Factors affecting management success

In a rapid and globalized world, management success is often associated with a plethora of carefully applied strategies that accentuate both the results and the processes utilized to attain a certain goal. Library shelves bulge with valuable management information about various factors that can affect our work performance and decisions.

However, although we wish to know answers to the question of what factors affect successful management, most individuals have neither the time to wade through pages and pages in the off-chance of uncovering possible gems nor the capacity to meticulously examine a particular situation to discover what impedes them to success. Successful management stands far beyond a list of factors, skills and recommendations that a manager can memorize in order to excel. A successful manager pays attention to many facets of management, leadership and learning within organizations.

The most important issue in management success is being a person that others want to follow. Every action you take during your career in an organization helps determine whether people will one day want to follow you. Based on this premise, it can be affirmed that Successful management is measured and demonstrated when a team's performance under a specific leader is undoubtedly better than under anyone else. Successful managers are aware of a series of substantial factors that affect their performance. One of the major factors – and unfortunately the most underrated – is stress management.

Stress is inescapable; everyone suffers from it to some extent; some people even say they thrive on it, while others feel it blights their lives. Stress, when

controlled and balanced, can be good for us, even facilitating peak performance. However, when we feel a loss of control - a central contributor to stress, the severe negative impacts can take a dangerous emotional and physical toll. Effective management is only possible if we are able to understand and control the impact of stress, both on ourselves and on our colleagues. Failure to do so can be costly both in human and financial terms.

For example, in the United States, work-related stress affects over 20% of employees and accounts for more than 6. 5 million working days lost per year. This degree of absenteeism clearly impacts on the efficiency of the workplace. Surveys also indicate that up to a quarter of the work-force considers work-related stress to be a major cause of unhappiness in their lives. The link between stress management and relaxation is evident. Taking time off work for recreation is essential if we are to be healthy, successful managers. The only trouble is, those who are most stressed are often the ones who just can't see " the wood for the trees. Similarly as stress management, problem solving is a substantial factor. In this case, everything starts with finding the right problems to solve. Surprised to start with this step? Not many problem solving processes include this step, yet it is absolutely crucial. We just need to think how often we spend time and resources on problems which don't necessarily demand such attention. When we ask ourselves " Is it the right problem to solve? " too often, our approach to problem solving is reactive; we wait for the problems to arise.

The real starting point for any problem solving process is to find the right problem to solve. After we have found the problem, we need to define it. It is very tempting to gloss over this procedure and move to analysis and

solutions. However, like the first step (finding the right problem to solve), it is one of the secrets of effective problem solving. Combining problems that are valuable to solve, with defining exactly what you are trying to solve, can dramatically improve the effectiveness of the problem solving process. The secret to defining the problem is really about the attitude one has when facing an obstacle.

In this case, it is crucial to see every problem as an opportunity to grow and learn in order to become a better manager. Once a manager has adopted this attitude, analyzing the problem, developing a solution and implementing it to overcome the problem tend to be more effective and less time consuming. Solving a problem also subsumes decision making. The first decision making lesson we should learn is, do we really need to make a decision? There may be times when not deciding can be the best option. This is not the same as deferring a decision, just because it's difficult or uncomfortable. Not deciding' is not a procrastinator's charter; nor is it the same as deciding to do nothing.

This can be a legitimate outcome from a proper situation analysis. However, deliberately waiting to see if a decision needs to be made is an equally valid approach. Making an unnecessary decision can do more harm than good. In certain situations some problems do go away and no decision is the best decision. Patience is here a virtue, and when faced with a decision making situation, perhaps learning to be patient is also a decision making lesson. Nonetheless, a manager needs to be careful of versimplifying this approach, considering that most situations will require a decision and an action. In most cases, a successful manager is also aware of the meaning of the word

Leadership. For example, leadership could be defined as the ability to guide, direct, influence or inspire. However, one word explanations don't really do much to help us understand complex concepts, and leadership can certainly be defined as that. Good leadership qualities can be learned but it's a good idea to experiment and learn from the best. But who are the " best" and how do you use ideas from these leading thinkers effectively in your situation?

Successful managers learn from their mentors and other successful leaders throughout human history, considering not only their success, but also their failures. In various situations, managers like Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, or Luca Cordero di Montezemolo remark the influence that persons like Sun Tzu, Niccolo Macchiavelli, Napoleon Bonaparte, Lorenzo di Medici and Abraham Lincoln have on their perspectives to see and analyze a certain problem. Learning from leading thinkers can help bring fresh ideas, insight and innovation to our practice. Workplace motivation is one of the most important aspects of good management.

It may be a complex, frustrating issue – especially when dealing with lazy workers, who avoid any responsibility -, but unless it is understood, and managed effectively, few organizations will flourish. Some writers think that most employees are naturally pre-disposed to enthusiasm for their work, demonstrating an inherent preference for engagement and achievement. Ironically, it can be managers themselves who dampen this ardour, through either poor management or a lack of understanding of what workplace motivation is all about. Of course, just knowing how to motivate employees is not enough.

Motivation is important but it's not effective without energy. Whilst motivation is considered to be the intent or desire to act, energy can be defined as the capacity to perform work. A manager shows energy every time she/he sets an example on how to perform well. Managing performance and energy are not about coercion; these terms relate more to encouraging people to work to their potential - because they want to and not because they have to. Once a manager has successfully motivated a team, effective delegation can be an important factor on the work place.

Delegation allows managers to make the best use of their time and skills, and it helps other people in the team grow and develop to reach their full potential in the organization. Delegation is a win-win when done appropriately; however, that does not mean that a manager can delegate just anything. When to delegate depends on a series of factors like whether the person a manager delegates a task has enough information and expertise, whether the task offers the opportunity to develop another person's skills and whether a person has time to take on more work.

However, it is important to know that as managers, we shouldn't micro-manage. This does not mean we must abdicate control altogether: In delegating effectively, we have to find the sometimes difficult balance between giving enough space for people to use their abilities to best effect, while still monitoring and supporting closely enough to ensure that the job is done correctly and effectively. Goal setting is another factor that can make a tremendous difference. Setting goals is important, but some goals are more likely to help us than others.

It's not just that goal setting is important, the kind of goals we decide to set are important and how we go about pursuing them. A successful business goal setting strategy comes from looking to the future. Goal setting in management requires making choices about how to use limited resources effectively. Goal setting in an organization is about making clear choices; both about what one is going to do, and about what one is not going to do. Filtering those choices helps to ensure setting goals that a manager can resource properly, and that have the best chance of making the desired future a reality.

Another factor that individuals normally ignore is communication. Communication consists of exchanging routine information and processing paperwork supportively. Communication is vital in management. Effective communication is so important for organizational success that not only managers, but also their employees must be effective communicators. One role of a manager is to help employees improve their communication skills. When all members of a team, department, or organization are able to communicate effectively with each other and with people outside their group, they are much more likely to perform well.

The successful manager, therefore, needs effective communication skills. Good communication is often incorrectly defined by the communicator as agreement instead of clarity of understanding. If someone disagrees with us, we may often assume the person just did not fully understand our position; but a person can clearly understand us and simply not agree. In fact, when a manager concludes that a lack of communication must exist because a conflict between two employees has continued for a long time, a closer look

often reveals that, to the contrary, plenty of effective communication is going on.

Each fully understands the other's position, but their communication does not necessarily produce agreement. Currently, when the organizations tend to be more global, cherishing diversity is as important as all other factors discussed above. Most people believe in the golden rule: treat others as you want to be treated. The implicit assumption is that how a person wants to be treated is how others want to be treated. Nevertheless, when a manager looks at this proverb through a diversity perspective, she/he begins to ask a series of questions " what does respect look like; does it look the same for everyone?

Does it mean saying hello in the morning, or leaving someone alone, or making eye contact when you speak? " It all depends on the individual. We may share similar values, such as respect or need for recognition, but how we show those values through behavior may be different for different cultures. How do we know what different cultures need? Perhaps instead of using the golden rule, we could use the platinum rule which states: " treat others as they want to be treated. " Moving our frame of reference from an ethnocentric view to a culturally relative perspective will help a manager to lead more effectively in a diverse work environment.

Managing diversity focuses on maximizing the ability of all employees to contribute to organizational goals. Affirmative action focuses on specific groups because of historical discrimination, such as people of color and women. Affirmative action emphasizes legal necessity and social

responsibility; managing diversity emphasizes business necessity. In short, while managing diversity is also concerned with underrepresentation of women and people of color in the workforce, it is much more inclusive and acknowledges that diversity must work for everyone.

Ignoring diversity issues costs time, money, and efficiency. Some of the consequences can include unhealthy tensions between people of differing gender, race, ethnicity, age, abilities, etc. ; loss of productivity because of increased conflict; inability to attract and retain talented people of all kinds; complaints and legal actions; and inability to retain women and people of color, resulting in lost investments in recruitment and training. Finally, time management is as important as the factors presented before. The paradox f time is that, for many of us, it's the least considered, worst managed, and yet most valuable resource we have. The problem with our use of time seems to be that far too many of us neither value time, nor use it properly. Perhaps what really matters then, is considering how we use our time, and then choosing to use it more effectively. The time management industry has worked tirelessly to sell us time saving techniques. These may shave seconds, minutes or even hours from the time we spend on tasks, but do they all work?

And, at what cost? To benefit from most of these techniques we're usually required to become disciplined and rigorous in following a prescribed methodology. However, often our problem with " wasting" time is not that we don't value it, it's our inability stick to the remedial prescriptions. Often what lies behind the time management process is the thought that we simply don't have enough time to do everything we need, or want to do. These

factors are irrelevant without measurement. Measurements should have focus, based on goals and models.

However, in most organizations there is little agreement or knowledge of what goals should be. Goals must relate to customer satisfaction. Ultimately, the customer is the only arbiter of success. Customers don't care about such measures as " lines of code" or " function points" unless they are related to quality. These and other second order measures must correlate directly with such things as maintainability, expandability, reliability, etc. There is little agreement within our industry as to how to achieve these attributes of information systems, let alone how to measure them.

Customer satisfaction surveys are essential to any measurement program. The construction, administration and evaluation of surveys is the subject of books and training classes. Measurement is not done well subjectively. Furthermore, measurements enhance our ability to sense things not accessible to our native abilities and intelligence. Subjectivity contradicts this. It also makes measures open to interpretation, and no two persons will interpret them in the same way. Measurement criteria should be well documented and understood.

Subjectivity will cloud this understanding. Where measures are objective and numeric, all parties know exactly where they stand. Although these factors are necessary to mention and they lead us to the right path, they are not sufficient to make us understand all factors that affect successful management. Good managers must never forget that organizations are about people. Knowing how to work with other individuals, cherishing

diversity, and encouraging workers are other aspects that can more or less affect the functionality of a company or business.

Encouraging people to flourish using all the previously mentioned factors is only one of the many solutions. In addition to all these factors, it is crucial to identify strengths and manage the conditions in which these strengths can effectively contribute to the success of an organization. That is what really affects successful management.