hear ideas from others augments my own opinions and lends differing points of view to help find unique solutions to business problems. Sometimes people do not pull their own weight. It would be a more engaging course if we could hear from some of the more silent people in class. I think in the last two weeks we should focus more on applying what we learn and engaging some of the more marginal students. We have explored why leadership is an important in implementing strategy, how sometimes it's more appropriate to fill a key position from outside even if qualifications exist in house, and what improvements might be suggested in evaluating the class so far. Corporate management must understand the dynamics of applied leadership, leadership selection, and leadership improvement to effectively the practice the interdisciplinary art of business.

References

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President and Fellows of Harvard College (2001). Cofidis. Boston: Harvard Business School