

Team

leadershipname:institutional affiliation
essay example

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Leadership is a complicated tool. Many do not fully understand all that goes along with being a true leader. Very few understand that there are even more than one type of leadership, especially when it comes to leading small groups. Robert T. Keller understood this and examined transformational leadership, initiating structure, and substitute for leadership in an effort to educate companies as well as the public. He was able to show that different types of leadership bring about different results and each have their place in small group businesses.

Robert T. Keller's article, "Transformational Leadership, Initiating Structure, and Substitutes for Leadership: A Longitudinal Study of Research and Development Project Team Performance" was featured in a 2006 issue of *Journal of Applied Psychology*. The article explains Keller's research concerning a longitudinal study involving leadership. Specifically, Keller studied how an initiating structure, transformational leadership, and selected substitute for leadership were predictors for performance (2006). 118 research and development teams were chosen from five firms. He found that initiating structure predicted measures of performance. Transformational leadership predicted many things: schedule performance, cost performance, profitability after 5 years, speed to market, and technical quality after 1 year. Leadership substitution consisted of putting subordinated in leadership positions. This experiment predicted profitability and technical quality as well as speed to market (2006). Moderator effects applied to the research and development groups revealed that initiating structure was the strongest source when predicting the technical quality of development projects.

Transformational leadership was the strongest predictor of technical quality

in research projects (2006). Keller's methodology was qualitative as well as quantitative. His philosophy was that different leadership styles would yield different results as well as better predictions of business aspects.

The article contributes a lot to our ideas about group and team leadership.

Once it was thought that there was only one kind of leader capable of taking command. An A-Type personality with a level head and the forthright will to push the group forward was always the person employers or groups were looking for. To appoint anybody else as a leader would surely spell disaster.

Or does it? Keller shows us in his article that at least three different types of leadership are not only effective but able to predict long-term gain in small companies (2006). The article also speaks to how groups respond to

leadership. For instance, in situations when a subordinate is put in a leadership position, this is nothing more than a fellow employee being placed as a superior. Once thought to be a bad idea that may cause unfriendly discourse among the employees, we see that it actually worked efficiently.

Subordinate leadership lead to accurate and strong predictions for technical quality among products. Transformational leadership is a relatively new concept, according to Keller, but has led to boosted employee morale and added to intellectual stimulation (2006). This piece of information shows us

that leaders must do more than just lead; they must motivate and stimulate as well. Transformational leadership was responsible for more strong predictors than the other two styles of leadership combined, due in part to the style itself. Transformational leadership literally transforms the space around them into an area of energy, where the leader accentuates

individuality while also bringing the group together. Teammates are allowed

to feel as a whole without losing themselves while maintaining motivation and feeling stimulated. This grants the maximum capacity for growth and prosperity within the group; the predictors speak for themselves.

Though the article is very informative and broadens our view of what different leadership styles in small business groups can do, it is still lacking in information. The article failed to include any negative aspects or drawbacks to these styles of leadership. This was no doubt the intent of the article. It was posed to make these three leadership styles seem like completely plausible solutions with no shortcomings or inconsistencies but to believe that three separate studies produce only positive results would be farcical at best. There is no denying that each leadership style is valuable in its own way, and these results needed to be shared. However, in order to make a fair assessment about which is best, or most productive, the negative results need to be known and addressed as well. The article also does not discuss how the research and development groups were chosen. This is an important aspect to the experiment. If different types of groups were not used for each type of leadership in the evaluation then the results are skewed. Also left out of the article, or not performed in the experiment at all, was whether or not there was diversity in the businesses assessed. If all of the businesses modeled the same structure the results may also be skewed because of that.

There is a lot of professional information we can glean from the article. To begin with, many leadership styles are acceptable and even profitable in the workplace. This was once thought to not be the case. Knowing which type of leadership is the best predictor of what business aspect; employers can tailor

leadership to fit their business' upcoming needs as well. Personally it allows for employees and those entering the workforce to accommodate many different types of leadership. Knowing what types of leadership illicit which results also lets employees model themselves after these templates in hopes of future job promotions and overall business success. Employees who are aware of the benefits each type of leadership can bring to a company can also use the information to their personal advantage by getting involved in a company that utilizes the most profitable type of leadership.

In conclusion, while leadership is a delicate tool it is one that can be harnessed. Keller understood that with longitudinal studies, results of leadership could be monitored. Though he only chose three different styles of leadership (there are many more) we now know that they all bring their own advantages when it comes to leading small business groups. The lessons of leadership taught in Keller's article are ones that would benefit anybody looking to lead or enter the business world.

References

Keller, R. T. (2006). Transformational Leadership, Initiating Structure, and Substitutes for Leadership: A Longitudinal Study of Research and Development Project Team Performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 202-210.