

Individual management and leadership plan

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Introduction

This brief is aimed at investigating and reporting my own individual management and leadership plan. It covers identifying and owning my individual leadership development requirements using a range of appropriate diagnostic tools. Alongside with this is the planning of the development of these skills, supporting such plan with appropriate use of academic and learning theories. Such plans are placed in an organisational or industry context, in which clear links to organisational strategies are created. Appropriate professional reflection at relevant intervals is incorporated.

According to Gallos (2008), leadership is a complex social process that is grounded on the values, knowledge, and skills of leaders and followers. Adaptive change is always involved in the concept of leadership. Leaders are able to see new opportunities and facilitate a multifaceted interactive process that reinforces individual and collective growth. Ladkin (2010) states that understanding leadership as a lived experience requires studying it within the specific context in which it operates. It is important for leaders to relate to followers where they must work together within a specific context and work towards a clear purpose. Kezar (2009) has articulated that leadership is a property of whole systems rather than of individuals, which means that effectiveness in leadership is a result of those associations or relationships amongst parts rather than of any one part of such system (i. e. the leader). This will be illustrated in the devised plan and placing such plan in an industry context.

Identifying and Owning my Individual Leadership Development Requirements

This part of the paper effectively identifies my own individual leadership development requirements through the use of a range of appropriate diagnostic tools such as Belbin Test, Four Temperaments Personality Test, and Myers Briggs Assessment. These individual leadership development requirements consist of what one knows about himself, what he does not know about himself, and how to find it out. The reason why one must identify and own his/her individual leadership development requirements is because of the need to examine where his skills, behaviour, and attitudes are placed within leadership and collaborative continuum and how he/she helps in building leadership in the organisation. It is also important to link personality and character with leadership because personality and character determine how one leads a group or organisation (Adair, 2007).

According to Kezar (2009), team and collaborative leadership models highlight the significance of focusing on organisational relationships, processes, and structures that foster collaboration, instead of emphasis on identifying and cultivating individual leadership skills.

The Myers Briggs Assessment tends to yield accurate type results through the use of administered and scored questionnaire (Quenk, 2009). (Since this test is not available online, it is only cited here as one of the assessment tools that assesses personality/behaviour and is not utilised in actual assessment.) The Belbin Test, on the other hand, measures the behavioral contribution of an individual through Belbin team role theory, making this test a behavioural test rather than a personality test. Team role preferences

are identified in Belbin reports to enable the individual to know and appreciate the extent of their strengths and the behaviour that must be developed for the benefit of the team (Riding and Rayner, 2001). From the Team Roles Test, which is part of the Belbin Test that I have taken, my strengths are identified as the ability to effectively resolve conflict with teammates and ability to plan and coordinate with teammates. The potential strengths, on the other hand, are satisfactory interpersonal skills, ability to communicate with others with relative ease, and ability to manage various tasks and other aspects of teamwork. The limitations I exhibit, which require further improvements for my team role performance, are lack of team-based problem-solving ability, setting only few goals for team projects, and preference for individual work instead of team work (Psych Tests, 2014). The Belbin Test clearly shows the strengths, potential strengths (which can turn into real strengths in the future, given one's increased maturity), and limitations (which can also turn into strengths, given their realisation through the test) for one's undertaking of the team roles.

On the other hand, the Four Temperaments Personality Test yields for me a 75-per cent score for each of the Sanguine, Choleric, and Melancholic aspect, whilst 58 per cent for the Phlegmatic aspect. This would mean that I am a people-person who likes socialising and exhibits optimism, enthusiasm, compassion, impulsiveness, and self-indulgence. Being choleric, the results show that I am extroverted, task-oriented, and seek competition and success at all cost, with strong leadership skills and passion for work. Being melancholic, I am respectful, compassionate, and possess intuitive traits. My phlegmatic traits, which are underplayed by the three other traits -sanguine,

choleric, and melancholic- are passive aggressiveness and calmness (How Much Do I, 2014). These traits play an influential stance on how I approach leadership and teamwork. My sanguine, choleric, and melancholic traits can be used in how I undertake leadership and team roles in my work towards achieving set goals. My knowledge of both these dominant and negligible traits based on the four temperaments supports my knowledge of my skills based on the Belbin Test.

Planning the Development of Mentioned Skills

This part of the paper includes planning for the development of the skills mentioned above. These skills are the potential skills and limitations identified in the Belbin Test. The Four Temperaments Personality Test shows one's personality based on temperaments, which greatly aids in my understanding of my inclination to developing the potential skills and cited limitations.

The plan includes the following:

Improving my interpersonal skills from satisfactory level to above-average level

Increasing my ability to communicate with others with relative ease

Improving team-based problem-solving ability

setting several goals for team projects instead of only a few ones

Increasing my preference for team work over individual work in accomplishing goals

Improving my interpersonal skills from satisfactory level to above-average level

The importance of increasing my interpersonal skills from satisfactory level to above-average level is seen in the fact that effective leadership necessitates not only analytical and decision-making skills but also interpersonal skills (Grant, Rothstein, and Burke, 2010). Such importance is evidenced by leader-member exchange theory, which focuses on the low-exchange and high-exchange dyadic relationships between the leader and the followers (Rainey, 2009), and transformational leadership theory, which states that leaders must inspire followers towards more accomplishment by focusing on the value of the followers and helping them align these values with those of the organisation (Givens, 2008; Nohria and Khurana). Additionally, Robinson (2011) underlines the importance of interpersonal skills by linking them to goal setting, such that the quality of goal setting is always connected to the quality of (interpersonal) relationships. Goal setting will remain empty unless leaders are able to motivate the people who are required to achieve them.

Grant and colleagues (2010) note the dichotomy between analytical and decision-making skills on one hand, and interpersonal skills on the other. It is important to delineate what constitutes interpersonal skills in order to place the significance of this skill to the wider leadership context. According to Grant et al. (2010), interpersonal skills development for leaders and managers refer to complex abilities of conflict management and negotiation skills, rather than just plainly focusing on engaging people in quality

interactions, speaking and listening effectively, and providing positive feedback. As for improving my interpersonal skills, this will be done by attending a skills training seminar focused on interpersonal skills for effective leadership (e. g. Grant et al., 2010).

Increasing my ability to communicate with others with relative ease

The importance of communication to leadership is that it is the process used for setting and communicating clear goals (Robinson, 2011). Improving this skill is through constant practice; meaning, talking to people more often.

This is however not a difficult stance to undertake since as my score in the Four Temperaments Personality Test shows, I have dominant extrovert behaviour shown by my sanguine and choleric tendencies, which indicate an interest to communicate with people (e. g. Ricketts and Ricketts, 2011).

Management theory's human relations movement highlights the importance of people motivation (Banhegyi, 2007), which is indirectly linked to communicating with them to foster smooth relationships.

Improving team-based problem-solving ability

In my plan to develop my management of various tasks and other aspects of teamwork, an important point to consider is that a leader cannot rely on teamwork to develop automatically without exerting some conscious effort on his/her part. Without the leader's influence, it is still possible for teamwork to develop to some extent, but this setting is unlikely for the work group to develop member satisfaction and maximum task performance (Butterfield, 2011).

In order to develop my team-based problem solving ability, my course of action is to read books on the subject. Applying into practice what I have learned conceptually and theoretically about it will yield positive outcomes, leading to desired improvements in my management of various tasks and other aspects of teamwork. Theodore Newcomb's Balance Theory explains why people tend to be attracted towards group formation, and this is because of the similarity in attitudes in their pursuit for a common goal. Such similarity allows them to share ideas with one another and function as a team. Lack of similar attitudes leads to loss of balance, resulting in a team not being formed (Kandula, 2006). An important thing to consider is that team-based learning is a result of good team-based decision making and problem-solving ability (Michealsen, Sweet, and Parmelee, 2008).

Setting several goals for team projects instead of only a few ones

Goal-setting involves identifying the goals to be established, gaining the commitment of people who are tasked to achieve them, and communicating these goals to people who have interest in their achievement (Robinson, 2011). Having this renewed realisation that setting many goals rather than just a few ones is more preferable to effective leadership and goal attainment, the plan is focused on taking a conscious effort on enumerating several goals every time goal-setting is being undertaken, and suggesting to the group a more increased identification of goals each time the group tends to identify only a few ones. The point is consciously putting into practice this knowledge. The relevance of setting several goals instead of only a few ones is apparent; a team that identifies more goals is able to achieve more goals,

compared to a team that identifies only a few goals, which becomes delimited to achieving only these few goals. The Goal Setting Theory explains the importance of goals in motivating people to work, and consequently, in making them behave with a purpose (Lussier, 2012). This would mean that not only is goal-setting beneficial for the organisation but for the people working on these goals as well.

Increasing my preference for team work over individual work in accomplishing goals

Since leadership is about leading people, individual work is not the paramount aspect of goal achievement, but teamwork. In a team, people work together towards achieving desired goals, have full and sufficient understanding in the importance of these goals, how these goals may be achieved successfully, and what each one and the whole team may contribute to their successful achievement. If the leader and even the team members are more focused on working individually rather than as a team, the essence of teamwork is lost. (Ricketts and Ricketts (2011) indicate that working as a team is more effective than working individually; thus, the motivation to utilise teamwork and the various literature on the importance of this concept (e. g. Dyer, Dyer, and Dyer, 2007; Morgeson, Reider, and Campion, 2005; Valle and Witt, 2001). Since the results of my Four Temperaments Personality Test indicate that I have an extraverted temperament, this temperament would help in my ability to build team work. The result of my Four Temperaments Personality Test on the phlegmatic aspect, specifically self-indulgence, is a good point to consider in my current

preference for individual work over team work. On the other hand, since my dominant sanguine and choleric propensities show that I am inclined to being extraverted, this preference is likely to be changed with ease, given such initial knowledge for its imperative change. Heneman and Greenberger (2002) state that the facilitation of team work is through the efforts of some extraverted individuals.

Placing the Plan in an Organisational or Industry Context/Strategy

Having accomplished the plan, the next step would be to place this in an organisational or industry context, creating clear links to organisational strategies. First of all, leadership is an important concept in the success of an organisation, which is why organisations always gear for effective leadership or management in the workplace. Leadership is different from seniority or one's position in the hierarchy of his or her organisation. It is an influential relationship that takes place between a leader and his/her followers as they pursue certain changes or objectives that mirror shared meanings, purposes, and strategies (Mills, Mills, Forshaw, et al., 2007).

The potential skills and limitations, on which the plan has been established, will eventually add up to my series of strengths identified by the Belbin Test. After implementing the plan, the expected outcomes for me would be above-average interpersonal skills, ability to communicate with others with relative ease, improved team-based problem solving ability, setting many goals for team projects, and increased preference for team work over individual work. These skills are useful in an organisational context; specifically in managing people where the leader/manager needs to unify his/her team towards

successful goal attainment. By being able to work in a team and foster good communication skills, problem solving ability, and other skills thus cited as my strengths, I and my team would together work on the necessary aspects of several tasks, which we are responsible to accomplish.

The retail industry is the specific industry context on which the plan is placed. This industry is characterised by several challenges in attaining competitive advantage because of the presence of new entrants, substitute products, bargaining power of customers and suppliers, and rivalry between existing competitors (Stonehouse, Campbell, Hamill, et al., 2004). These challenges serve as a factor for my pursuit for effective leadership and team roles, on which the plan is established. My ability to effectively resolve conflict with teammates and to plan and coordinate with them plays a significant role in smooth working relationships within the team. This importance is further seen in the claim that conflict and lack of team coordination serve as a barrier to attaining desired goals (e. g. Lencion, 2012; Rout and Omiko, 2007). Moreover, my improved interpersonal skills will enable me to communicate my ideas more effectively across people and departments. It has been noted that interpersonal skills refer to analytical and decision-making skills (Grant et al, 2010), which means that my possession of these skills will aid my team and the organisation in addressing the competition that retail companies commonly experience. These – together with my improved ability to communicate with others with relative ease, improved team-based problem-solving ability, setting many goals, and increased preference for team work over individual work – will help the company develop strategies for competitive advantage.

Incorporating Appropriate Professional Reflection at Relevant Intervals

This research has enabled me to identify my own strengths, limitations, and potential skills in leadership and team roles. Apparently, I had no prior ideas of these skills and limitations on a systematic basis, but the Belbin Test and the Four Temperaments Personality Test enabled me to find out approximately what these skills are. I certainly have an initial knowledge of myself, but these tests confirmed them and even added some more which I was not very aware of, such as my satisfactory level of my interpersonal skills, a need to communicate with others with relative ease, a need to improve my team-based problem-solving ability, and my inclination to set only a few goals instead of many goals for team projects. Some of the skills that I am already aware of are effective conflict resolution and ability to plan and coordinate with teammates.

Moreover, the Four Temperaments Personality Test made me understand the ease that the potential skills and limitations may be improved. This is because of my dominant combination of sanguine, choleric, and melancholic temperaments, which have positive traits for leadership abilities (e. g. extraversion, being a people-person, optimism, and enthusiasm, being task-oriented, being competition-focused, and being success-specific and strong leadership skills).

A further realisation that I have derived from this exercise is the importance of knowing oneself – strengths, skills, abilities, potentials, and limitations – since such knowledge serves as a prelude to being able to manage teams and the organisation as a whole. By being able to systematically identify my

strengths, I have been personally assured of my abilities. By being able to also systematically identify my potentials and limitations, I have found out the areas that need improvement. These limitations and potentials allow me to better focus on what I must take an effort to improve on, whilst seeing them as a way for constructive criticism.

In addition, no effective leader can function without self-realising his own strengths, skills, and limitations since only when he/she has fully realised them can they be able to function more effectively.

Conclusion

This paper has provided an investigation of one's own individual management and leadership plan, using such diagnostic tools as the Belbin test and the Four Temperaments Personality Test. These tools helped identify and own my individual leadership development requirements. Through the Belbin Test, certain strengths were thus identified along with the potential skills and limitations. The Four Temperaments Personality Test also identified the dominant temperaments that helped in the assessment of one's leadership propensities and abilities.

The plan for development of the skills is centered on improving my interpersonal skills from satisfactory level to above-average level; increasing my ability to communicate with others with relative ease; improving team-based problem-solving ability; setting several goals for team projects instead of only a few ones; and increasing my preference for team work over individual work in accomplishing goals.

The retail industry is the specific industry context on which the plan is placed. A professional reflection is conducted, focused on how the entire work is done.

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