Leadership and emotional intelligence

Life, Emotions

Goleman (1998) was the person responsible for popularizingEmotional Intelligence. He started by dividing emotional intelligence into five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill (p. 94). He then analyzed the degree of presence of each of these components in people holdingleadershippositions, and found that the qualities were essential in developing effective leadership.

Emotional Intelligence has been addressed in context of leadership by several other researchers and theorists also. The effectiveness of leadership can be judged only when there are specific elements that can be set up as parameters for effective leadership. George (2000, p. 1039) has presented the essential elements of effective leadership by considering the works of Conger and Kanungo, 1998, Locke, 1991 and Yukl, 1998. These can be presented as below: • To develop a set ofgoalsand objectives and ways to achieve them

• Make the team members understand and appreciate the importance of their work • To motivate the team members and keep up enthusiasm and optimism levels • Be flexible to change and encourage the same among team members • To establish and maintain a meaningful identity for their organization. To analyze the relation between leadership and emotional intelligence, a detailed analysis needs to be carried out on the effects of emotional intelligence on each of these parameters.

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee consider emotional intelligence to be a critical component of effective leadership, mainly because being a leader means dealing with teams of any size. According to them emotional intelligence is

important to leaders because they can motivate their team member better and would also have a transformational influence on the team members, leading the team to perform effectively (p. 25). Goelman's books suggest that every individual has his own emotional profile with strengths and weaknesses.

He identifies four emotional domains in his book Primal Leadership. These four domains as: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management (p. 526), and are considered to be very important characteristics needs in clinical therapists and clinical social workers. Self-Awareness is a combination of emotional awareness of a person's own emotional profile, making accurate self assessment based on the profile, and finally having self-confidence to own up to one's capabilities.

Self-Management consists of having emotional self-control, having transparency in one's dealings and behavior, adaptability to changingenvironmentand situations, a drive towards a sense of achievement, initiative to seize new opportunities, and finally optimism to see the positive side in events. Social Awareness is the existence of sympathy in a person to sense other person's emotion, understanding their point of view, organizational awareness about the changes and events occurring in the organization and a sense of service for meeting client's requirements and needs.

Finally Relationship Management is having inspirational leadership, which would motivate team members, influence which would involve powers of persuasion, an intent to develop others by giving correct feedbacks, being

the change catalyst to direct the team towards a new direction, having the qualities of conflict management to resolve intra and inter team disputes, Building relations with a wide network of people and finally a sense of teamwork and collaboration (Dearborn, 2002, p. 526).

Leadership literature is mostly concerned with the style of leadership. This is one of the methods to describe the attributes of leadership. The leadership style is associated with how a leader operates rather than what are his characteristics. That is to say a leadership style can be defined as approach for providing direction. The predominant types of leadership are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire (Strasler, 2004). Kurt Lewin gave these three types, however, there may be many variations to these predominant styles.

This is also called formal or authoritarian type of leadership. This style of leadership is both domineering and controlling. In this type of leadership, the leader tells employees how he wants the work done and what he wants employees to do without getting their views. In other words, the leader makes all the decisions without consulting the subordinates and also dictates their roles. Micromanaging is a type of autocratic leadership in which the upper management controls even the smallest tasks under taken by the subordinates (Strasler, 2004).

This style of leadership was prevalent in the industrial sector from the late 1800s to 1950s and was dogmatic. Commands were issued to the subordinates and compliance was expected. The leader had complete power to give or withhold rewards or punishments. A variation of autocratic leadership can be seen in the government offices, where rules, regulations

and ranks hold importance over the work actually done. This variation is known as bureaucratic leadership, and a more efficient and rigid version of it can be seen in military outfits also.

The autocratic and bureaucratic styles were dominant in the first half of the 20th century, but are now obsolete in the private sector (Sousa, 2003). Autocratic style of leadership can be used when companies are managing less experienced employees, in situations where any minor error may lead to huge damage. It is also used when the time at hand is very minimal to incorporate employees' views. For instance US companies operating in under-developed countries often tend to use the autocratic style of leadership at the start.

This is because it allows the parent company to have more control over its overseas investment in countries where the social conditions are volatile (Sousa, 2003). The autocratic style of leadership limits the employees' freedom of expression and participation in the decision-making process and hence it should be avoided as a routine style of leadership. It is often this type of leadership drains off the employees' ambition and reducing their motivation levels. It may serve in alienation employees from leadership and does not serve to create trust between leaders and their subordinates.

Also, such type of leadership is not good when creative minds are involved as the initiative is suppressed (Strasler 2004). In autocratic leadership style, leaders make the decision alone and have full power of decision-making. The leaders are more concerned with the task accomplishment rather than concern for their subordinates. In autocratic leadership, there is high level of

supervision. The policies outlines are usually followed rigidly. Using this type of leadership leads to promote apathy or hostility and aggression. It also creates acultureof dependency on the leader.

The employees are usually seen to expect their managers to make all the decisions for them and tend to become fearful and resentful. Another disadvantage is that the autocratic leader denies himself the inputs, suggests and viewpoints of their subordinates which are often very helpful when trying to solve a new problem or availing a new opportunity (Straub, 1999). However, as is mentioned above, being autocratic is not always bad. There are situations when it actually turns out to be beneficial to be authoritative. b. Democratic Leadership

This type of leadership is also known as participative leadership. As the name suggests this type of leadership involves other people for the decision making process. The leader following this leadership style consults the employees about the proposed actions and decisions and encourages them to participate in these discussions (Dixon, 2003). However, this does not mean that the employees get to make the final decision. It only means that the leader considers the contributions of the employees and but comes up with a final decision on his own based on everyone's inputs.

Democratic leaders usually see themselves and their employees as a part of the team. The late 1960s saw an emergence of democratic and participative leadership where the management consulted with the employees of the organization on significant actions and decisions. The management encouraged and rewarded the participation of the members in the decision

making process. This led to an increase in the employee motivation and job satisfaction levels which in turn led to a phenomenal increase in productivity chiefly in terms of innovation (Sousa, 2003).

Democratic leaders are people-oriented and focus on human relations and teamwork. Democratic leadership leads to mutual benefits for the leader and subordinated. From the point of view of the employees, this type of leadership usually leads to their empowerment by giving them a sense ofresponsibilityfor the decisions made. On the other hand the leader or the manager is in a position to make better decisions, especially in a case where he is working with highly skilled or experienced employees.

The decision-making usually takes place through consensus and consultation (Strasler, 2004) Participative leadership involves stakeholders like investors, superiors, peers and at times even subordinates. The degree of influence on the decision-making is mostly due to the leader. It can be an effective form of management when the employees have different perspective than their manager due to their daily involvement with the work in hand. A successful leader in this case knows when to be ateacherand when to be a student to reap the maximum benefits.

This type of leadership is useful at the time of implementing organizational changes for resolving group problems and also when the leader is uncertain about the course of action he should take and requires additional inputs to go ahead (Strasler 2004). Democratic leadership also has certain disadvantages. All the decisions cannot be participative, because endless meetings can increase the frustration level of employees. Also such type of

decision-making is not good when the organization is hard-pressed for time like in a crisis (Strasler 2004).

Another disadvantage is the tendency of the decisions to be based on the will of the majority, which is not always good. c. Laissez-faire Leadership The term Laissez-faire leadership comes from the French expression which means ' Let them do" (Brym & Lie, 2006). This type of leader ship is also known as delegative or free-rein leadership. This involves allowing employees to make the decisions at the work place. Here the leader gives the subordinates a substantial degree of independence in their work allowing them to set their goals and discover their own ways to achieve them (Dixon, 2003).

This method is used mainly when employees are in a position to analyze the situation at hand. However, this does not mean that the manager is not responsible for the decisions made. The decisions carried out are still the responsibility of the leader. The leader adopting this style of leadership sees his role as one of facilitating the activities of other employees by providing them with information and acting as a contact with the group's external environment (Dixon 2003). It is sometimes also known as the lest effective type of leadership, especially when the employees are untrained, as it involves least involvement from the leader.

In most of the situations where delegative or free reign leadership is used, the employees have already gone through organizational learning and training and are therefore fully equipped to handle most of the issues that might arise. A group successfully following this type of leadership is self-

sufficient and self-motivated and the presence of a strong leader is not really required. The group members have to be highly skilled, experienced, trained, motivated, educated and the trust and confidence among them is also very high.

These people can work on their own without any need for supervision and guidance (Brym & Lie, 2006). An obvious problem would arise in such a leadership style, when something goes wrong. The employees would then try to pass the blame to others. An argument could be that such situation may not arise as the group is responsible; however, this means a great degree of blind trust from the management style. Any leader who uses this type of leadership however has to use it very wisely since there is a huge probability that it might be misused.

While this style of leadership is not always undesirable, successful group are more of exceptions rather than the norms. Mostly this tends to cultivate unfocused discussion and inefficient work. This style of leadership might hinder productivity and decision-making and hence is not usually recommended (Wood, 2005). When used to a large extent this might even lead to afailurein an organization. Research shows that this leadership functions well when incorporated with other leadership styles.

This leadership style acknowledges that the leader is never an expert in all areas or all fields. There are always employees who are more qualified in an area or so (Kotter, 2000). In situations where manager is not exerting sufficient control, it can also be referred to free reign leadership style. At times distance might force a leader to be laissez-faire leaders too. For

instance when a manager is managing employees over multi-locations far away from each other and himself, this type of leadership would come in picture (Straub 1999)