Stage 5 Building Block

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**Leadership and followership**

According to an article by Hollander (2013), leadership has traditionally been regarded as a matter of leadership qualities and behaviors. Hollander explains that the leader is mainly considered as the key player and the followers are considered as relatively passive and less essential. I found this article to be interesting because the author highlights how the traditional perception of leaders being the major actor is being replaced by the follower. The author highlights that the follower’s role is progressively being acknowledged as one of the roles with the potential for taking on the leadership function.

There is no leadership without followership. The author agrees with this statement and highlights that both leadership and followership are unity and that leadership involves an interdependent relationship with followers, in a bid to achieve the team’s objectives. The manner in which a leader and followers view and respond to the actions and personal qualities of the other, significantly determine how the relationship between the two will be. When a leader and followers treat each other with respect, the team is likely to work harmoniously in pursuant to the team’s objectives.

As explained by Hollander (2013), leadership not only features the direction of activity, it also encompasses other important features such as goal setting, resolving conflict, communicating, and maintaining the organization. The author highlights that such functions of leadership can also be distributed to the followers in form of delegation. Through varying degrees of delegation to the followers, the leader can work in harmony with the followers, thus making goal achievement much easier. In some cases, the leader may be overwhelmed with his or her duties, and delegating some levels of leadership functions can ease such pressure resulting in a much coherent leader.

While leaders do command a great deal of attention and influence in team setup, it is essential to note that the followers can significantly affect the leaders and the entire enterprise. For instance, when the leader introduces a new policy that does not favor the followers, they may refuse to adhere to the policy resulting in resistance to change. Such resistance can become significant to the extent of affecting the leader’s ability to control the followers and even affecting the performance of the organization, due to stalemate or even a strike. According to Hollander (2013), followers, in most cases, are the leader’s attentive audience, who get the chance to experience firsthand the leader’s personality and can contribute to the leader’s intentions and values. The follower’s role also holds the potential for taking on the leadership role.

Norzailan et al., (2014), argues that developing strategic leadership competency is essential in leadership development. A leader with a bird’s eye view of the organization and one who possesses clear understanding of both the internal and external environments of the firm can properly guide his or her team to great heights. While the basic skills of leading people are essential, being able to think ahead and to develop strategies for future problems is vital for any team. Having the ability to read the internal and external environment of the company is essential in determining present and looming issues, which may affect the company’s performance.

According to Guenter et al., (2016), leadership can help to break the silence in teams. However, this may not work out for every staff. While leaders play a crucial role in ensuring that the followers perform their duties appropriately, the followers also have an important role to play in leadership matters. According to the authors, silence among the followers can result in significant damages to the leader and the organization. For instance, if the followers remain silent about some issues at work, like safety issues, fairness concerns, unfavorable company policies, among others, it may result in unsatisfied employees. When the workers are dissatisfied or uncomfortable about their work, they may end up with low morale, which can greatly affect their productivity.

However, creating an environment that allows for suggestions and communication between the followers and the leaders, both parties will feel free to discuss such issues before they wreak havoc to the organization. Followers who are silent about their safety concerns at work may end up facing the danger, which can significantly injure or even result in fatalities. The injured followers may be unable to continue working due to the injuries sustained at work. The organization may end up facing litigations and huge fines due to unsafe working conditions. Both parties may end up being affected significantly due to silence.

Guenter et al., (2016), explains that using the behavioral plasticity theory, an authentic leadership style can be adopted which affects the level of silence between the followers and the leaders. According to the authors, the behavioral plasticity theory proposes a set of leadership behaviors, where the leaders reveal their true selves. When leaders become comfortable with the followers, it promotes interactions between the followers and the leader, which then reduces silence and motivates followers to speak up. When a leader and the followers can engage on a personal but professional level, they can share ideas and get the chance to highlight key issues concerning the project, before it escalates to something big. Employees low on proactive personality can be encouraged to air their views and concerns in regards to the project, process, and organization. The authors argue that active employees are less susceptible to social influences, which comes in handy issues are affecting the followers, which the leader is not aware of.

According to Whitlock (2013), there is an interdependent relationship between a leader and followers. The author argues that from this interdependence, the followers can make a judgment regarding their leaders, as to whether they follow them or not. Also, the author highlights that a distribution of power exists between leaders and followers, which can significantly affect the team’s goals. The author argues that active followership is an essential component for any successful team. Active followership refers to the personal commitment to effectively and boldly share in a collaborative environment. For active followership to succeed, good leadership has to exist as well. Organizations should strive to ensure they promote good leadership and active followership in their divisions and teams, to ensure they are on the right path to achieving the team’s objectives. The authors indicate that organizations should train their employees on followership skills to optimize performance. Also, regular training for the leaders and senior executives is essential in ensuring the leaders can properly guide the followers.

**Team member**

According to Pinter & Čisar (2018), team members play an essential role in ensuring the team is cohesive and following the company’s objectives. The authors highlight that development is a group task. Ensuring that the team member has the chance to pick a project that best matches their interest is essential in ensuring every team member likes the project. Giving the group a chance to develop a project that is of their interest is vital for satisfaction and contentment. Team members should ensure they take responsibility for the other members, for the successful implementation of the process. According to Lynn & Kalay (2016), the vision of the team must be shared and supported by others on the team to ensure cohesion. According to the authors, vision support is an essential component to ensure the team members are aware of their role in realizing the team’s vision.

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