

# Leadership in business world assignment

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



Leadership In The Business World Gene Hernandez MGT 380 Charlie Williams  
February 6, 2011 Leadership In The Business World Leadership plays a vital role in Corporate America today due to the vast diversity of an organization whether local or global. Overall, leadership is very different than management and some of the outcomes we reviewed help define what leadership truly is and helps drive the business. Power and influence play a major role, along with initiating and managing change and the leadership theory of participative leadership brings together a certain leadership view. Together these attributes help define and frame the character of individuals as well as the organization and together you can use these theories to set the framework for your leadership style and approach. As I reflect back on the outcomes of this class and a previous one the outcome I have is a better understanding of leadership and management as well as how it is used as well as the theory of each. When I think of leadership and management they are separate theories but each is critical to an organization and using this foundation will help frame the approach.

As outlined “ there is a profound difference between the two and both are important” (Shockley-Zalabk, 2009). “ To manage” means “ to bring about, to accomplish or to have charge of or responsibility. ” “ Leadership or leading” is influencing, guiding direction, action or opinion” (Shockley-Zalabk, 2009). In my learnings this term one of the areas that I gravitated to was the theory around participative leadership, delegation, and empowerment. This is a somewhat straight forward concept although it can be difficult to implement.

From participative standpoint it is about “consultation, joint decision making, power sharing, empowerment, and a democratic management style” (Yukl, 2010). This is one that I can relate as I find that involving others on key decisions you have a much better chance of succeeding versus if you did this alone. In my case I have been on both sides and the individual approach on a big decision caused me to work twice as hard, was more stressful, and overall much more difficult than it probably should have been. On the other side involving others in decision making is often necessary for getting approval.

An example of one where I was ultimately the decision maker but was looking for some buy in to support my effort I took some extra steps. Although I was making the recommendation for approval what I did was before my presentation was to socialize my recommendation and have a conversations with key stakeholders before the big meeting. By doing this I was able to obtain feedback, set people at ease so they were not taken off guard, moreover to ask questions that we could in turn dialogue on prior so that we could have some consensus or potentially make some changes.

By involving others the process went much smoother and by taking this approach my success rate of approval has been much higher and I have gained even more respect from my peers as they were part of the discussions which they valued tremendously. As part of this idea delegation is also an important piece since it is a “distinct type of power-sharing process that occurs when subordinates are given responsibility and authority

for making some types of decisions formerly made by the manager” (Yukl, 2010).

This piece I can say I struggled with in 2010 as my team was scaled back and we reorganized twice during this period as we went to a matrixes environment. When I look at delegation I truly appreciate the reasons why and for me the top reasons to delegate are to develop subordinate skills and confidence, raise awareness, create commitment, reduce my workload to manage time better and move repetitive tasks that I do not need to focus my time on.

Diving into why I didn't want to always delegate was I didn't want to stretch my team as much so they could still balance home and work, some of the decisions were very important, and by delegating my senior analysts were having to go head to head with executives who were in a much higher authority level. With my dilemma of being staffed challenged I had to adjust so that I could still delegate certain things if not I would be facing burnout, higher stress, and higher likelihood for error.

By moving past this I had to assess what I could still delegate that was better suited for my subordinates. Another piece was I had to breakdown requests into smaller steps or deliverables and provide clear expectations on what was needed. The one idea I had to understand was identifying deliverables that were urgent but not the highest priority. The other piece was delegating more appropriately to the skill of the team while still stretching them to learn and take on more responsibility.

Overall, I learned more about this concept in 2010 and this course helped reemphasize the things that I was doing right and some thoughts on improving and monitoring delegation type tasks. In the end to be effective you have to be a leader and do the right thing and even though you are overloaded and may not want to burnout your team adversity will bring out the best in your team and in many cases they will step up to the plate to deliver.

The last concept within this that I find very interesting and use this in many ways during a normal day and or week is empowerment which “ involves the perception by members of an organization that they have the opportunity to determine their work roles, accomplish meaningful work, and influence important events” (Yukl, 2010). With this theory I have used this extensively for my core team as well as my matrix team that work on projects or group assignments. When I empower I clearly identify the objective of the project, give them the resources and the latitude to succeed.

With empowerment you are also encouraging them to engage and you in turn as a leader trust them to handle delicate information, help with critical decisions and present a view of the situation. In my role I have learned to use this in many cases as we support a large group of executives and as one individual cannot be in all of these places. If you have the right team players then you can empower and be successful. The one thing that I have learned is you have to build trust, rapport, and vision in order for this to work.

On the flip side when you empower you also trust them so you do not have to micro manage but set up checkpoints along the way to ensure progress is

being made and you are aware. Participative leadership truly encourages participation by others and this is a concept that I have embraced in my work. If I did not then I would probably not be in the role that I have as a different model would not be as effective. When I see our organization we are evolving and this approach has been best suited for us as we have the right team players to carry this out.

Although still new it is encouraging that this model is working but it must be monitored as it could change quickly with a new senior leader or organizational change. When I look at many organizations and even specifically with the one that I have worked for the last 19 years power and influence in leadership is another aspect that is important. Looking back at my career I still recall distinct leaders who thought had great leadership qualities and truly balanced power and influence to ensure the organization was successful.

For the ones that I did not think were effective they tended to leave over time as it was not the good cultural fit. Looking at influence which I think is something every leader should possess as outlined is about “ Having clout with your boss gains respect from subordinates and peers; being influential with colleagues lets you deliver what your boss wants and your subordinates need; and high-performing subordinates increase your power sideways and upwards because you can deliver on your obligations and promises” (Bradford & Cohen, 1984).

Power is also important if used and managed appropriately. “ Power involves the capacity of one party (the “ agent”) to influence another party (the “

target”)” (Yukl, 2010). To further define “ power is usually used to describe the absolute capacity of an individual agent to influence the behavior or attitudes of one or more designated target persons at a given point in time” (Yukl, 2010). Power is something that can be used effectively but also can be abused which is when you fall into situations of unrest or turmoil. Our book outlined five position powers and two personal powers (Yukl, 2010).

One that I see has highly effective is legitimate power which is based on formal authority over work activities. In my organization we tend to lean on legitimate power since areas of responsibilities are outlined and the various leaders are assigned to them. What I like about this is requests are clear, are within scope, proper channels are followed, and in many cases you have some reasons with the clear request that is made. I tend to think some of this thinking is from our military background although I have seen different shifts at times.

Along with power comes influence and every leader should possess this quality. Ideally they should possess the two and not focus just on the power concept to achieve results. Influence is something that can help move an organization to achieve a goal and with that you could leverage your power aspect in conjunction with influence. Influence is a balance as you do not want to use power to be directive but influence relates to collaboration, working as a team, and consulting with your team or project group to achieve maximum result.

As I reflect on my organization taking a closer look at the mission “ USAA’s mission is to facilitate the financial security of its members, associates, and

their families through provision of a full range of highly competitive financial products and services; in so doing, USAA seeks to be the provider of choice for the military community” (USAA, 2010). These words are powerful but yet very meaningful as it outlines what our purpose is, who we serve, and what we want to be to our members.

As an employee this is what draws me to a great company such as USAA. From a Fortune 500 list the top companies if you were to research some of the top 100 or 200 companies such as Microsoft, FedEx, or Google you would find some of the same similar characteristics as well (Money, 2010). As someone in the work force one of my criteria would be to ensure they follow the same values and mission that I currently serve as well as my own personal core values.

Many of the things outlined in our mission are accomplished by our sphere of influence and power to achieve for the common good of the association and our members. This is the foundation of where leadership is executed from and then rolls down to the leadership team, management, team and its subordinates. Every employee can relate to the mission and it that is at the core of each individual executing the leadership plan is almost straight forward. As I reflect on our studies this term and what is leadership I came away with a better prospective of ideas that I can use in my daily routine.

One that I also find important is the concept of managing change within an organization and the significance leadership has on it. Change can be dramatic to an organization and having strong leadership to help guide and facilitate will ensure that the process moves as efficient as possible. One of



the attributes that I feel leadership should have is vision. Before you can support change they must have a vision of what the change will look like and how it will benefit the organization.

Leadership plays a major role in what that vision should look like and it is not that they should tackle by themselves but as outlined in chapter ten some key information for creating that vision is “ involve key people, strategic objectives with wide appeal, identify relevant elements, link to your core competencies, credibility, and once you have that continually assess and refine” (Yukl, 2010). Once you have the vision key leadership are responsible for implementing change.

Implementing change is the responsibility of the leadership team but they also must engage key members to ensure they agree with the vision and ensure they have the appropriate team in place. In many cases it may require changing of management to ensure the vision is implemented and executed according to plan. Ultimately the leadership team is critical and from experience I have seen where it has failed to implement down the chain and it primarily falls on the leadership team that did not execute correctly and you in turn have disjointed teams since they do not understand or it was not communicated properly.

In my opinion leadership is relatively straight forward; however leaders earn there paycheck when it comes to initiating and managing change as usually it means that something is not working properly which prompts change.

When things run smoothly leading is easy it is when you have to adjust and make changes is when true leadership is exhibited. “ A common mistake is

when they develop a vision but it never translates into something your frontline employees understand” (Gossage, 2010). If you think about this in a simpler term how many times do you fail on something if it is not thought out properly or is looked at one-sided.

Overall leadership in Corporate America is challenging and over the last few years it has been challenged as many have not had to experience leading in an economic downfall. Those that come out the other side unscathed are the ones that most likely had strong leadership qualities and they worked closely with peers utilizing various theories to succeed. Leadership is not a science as it has art to it and it is not always a direct route to success but if you can navigate the waters using power and influence and can manage and create effective change then you may have the formula for success.

In the end success is in the eye of the beholder and leadership is in that realm. Whether your key attributes are having vision, courage or ability to inspire it also relates to your own value system of how you were raised and what you want to be. In the leadership role not everyone will agree with all of your decisions but at the end of the day you do the right thing for yourself, your organization, and the customers or members you serve. References  
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