

Major ingredients of a leader management essay



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Introduction

First of all, in terms of the two perspectives- 'leaders are born' and 'leadership skills can be developed', I support both of them. A successful leader is definitely born with certain and extraordinary talents, which provide the foundation that can be further developed during his/her life (Cyril Levicki). But possession of just the innate traits is not enough to become a leader. A leader also needs the training and development of leadership skills which can be acquired through school, workplace and experience.

There are many types of leaders in the world, including the politics leader, military leader, science leader and business leader, etc. In this essay, the leadership in business organisation is mainly discussed. The main body of this essay is mainly divided into four parts.

In the first part, the definition of leadership is given. The major nine ingredients concluded by Cyril Levicki is listed in this part, and some of these ingredients will be discussed. I also introduce a leadership when managing the professionals. With the development of technology and society, there are more and more companies consisted with mainly professionals. So this kind of leadership is worth mentioning.

Evidences of 'leaders are born' will be provided in the second part. The achievement of Jack Ma, the most successful business leader, will be used as an example to illustrate this kind of opinion. The second part has a great connection with the third part, because the person who is to be leader relies not only on his innate traits, but also the training and development of leadership. So the third part is about why leaders need to develop the

leadership skills and how they can develop that. In this part, two types of leadership are introduced, which are charismatic leadership and intelligent leadership. In addition, the steps of developing leadership skills are discussed.

The last part is about the implications for the management development. The implications are discussed from three aspects. They are selection of leaders, training for leadership and strategy of leadership development. Because training leaders is a long term plan, so the company should formulate a complete and suitable policy for that.

Definition of leadership

What is the leadership? Although the type of leadership varies in different contexts, for example, Sir Winston Churchill is the leader in the politics in UK while Newton is the leader in science, a leader is always leading. A leader possesses a good combination of personalities and skills and makes others to follow his directions. An effective leader always makes good judgement and benefits the whole organisation. In this essay, the definition of business leaders includes those senior managers and executives in the company.

John Maxwell defined leadership as having influence on others, no matter positive or negative, for example, Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Winston Churchill and even Adolf Hitler. Van Home said in his paper that 'employees pay for the price of leadership, and they also reap the benefits from the successful leader'. To be a good leader, one should firstly be a role model, which might exert a great influence on employees (Van Home, B.). In addition, the leader should have broad vision, which enables him/her to better make decisions

without vital mistakes. The vision can be broadened with the accumulation of his/her experience. The leader should also have the ability to multi-task, especially for those efficient leaders. The ability to multi-task enables leader to do more things at a limited time. Those abilities mentioned above all can be developed after they were given birth. But some characters, such as calm and persistence, were in most cases innate traits.

Major ingredients of a leader

Cyril Levicki has concluded nine ingredients of a business leader. They are:

Tenacity

Stamina

Long term wisdom

emotional intelligence

judgement about what is worth fighting for

Equanimity

Character

Capacity to inspire followership

Generalized love for fellow human beings

As we can see, among the nine ingredients, some of them are innate traits (tenacity, stamina equanimity and emotional wisdom), and others need developed through out life. Tenacity and stamina mean the ability to stick to

the job and task, no matter how difficult it might be. The long term wisdom and judgement about priorities require the leader to have broad vision and forecast the future of the business and make good judgement. The rest four ingredients are all about the influences of leader on others. The great business leader should have positive value and use it to lead and motivate employees. And the leader should also make sure that people enjoy being led by you (Cyril Levicki).

Leadership in managing professionals

Nowadays, there are many companies consisted of professionals. Managing those professionals could be a big question for leaders. Most professionals would like to describe that they are in a better position than managers, who are here to serve them. Mintzberg thinks that the leadership should be covert when managing professionals. He generated this idea from his friend Bramwell, a conductor. Bramwell led an orchestra, among which were all professional musicians. Bramwell did not see himself as 'a manager, but a lion tamer'. What he gave those professionals was not direction, but support and protection. And he ensured that the whole team was in great harmony. So Mintzberg concluded that the leader should 'not be in complete control nor be entirely unimportant'. The relationship between the conductor and the orchestra is just like that between senior manager and professional engineers. If the manager acts like an overt leader and let those professionals follow his plan, which might be wrong. The professionals would definitely feel depressed and the interest of company would be damaged. What the manager should do is to provide a good workplace which allows professional to do their best and to give them enough support. So the key point of

managing those professionals is to let them appreciate the management, and be willing to cooperate with managers.

Summary

So the leadership is about both innate good traits and skills and knowledge acquired through training and experience. When the potential leader was born, he /she was given the raw material of talent, which can be further developed. Both of them are essential for the leadership.

Evidences of ‘ leaders are born’

After working with thousands of leaders, Cyril Levicki said in his book that ‘ almost all good leaders are born with a special talent, which is modified as they develop as children’.

Cyril Levicki had illustrated this point by some evidence. He said from 1960 to 1990, the leadership training and development in business schools in USA and UK increased dramatically, but there were no signs of the same increase in the national growth rates of business and corporations. While in Japan and Germany, where there were not so many business schools, had continuous growth in national economy and corporations. Cyril concluded that the training of leadership showed no significant influence on the growth of leaders. Although this argument is just generalized according to the national context, not individual, it can somehow reflect that not all the people taking the course of leadership in business schools can be leaders. The potential leader was born with some special characteristics, which can be nurtured during his/her whole life. Without those characteristics, the person has nothing to be developed to be a leader. So not all those potential leaders can

be leaders, but all leaders are given the genetic talents where they were born.

Examples of ‘ leaders are born’

I think a good example of ‘ leaders are born, not made’ is Jack Ma, the CEO of Alibaba. com Corporation. He was a really born leader. He got the Bachelor degree of English and never received any management education before he set up his company. When he graduated, he became an English teacher. He went to USA one time, and found that the online trade was highly developed in US. Then he made up his mind to do this kind of business, even although he had never got into internet before. Now he is the most famous business leader in China. He runs one of the world’s biggest B2B online marketplaces and becomes one of the world’s 100 most influential people in the Time Magazine in 2009. He is such an effective business leader that his consumer-auction website -Taobao. com defeated eBay which shut down its site in China in 2006. He has not received any education of leadership, but he can lead approximately 5000 employees and get success. What he has got are his courage, confidence persistence and active mind, which cannot be trained. But his further success cannot only attribute to his given characters, but also to his working experience and the management education he gets in recent years.

Some leaders don’t have concentration on classroom and some want to begin their career as soon as possible in stead of staying at university, just like that Bill Gates quit of the University of Harvard. This is determined by his innate traits. He just could not wait to do what he wanted to do and to stick

to the business that he thought would make a big difference to himself, even to the world. And finally he made it.

In a Food Manufacture HR Forum (Green Rebecca), HR experts from different companies gathered to discuss whether leaders are born or nurtured and how they justify the investment to the board. Most of them agreed that leaders were born not made. The HR manager in Kerry Ingredients said that 'leaders cannot be trained, what you can do is to provide the culture to allow them to develop by themselves'. But I don't quite agree with what he said later - 'you cannot train competence, vision and drive'. Clearly, competence can be trained, for example, the management skills and technical knowledge. The vision of a person can be broadened with the accumulation of his/her experience, especially the time during a crisis in the workplace.

Summary

All those leaders were born with special talents, which formed the foundation of their future leadership characters. Those talents become more and more obvious and sound when the person grows up. Those traits play a significant role when the person tries to become a leader in the future. But it does mean that relying only on the innate talented traits one can become a leader. He/she also needs to get training and development in the classroom and school, and accumulate experience in the workplace. The next section will talk about this.

Development of leadership skills

Scott M. Reithel, and David M. Finch pointed out that:

' The very idea of ' developing' leaders suggests there are existing skills and abilities to be developed. It is the right mix of traits, skills, experience and the organizational environment that makes great leaders.'

They admitted that innate traits were essential for the better and further development of leadership, but the technical knowledge were acquired through school, university, experience and other sources. Some of the innate traits could not be changed, but might be able to be improved through training and development. Reithel and Finch had given an example that an introvert could not be changed into an extrovert, but the introvert could be trained to get along well with peers.

The needs for nurture of leadership

There are some interesting nurture-influencing factors concluded by Cyril Levicki: being the eldest child in the family and having a father who achieved high levels of success. That is because the family factor might exert great influence on the development of the person, especially during his/her childhood. The treatment and education from parents would have impacts in different aspects. The child would learn from and follow his/her parents. A father who achieves great success usually wants his child to follow his steps and carry on the business. He would do what he can do to nurture his child, especially the eldest boy.

The effective leadership needs rich experience. Dov Frohman's experience as a leader of Inter Israel in crisis is a very good example. During the Gulf War, Dov had to make a hard decision which was whether to close the operation of Intel or to keep Intel open. The government had warned that

Iraqi missiles which might carry chemical weapons would fall in Israel. It would be easy close the business, just like other companies, and the senior executives would not blame Dov on this issue. Dov had a belief that ' a leader should ensure the survival of the organization'. If he closed the business, that meant he agreed that Israel was not suitable for investment. So he finally decided to keep Intel open. In the first day of the war, most of the Intel employees attended the operation. Because of their continuous working during the six weeks of war, the Israel Intel won a great reputation which allowed Israel Intel to be the largest private employer and the mainstay of high-tech economy (Frohman D.). Just as Dov said, ' My experience in the Gulf War taught me a lot about responding to crisis situations.' He had accumulated rich experience during the Gulf War. Dov concluded three big rules for the leader during a crisis —' focus on long-term survival, go against the current and trust your instinct'. I do think that Dov's instinct, belief and judgment were not born, but gradually formed with the increase of experience.

Types of leadership

Leadership can be developed. There are several types of leadership. Each of them has advantages and disadvantages.

Firstly, I will talk about the charismatic leadership. A charismatic leader is able to let workers to listen to his, follow his order and complete tasks as soon as possible. He seems to be glamorous and respectful to all the employees. However, the bad thing is that he might sometimes persuade workers to do some of his bad plans. And creative workers might stop thinking of their own plans but to follow the leader's policy. Charisma is

superficial, which can be felt by employees through the leader's clothing, manner of speech, and behaviour. All of these can be developed. Clothing can be brought in the famous branded shops. Good manner of speech can be practiced over and over again. Polite and suitable behaviour can be learnt through classes or from other people.

Second is the intelligence of leaders. Take the example of Jack Ma again. Jack Ma was born with special characteristics which potentially enabled him to become a good leader. But if he didn't learn the knowledge of internet and business, if he didn't go to USA to contact the on-line business, he cannot manage to success. After he found the Alibaba. com Corporation, he never stops learning both professional PC skills and management. Bill Gates has got great innate traits, but he was not born to know how to create ' Windows'. He came out of beginning his career in the field of PC after years of learning and experience. So the intelligence should be developed.

Development of leadership abilities

Defining the task is a major ability that a leader should possess. As a leader, you cannot do everything all by yourself. You must define the task and arrange people to complete the task together with the least turnover.

However, task is a general meaning, so it has to be specified into objectives, aims and purpose (Adair, J.). The leader should always be clear about the task and be able to answer all those questions relating to it. In addition, the leader should also be good at communication. The leader does not have to talk fluently and endlessly. What the leader has said should be brief, simple, yet effective. This kind of simple activity also needs to be developed.

When leading a team, the leader should formulate the plan after define the objects they are going to achieve. So planning is the second ability that a leader should develop. In order to make a good plan, we should keep ' five W and one H' in our mind: When, What, Why, Who, Where and How. Those six factors are the essential components of a plan. The leader should also prepare for both plan A and plan B, even plan C. When emergency happens, the team and the company can have alternatives to choose. So making the contingency plan is crucial for a leader.

The third important ability might be the use of control. Here the control from leaders is not the completely dominant control that a leader uses his/her power to force every employee to follow his/her plan which sometimes might be wrong. And the type of control differs from different companies. In the company consisted of mainly professionals, as I mentioned in the form section, the leader should not have complete control of them, who need support and protection (Mintzberg). But in this case, the leader should not be absolute powerless, and he/she needs to balance the power of control. Another thing is that the leader should learn to be self-controlling. If the leader cannot control himself/herself, how can he/she controls others?

The ability of organising needs development. A leader should not only organise his/her own work, but also the business of the organisation. Organising is to arrange different parts into a right order. The leader's priority is to organise the company well and lead his/her team in a right direction. Also, the leader needs to organise his/her own time, thinking about the future. Organising the time can gradually becomes a very good habit of leadership.

There are still many other abilities that need to be developed, such as motivating and evaluating (Adair, J.). The development of leadership skills is really a long-term plan, which needs the persistent endeavour from both the potential leaders and the company.

Implications for management development

Most companies, especially those large corporations, have to prepare leaders for their future needs. When there is a vacancy, someone is able to take the job. Due to the importance of nature (innate traits) and nurture (leadership development), organisations should create certain conditions for the potential leaders. Just like a plant need light, warmth and water, a leader needs fruitful source (Adair, J.).

Selection

Not everyone can become a good leader, so the selection of the right people for the leadership and management development is very important. How to get to know whether the person has the potential to become a leader or not? Scott Reithel, and David Finch suggested that 360-degree feedback technique can be used. 360-degree feedback is an efficient tool, with which feedbacks gathered from superior, colleagues, subordinate and customers can be analyzed. From the feedbacks, the person's work, communication and leadership skills can be judged. And this tool can also improve the person's self-awareness, because he/she must do his/her best to prove his/her ability. Some people might say that 360-degree feedback would cost plenty of time and money, but I think the wrong choice of the potential leaders might lead to more waste of time and money.

However, there is another opinion about the selection for management development. In the HR forum mentioned in the former section, Blackburn argued that the selection should not only focus on the successful employees, but also concentrate on those 'struggling workers', who might make big impacts on the company as well. Matthews had made a very good description, 'Like a gardener, you nurture all the plants but weed out the ones that won't grow'. Her point of view was to nurture most of the employees, and wash out some who are thought to be unqualified to become leaders during the management development.

Training for leadership

A leader cannot effectively manage the complex organizational business without possessing enough technical skills, knowledge and savvy (Scott M. Reithel, and David M. Finch). Those skills and knowledge are acquired through training and experience. What the company can provide directly is the training, in terms of training them internally or sponsoring them to go to business school or both of the two. The company can also provide the experience indirectly by letting those people working in the workplace. For example, many companies send their managers to Action-Centred Leadership course or run this kind of course inside the company (Adair, J.).

The most difficult question might be the investment and return. The investment on leadership development is a long term project. It is not like the retail and manufacture that you can see the benefits in a short time after the investment. So the managers, especially HR managers, should be cautious when taking the leadership development plan. HR managers should take the responsibility of making good use the money invested in the plan.

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To be a leader requires a spirit of life-long learning. There is an old saying in China, 'one is never too old to learn'. On the whole, the development of human society is getting faster. If the leaders do not enrich themselves with knowledge all the time, they might be washed out of their role as leaders, and somebody else will take their positions. Being a leader does not mean that one person does not need to learn anymore. Instead, he/she should learn continuously. So no matter the senior managers or leaders in the company, they should be arranged to receive the training and development regularly.

Strategy of leadership development

The leadership development is a long-term plan, so the organisation should formulate a specific policy which might be amended with the change of industry environment.

Leadership development should be seen as an important activity in management. Most of the sections in the organisation will take part in the plan. Line manager, for example, can be the leadership mentor, who will inform the 'future' leaders during the training program. So the company should formulate a career management development policy for leaders. The leader should have the experience of the business in company as a whole. A specialized sales manager cannot be the general managing director, just because he has no ideas about the finance or manufacture of the company, so that he cannot make decisions relating to these. He cannot see the company as a whole, because he is just a professional in sales. This example can also be seen on the financial manager. That is why the company needs the long-term policy. John Adair has used an example to illustrate this

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opinion: ' in a bottling company, a managing director had moved his finance director to the sector of marketing and distribution. He said that the finance director did a very good job in financial sector, but lack of experience in other sectors. He needed to learn from the different sector and other people, such as line managers.

Most organisations would train more leaders that they really need, so some of them might go to other companies. ' Why we should train leaders for other companies?' Some managers might complain. Indeed, training one leader could cost a lot of money and time, let alone training more leaders. Most of the successful business leaders, including those senior managers, had worked for more than one company. From another angle, just as Adair said, the training of more leaders would benefit the industry as a whole.

Conclusion

Leadership is nature or nurture? The answer is both. Without the innate traits, one has no raw material to develop. And an extraordinarily talented person would know nothing if he does not receive any education or training. Both of nature and nurture are important for one to become a leader. Since we cannot change our nature, we should make good use of nurture.

The development of leadership skills requires the endeavours from both individuals and companies. Individual should firstly be the right person to become a leader, and then begin to work hard for it. The company should formulate the long term plan for the leadership development and then provide a good culture for the training of leadership skills. Managers should be cautious when implement the plan of leadership development, ranging

from selection and training, because they have to make full use of the investment. Every leader has the remarkable innate traits, but not everyone who has those traits can become a leader. To some extent, the determinant is the management development.