

General patton's leadership and communication style analysis assignment



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HIS authoritarian father role modeled a successful totalitarian approach which would have overshadowed any attempt at a democratic leadership style (General Patton, n. D.). " A leader's selection of a particular behavioral style depends in part on the schemata that he has stored in long-term memory' (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 62). General Patton was a formidable and strategic leader. " Patton is now considered one of the greatest military figures in history' (General Patton, n. D.). Unfortunately, his blunt and intolerant personality and his authoritarian leadership style, at one point, was the primary force in his fall from grace.

Even though Patton enlisted excellent military technicians, such as General Omar Bradley, his authoritative approach stifled their suggestions and constructive criticisms; ultimately leading to not only their dissatisfaction and throughout the ranks (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 45). Albeit these military technicians were highly trained, if General Patton had utilized a democratic style of leadership the decision- making process might have stalled to the point of becoming ineffectual, war and the military often demand immediate and decisive actions (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 43 & 46).

General Patton maintained strict control over his subordinates and demanded 110% effort from everyone. His expectations were over-inflated, rigid, callous, and unyielding. Once his mind was made up no other possibilities would be considered. Once Patton ordered General Trust to either perform the Impossible or be replaced (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 51). A democratic leader would have discussed, evaluated, and proposed a

collaborated solution to the predicament. He was also intolerant of shortcomings in others, especially cowardice.

A good leader has the wherewithal to determine the appropriate leadership style for each situation (Hickman, 2009, p. 56). General Omar Bradley was considered the "Gig's General" due to his more democratic leadership style and understanding of his men's 'off' needs. He stated, "It is a well-known fact that to tense men I do not like to do the tenure Walt Patton created and maintained a distance between him and his followers; believing that a fear of him would make them try harder (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 42). "Leaders should be ethical and serve the common good" (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 16).

General Patton generally ignored the ideas, feelings, and rank of others, even superiors (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 51). In utilizing his typical downward and linear communication style, his retort to a junior officer reading General Alexander's command for Patton to stop his advance to the west "That's what you think it said. I think it was garbled in transmission" (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 8). Communication styles General Patton did not employ the more effective transactional model of communication. His model was more in line with the action model of unilateral or linear messaging (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 8-9).

If he would have developed a more interactive model with feedback from each receiver, employing a more participative involvement with his staff, his followers might have been more receptive to his decisions and changes (Libber & McConnell, 2008, p. 424). He demonstrated an uncanny ability to motivate his troops. "Impression management is the key to successful

military leadership... Creating the impression that they are trustworthy, effective, morally worthy, innovative, and skilled" (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 30 & 31).

Impression management can increase cooperation, but his sometimes detrimental impression management undermined relationships (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 33). His statement " The soldier is the army. No army is better than its soldiers" exemplifies respect towards his men and communicates how vital they are to the success of the operations. But in reality, in almost every operation, he demonstrated more concern for the successful completion of his assignment than for the soldier's welfare.

He personally directed the completion of most tasks; textbook authority compliance behavior (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 55). Patton tended to dominate communications with " Leadership is about who you are... [and] what you do", instead of " Leadership is about how you act... [and] how you work with others". Influence instead of force and collaboration instead of demands is a more effective style of leadership (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 10-11). Patton was a devotee of history, especially the classical age, and related many satirical lessons through its retelling.

If the German officers would have accepted the Junior officer's prediction that Patton would strike in Sicily, reenacting the Greek and Roman's examples, the war might have had a different outcome. Storytelling is a technique for relating events, inspiring actions and values, as well as " building strong relationships and a sense of affiliation" (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 23). Patton was ordered by his superiors to repair the damage to his

public image, resulting from his disrespecting an enlisted man with a slap, through a public apology.

His charismatic style of communication facilitated him in “account[ing] for his missteps in ways that reduce their negative impact” (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 59). Followers communication Leaders play an intricate role in enabling their followers to perform successfully through acknowledging and respecting their needs (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 59). Needs are central to task motivation; whether the needs are basic (food, water and shelter) or Maslow's Pyramid Self-Actualization (Bellman & Deal, 2008, p. 124). “We can achieve our goal only if we fulfill the needs of our own people” (Bellman & Deal, 2008, p. 123).

Patton preferred the Theory X management approach, believing that subordinates exhibit a dislike and a lack of motivation for work, requiring active management, direction, and motivation by a superior (Bellman & Deal, 2008, p. 126; Libber & McConnell, 2008, p. 351 & 529). “The leader who thinks of followers as generally incompetent... is much more likely to engage in authoritarian leadership that calls for strict supervision and direction” (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 62). In contrast, studies generally demonstrate that followers perform best when they are allowed autonomy and active participation (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p. 56).

Through his overindulged ego “fog” he does not understand how others perceived him, that “there are 50,000 men on this island who'd like to shoot [Patton]”, or that “The men do not share Patton's sense of glory, because they are stuck there living each day with death tugging at their

elbow'. He expected his men to show discipline and extraordinary character and only then did he respond with respect. Patton epitomized the inconsiderate leader through his lack of self-control, superseded ego, criticizing of soldiers in front of others, making threats, and refusing to accept lowers' suggestions or explanations (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 53).

His decisions were sometimes corrupt, insular, and self serving. He demonstrated blatant arrogance; not acknowledging his own mistakes but instead blaming others. His insatiable arrogance was demonstrated in his arriving first in Messing, Sicily and in Bastions, France in spite of the cost of so many men's lives. He did not know how to match his mood appropriately to some situation; sometimes his " irritation and annoyance led to anger and rage" (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 29). His demonstrations of callousness to his men was the origin of his nickname " Old Blood ND Guts; our blood, his guts".

A leader must value the feelings of his followers in order to bond with them and illicit their best performance (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 28). Patton made a critical dysfunctional leadership error when he slapped an enlisted man for showing cowardice; violating the soldier's human rights (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 17). He believed his fall from grace was a direct result of the slapping as he states " All glory is fleeting". He can't believe that " something so trivial could keep him from fulfilling his destiny'. He deifies himself when he states " God will not allow it". Patron's personal assistant, Let.

Colonel Cadmic is an exemplary follower, " knowing what they want to achieve in life and commit[ting] themselves to achieving [it]... They understand what tasks are most important to achieving the organization's vision" (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 59). Let. Colonel Cadmic was also conciliatory; effective in appeasing General Patron's ego and needs. He assisted in Patron's Illusions AT great power: even tong Held Marshall Roomer was not present at ten campaign, he was still the originator of the battle plan and therefore, Patton did beat Roomer. Task vs.. Interpersonal Orientation

As a leader, he excelled within the task orientated model, performing brilliantly with the technical military stratagems, but failed with interpersonal relationships, exhibiting poor people skills. An effective leader is able to maintain these two leadership characteristics in balance (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 51). In the functional arena he was admired for his successes; never allowing for retreat but instead demanding offensive tactics. Winning was exceptionally important to Patton and this autocratic leadership ideal was evident in his statements: " Wars are not won by defensive tactics.

You keep moving and the enemy cannot hit you. When you dig a foxhole, you dig your grave. " He excelled in his knowledge; of the enemy commander, having read Field Marshall Roomer's warfare tactics book, and the performance limits of his men and equipment, having supreme knowledge of the tanks. Also effective, was his detailed preparation of the physical environment and action plans; applying historical strategies from the ancient Roman and Greek times. His poor people skills not only created <https://assignbuster.com/general-pattons-leadership-and-communication-style-analysis-assignment/>

considerable tension between him and other commanders, as evidenced with the deliberate race for control of Sicily with

General Montgomery, but also between himself and his men, as exemplified with the incident of the slapping of the soldier. He was told by his superiors "your worst enemy is your big mouth". Leaders must demonstrate valued personality traits such as integrity, sincerity, and stability in order to earn and keep the respect and loyalty of their followers (Hickman & Johnson, 2009, p 28 & 32). Conclusion General Patton employed both positive and negative leadership behaviors. The contradiction of his leadership is an example of what a leader can be and what they should not be.