

# Effective leadership assessment flashcard



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1Introduction The report will concentrate on my assessment of successful and effective leadership through personal observation and also through an interview of an individual that I believe is successful and effective as a leader. The results will be considered and discussed with an emphasis on my perceptions of the leader's leadership style, values and behaviours in comparison to the person's own views and leadership theory. A two year plan will also be developed to improve my own leadership effectiveness based on the findings and insights gathered from the research. The report will answer the following questions: •What are the leaders' perceived leadership style, values and behaviours from my observations? Does the leader agree with my observations of their leadership style, values and behaviours? •How does the leader influence others? •How does the leader draw on networks and power bases? •Do the findings agree with the theory on effective leaders? •How can my own leadership effectiveness be improved based on the findings? The report will outline the methodology used to gather the data, a detailed account of the findings, a discussion on the results and a comparison against the relevant theory and present conclusions and recommendations based on the research.

Methods Data for the report was collected by way of observation of a person I perceived as being an effective leader over a one week period and through a one on one interview with that person after the observation period. The person I selected has a long history (24 years) of experience in senior leadership roles within the federal public service. His present role is as the head of a large federal government department. The observations were undertaken without the person knowing they were being observed. During the interview I was able to engage the leader in three questionnaires from the unit text that I felt would give more insight into the persons' values that might not have been as obvious from simple observation over the short observation time period. The questionnaires undertaken during the interview included:

- Leadership Assessment Quiz 5.

- 1 (Ethical Reasoning Inventory) (DuBrin et al. , pp124-125);
- Leadership Assessment Quiz 8.
- 2 (Organisational Politics Questionnaire ) (DuBrin et al. , pp222-223);
- Leadership Assessment Quiz 9.

- 1 (Survey of Influence Tactics) ) (DuBrin et al. , pp242-243);

It must be noted that due to the limited timeframe for observation and with my limited knowledge of appropriate observation techniques the results of the observation period may not be as accurate as would have been if I was properly trained. During the report I will refer to the leader as ' AM'.

3Results

The results from my observations and questionnaires during the interview are shown below.

Observed AM's View Leadership

stylePARTICIPATIVE/CONSULTATIVECONSULTATIVE ValuesHonest Committed  
Ambitious Capable Helpful ResponsibleRespect Commitment Fairness  
Teamwork Listening BehavioursSelf-confident AssertiveSense of humour Self

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aware Motivated Empathy Strong work ethic Socially adept Trustworthy ' Take charge' Adaptable Sense of humour Motivated Tenacious Observed Score AM's Own Score Leadership Assessment Quiz 5.

1 (Ethical Reasoning Inventory) 95 Leadership Assessment Quiz 8. 2 (Organisational Politics Questionnaire) 711 Leadership Assessment Quiz 9. 1 (Survey of Influence Tactics) Observed Score AM's Own Score Norm 1. Team Play 554. 1 2.

Charm 433. 3 3. Appearance 543. 3 4. Manipulation of situation 223. 1 5.

Manipulation of person 212. 6 6. Assertiveness 543. 9 7. Joking or kidding 433.

7 8. Exchange of favours 442. 9 9. Promise of reward 222. 5 10.

Threat of punishment 111. 8 11. Ingratiation 233. 2 12. Logic or reason 544.

3 13. Alliances 443. 3 14. Threat of appeal 211.

5 15. Compliments 553. 6 16. Compromise 443.

4 4 Discussion DuBrin et al. define an effective leader as one that '...helps group members attain productivity, quality and satisfaction...' through the right behaviour, skills and attitudes (DuBrin et al.

, pp60-83). By identifying the values and behaviours that effective leaders use most often, one is then able to also utilise these same traits to help group members and ultimately organisations attain their goals. The purpose of the following discussion is to compare and evaluate my perceptions of AM's behaviours and values with those held by AM, how they compare

against leadership theory and how these new found insights can assist in improving my leadership effectiveness. 4. 1Leadership Style From my observations of AM it became apparent early on that he was using behaviours linked to a predominantly participative leadership style, evidenced by the high percentage of decision making being shared with and within the group. His principal style as a participative leader appeared to be consultative in approach where most decisions were conferred with team members before final decisions were made by him (DuBrin et al.

, p75). As a result, maintaining lines of open communication with his team also seemed to be a main concern. It also appeared that he was attempting to 'make a connection' with the members of the team by creating an environment of warmth, friendliness, trust and emotional support. DuBrin et al. acknowledge that '...when leaders concentrate on communication and developing relationships with followers, it is viewed as effective leadership' (DuBrin et al.

p61). Therefore, both of these relations based leadership behaviours have a direct correlation to effective leadership. However, AM's leadership style was not always consultative. There were times where his style did appear to change. These circumstances were mainly apparent when dealing with other leaders (consensus) and members of his team that were perceived to be lacking in motivation (authoritarian). This modus operandi of using different leadership styles for different people and situations appears to be supported by Fiedler's Contingency Theory, Path-Goal Theory and Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Model (pp173-200).

Although, DuBrin et al. does make the point that this approach is reliant on leaders having a lot of experience, common sense and emotional intelligence to be effective (DuBrin et al. , p35), which AM has acquired throughout his extensive career. AM's view of his leadership style was in agreement with my observations of a consultative style. Surprisingly though, he thought he would find it very difficult to change his leadership style, as was demonstrated by his actual behaviour.

One reason for this diversion may be a lack of self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Although this seems highly improbable, as most effective leaders have high levels of self-awareness and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). The most likely scenario for the divergence is that AM has high levels of emotional intelligence including self awareness, motivation, empathy and social skills, developed over numerous years that have become second nature to him and are now part of his sub-conscious behaviour. 4. Values and Behaviours According to Carlopio et al.

values '...are among the most stable and enduring characteristics of individuals' (Carlopio et al. p113), interestingly though, DuBrin et al. points out they are not based on any fact (DuBrin et al. , p127). However, these same fact less values do govern our actions and behaviours. From my observation, I came to the conclusion that AM has a highly developed set of values which were demonstrated by many decisions that were aligned with my perception of the values that he holds.

AM seems to have a deep sense of what is ' right and wrong' and what is ' ethical and unethical'. Robbins et al. escribes these characteristics as ego-

strength, a measure of a person's convictions, and locus of control, a measure of the degree that we believe we are masters of our own destiny (Robbins et al. , p153). Throughout the observation period AM appeared to have a high level of ego strength.

This was displayed by calm, calculated decisions based on what appeared to be a consistent moral judgement of what was right and wrong. He also displayed a strong internal locus of control. During the interview with AM, I was able to get some insight into what motivates him. He has always been 'the leader', even from a young age and has sought out leadership roles throughout his career. This points toward a personality that believes they are master of their own destiny.

Robbins et al. , makes the point that leaders with an internal locus of control are inclined to be more consistent in their moral judgements than those with an external locus of control (Robbins et al. , p153). We can conclude that AM's behaviours are based on a strong set of values coupled with a strong conviction of those values. 4. 3InfluenceFrom the observation I undertook, AM seems to be very influential.

The results of the survey of influence tactics indicate that AM has a highly developed sense of how to influence others and the tactics that can be employed to influence. He understands the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ways of influencing others. During the interview AM indicated that he was a 'big believer' in team work and team play. This same tactic is used by many others as an effective influence tactic (DuBrin,

p248). He also has a strong conviction that bullying is an inappropriate tactic for influencing people.

He seems to have an insight into what makes the bully 'tick' He has worked for bully's and has developed strategies and tactics for influencing them, the most effective being to 'stand up for what you believe in'. He suggested that bullies will test you to see if you have a conviction of your beliefs, indicating that one must have high levels of ego strength and a strong internal locus of control to counter-influence the bully. This is quite interesting, as this line of thought points to ones value system and behaviours being a core foundation of influence. AM also has what is described as a personal magnetism.

This personal quality is likened to charisma and refers to a '...captivating, inspiring personality with charm, and charismatic-like qualities' (DuBrin et al. , p248). Miller (2006) points out that charismatic leadership and influence, are reserved for the top echelon of leaders. During the interview AM mentioned that he did not have any formal management or leadership training, indicating that charisma and personal magnetism may be an innate personality trait. Miller's line of thinking is that not every leader can be genuinely charismatic, but, leaders at any level are able to develop charismatic-like qualities that can then be used as an effective influence tactic (Miller 2006). 4.

4Power Bases and Networks A person's power comes from their capacity to influence actions or decisions. As the head of a federal government department, AM has considerable influence due to the position of power that



he holds in the organisation. AM also has a significant personal power base. This is endorsed by Robbins et al.

That most effective leaders rely on several different forms of behaviour to affect the behaviour and performance of their followers (Robbins et al. , p503). In his current role as departmental head for an organisation that is undergoing massive cultural and organisation change, AM is perceived by the organisation as a collective, to be a transformational leader. According to Atwater and Yammarino (1996) transformational leadership is based on a view of respect and admiration by members of the group resulting in an exertion of influence due to this outlook. Further analysis by Atwater and Yammarino reveal that transactional leadership has foundations of a personal power base.

Therefore transformational leaders are able to influence by virtue of their referent power base. From the interview with AM it also became evident that he had positioned himself throughout his career to be close to those with power. As an example, one of his first jobs in the public service was as an executive officer to the departmental head of a federal government agency from which he promoted to a senior executive position in the agency. He has then been able to develop networks with senior leaders and executives and others with both strong personal and positional power bases themselves.

AM indicated that throughout his career he had never had a formal mentor or coach, although he did have informal mentor/coaching relationships with a number of people throughout his career. At present he has engaged the services of a professional executive coach as someone to use as a resource,

mentor and confidant. He thought it was a good idea that the mentor was somebody outside of the organisation, thus removing the mentor from organisational politics and conflicts of interest and at the same time allowing the mentor impartiality in their guidance and advice. AM's view of this differs from DuBrin et al. who indicate that most mentors are from the same organisation as the leader.

I agree with both views, although a qualification would be that mentors from within the organisation would generally be used by lower level leaders, whereas using mentors from outside the organisation would be beneficial for senior level leaders. Conclusions The following conclusions can be made from the findings of the report:

- Communication and developing relationships have a direct correlation to effective leadership;
- A well developed awareness of ones self and emotional intelligence allow a an effective leader to be cognisant of their surroundings and how their behaviours affect those around them;
- Our values govern our actions and behaviours; A strong set of values gives an effective leader the ability to make decisions based on sound moral foundations enabling the decisions being made to be consistent and based on right from wrong and ethical;
- The ability of effective leaders to influence is based on a core foundation of well developed values and behaviours;
- Effective leaders at all levels are able to develop charismatic-like skills to influence others;
- Effective leaders rely on several bases of power; Transformational leaders influence through personal power;
- Effective leaders develop networks with others that also have well developed positional and personal power bases;
- Most leaders subscribe to mentors as an effective way of developing effective leadership

skills; 6Recommendations The following two year plan has been developed to enable me to improve my leadership effectiveness based on the findings:

6. 10 – 6 Months Undertake an initial self evaluation and reflection of my values, behaviours and leadership style. This will enable me to be more aware of the effects my values and behaviours have on others; •I will endeavour to undertake similar self reflection and 360 degree feedback exercises every six months so as to maintain a high level of self-awareness; •Begin to correct any values or behaviours found through the self reflection exercise that are not compatible with that of effective leaders; 6. 7 – 18 Months •Start to increase my power bases by developing a network of effective leaders and others with strong power bases; •Position myself to be close to effective leaders that have influence and power; •Engage the help of a mentor. •Seek out roles and experiences that will develop my leadership skills; 6.

32 Years and Beyond •Finish my MBA course; •Seek out and obtain a leadership role at the Senior Executive Level of the public service.

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