

Minicases examples of servant leaders



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Introduction

The concept of servant leadership was developed in the year 1970 by Robert K. Greenleaf and has grown to be one of the most common leadership models practiced today. Servant leadership entails serving the people that one is entitled to as a leader. In an organization, Greenleaf describes servant leadership as, “ An implication that employees are an end in themselves rather than a means to an organizational purpose or bottom line” (Greenleaf, 1977, pp. 8). Servant leaders dedicate themselves and attend to various needs of members of the organization. They make sure that the needs of the people they lead are well attended to and prepares the employees in away that they deliver their best to the organization. Servant leaders listen to the opinion of those they are in charge of and utilize their ideas to make decisions to focus on building a working community rather than a dictatorship type of working environment. Apart from the above, they also encourage freedom of expression with respect to employees’ rights to facilitate personal growth and instill a sense of belonging to employees (Greenleaf, 1977).

Analysis of Mini-cases or examples of servant leaders

The first mean case is of Azim Hasham Premji. This case is about the servant leadership style that the named leader was using in his small vegetable oil processing plant. He fully dedicated his leadership to serving the community or the society around the company. He focused on ensuring that the community members get the best and enough quality products before any other area. He built a company primry and secondary school in the

community to serve the young generation and organized sponsorship for well performing students. The approved need students could learn free of charge. Through the company, he sponsored several community projects geared towards ensuring that the living standards of community members is improved including water projects, electricity, roads and other forms of infrastructure. He generally served the needs of the society thus qualified a servant leader. These acts led to greater improvement and general good of the company as the whole community could only rely on the company for vegetable oil supply and this increased the company's sale and profits making it expand its scale. There was good relations between the community and the company thus smooth operation of the company with no threats. Due to this good reputation, the society members extended the good name to other communities leading to gaining of more customers (Spears, 2002).

The second mini-case concerns an entrepreneur by name Kiran Mazumdar Shaw. She had a biotechnology industry involving research in biotechnology. She employed several researchers to work in the industry. She focused on attending to the needs of his employees so that they give out their best. She generally encouraged her employees to freely express themselves and give ideas. She discouraged selfishness and ensured her team members worked as a group assisting one another. She used to spend most of the time in the lab assisting her employees in various research projects. Generally she qualifies as a servant leader since she is much dedicated o serving the needs of her employees. Her actions led to success of various biotechnological research projects since the employees were prepared to give their best and

felt encouraged with freedom to exercise their ideas. The industry won many tenders for research work (Greenleaf, 1977).

The last mini-case compiled involves Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy. The named doctor was the manager and founder of a hospital called Aravind Eye Hospital (AEH). The success of this hospital was based on its founder leader who exercised servant leadership. Despite having employed doctors, he went ahead to assist them in cases of emergency and cases of high workload to ensure that each and every patient is attended to. He had virtues of humility, empathy and he always listened to the suggestions of his employees and other stakeholders including the patients. He took advantage of the current information technology to set the hospital in a manner that serves almost all needs of the patients. This greatly improved the performance of the hospital in terms of efficient and effective service delivery to the patients. He qualifies as servant leader due to his dedication to serving the need of employees by assisting them and ensuring that the patients are well treated. These actions created a good reputation and positive attitude from the employees and those attending the hospital. Many patients could come to this hospital and leave the hospital with a positive attitude (Spears, 2002).

Conclusion

In order to exercise servant leadership, morals have to be applied and the outcome is generally of benefit to the organization, its stakeholders and the society as a whole.