



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS RESEARCH: A  
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT  
Volume 14 Issue 6 Version 1.0 Year 2014  
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal  
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)  
Online ISSN: 2249-4588 & Print ISSN: 0975-5853

# The Latest Leaders' Behavioral Patterns and How they Affect Employees' Performance

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**GJMBR-A Classification :** *JEL Code: J54, J50*



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# The Latest Leaders' Behavioral Patterns and How they Affect Employees' Performance

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**Abstract-** Leaders play a very important role in leading people, especially employees in a company, towards the right path. Due to the shifts of many eras, the replacement of different generations of people in the workforce and the swift changes in technology; there has to be changes and adjustments made on the behaviors of leaders and how it affects employee's performance. In this essay, research is made on the latest leadership behaviors and its effect on employee's performance.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In every successful event, there is a leader. A leader is someone who takes the role of leading and inspiring employees, guiding them to the success of not only for the company, but also for the industry and economy. Leadership skills wanted by companies have changed over time as the workplace structure is also changing. The difference in lifestyle, preference and ideology of generation X and generation Y needs to be taken into consideration. As more people of generation Y are getting into the workforce, companies have to make certain changes of the company culture to enhance productivity. The rules and norms set by the older generations might cause unpleasantness for the newer generations. Leaders' skills need to be rewritten in order to adapt to the new generation's mindsets and to help increase their productivity. The traditional leaders are more conservative in terms of maintaining information but the new collaborative leaders are more open in sharing information and knowledge. The traditional leaders also believe power comes from their authority, and creates a gap between managers and employees. However, the new leadership style believes that the best power comes from a collective team with great communication.

There are two different opinions on the nature of leadership skills possessed by a person. The first school of thought is by Grint (2000) and Nietzsche (1969), where they believe that leaders are born and the leadership qualities embodied are subconscious (Mostovicz, Kakabadse, & Kakabadse, 2009). The other point of view is by Henrikson (2006), where he states that humans have to work hard to obtain and develop

leadership skills before they can emerge as leaders (Mostovicz, Kakabadse, & Kakabadse, 2009). As there are claims that leaders need to develop skills before being able to lead, companies have to ensure future leaders are equipped with the new skills needed in order to ensure positive employees performance and hence, increasing company's productivity.

## II. FIRST IMPRESSIONS ON EMPLOYEES

Most of the time, managers form their first impressions of an employee in the first few days of working. However, most of the managers do not realize their impression of the employee and had probably labeled them (Topper, 2007). According to Manzoni and Barsoux (2002), a manager basically separates employees into two groups: the in-group, which are the strong performers and the out-group, which are perceived to be weaker performers (Topper, 2007). Once managers unconsciously divide employees into the two groups, the manager will behave differently towards those in the in-group and out-group. Employees in the in-group will normally be viewed in a positive manner while those in the out-group will be viewed in a negative manner. Having a negative feeling towards an employee will make the employee's performance worse. It basically starts with the manager looking out for the slightest mistake, a negative interaction or a missed deadline from the out-group employee. The manager will then probably give a warning and keeps a close eye on the employee's performance. Doing this will cause the employee to feel frustrated and underappreciated of their work and contributions. The employee will then start communicating less and limits his/her movement with the manager. This behavior will then give the manager a confirmation on his negative perception of the employee. In this situation, labeling an employee has caused many employees' underachievement.

To overcome this problem, managers need to be aware if they have done this by asking "Have I mentally labeled a staff as a weak performer?" and "How am I liable to this situation?" (Topper, 2007). Managers need to be open minded in overcoming these problems. According to Manzoni and Barsoux (2002) again, there are five concrete steps that can solve problems caused by negative misconception on employees. The first step is *agreeing on the symptoms*. In this step, both manager and employee have to agree on the part where the employee has underperformed.

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The second step is *diagnosing the causes*. Both parties have to examine the cause of weak performance including the possibility of how the manager's negative view on the employee affected the performance. The third step is *finding the cure*. The two of them have to agree on the work objectives and the actions to be taken to improve relationship. The fourth step is *preventing relapse*. The manager and employee have to agree on the promise to report any future problems and have a more open communication. The last step is *monitoring the effectiveness of the treatment*. Both parties have to keep a constant review on the progression of both parties (Topper, 2007).

### III. SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

The German carmaker BMW has a sustainable leadership model which starts with senior executives taking a macro view on the company and asking the simplest question, "What is the purpose of this firm?" The company has identified two distinction models which is the sustainable "honeybee" leadership approaches and non-sustainable "locust" management (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). The "honeybee" leadership encourages leaders to build communities, enhance collaboration among stockholders and promotes long-term value. In sharp contrast, the "locust" leadership is a metaphor image of swarms of harmful insects arriving on green fields and stripping them bare. The meaning behind this is that locust leadership condones activities that achieve short-term returns for investors and bonuses for executives. One of the key honeybee practices is to have continuous training and development for all staff members and not restricted to only its special groups. Leaders who emphasis on employee's continuous learning will receive better performance from them. BMW is reported to have invested 179 million in employee training on 2010. The company stay focused on developing and retaining their staff by using a succession planning policy of promotion within the firm as one of their unique culture is developing their own managers (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011).

### IV. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

According to Druskat and Wolf (2001), in order to perceive someone else's emotions, feelings and to help others to regulate emotion in attaining a goal, social skills and empathy is needed (Polychroniou, 2009). Emotional intelligence is a trait needed and is highly emphasized this era. According to Rahim, et al. (2002), most employees are probably to respect and emotionally identify a leader who has empathy and is considerate in helping subordinates to be effective in handling conflicts and enhance job performance. The Goleman components of EQ describe the dimensions of EQ which should be practiced by leaders, and they are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and

social skills. *Self-awareness* is the ability to recognize which emotions, moods and impulses one is experiencing. It also includes being aware of how one's feelings can affect others. *Self-regulation* is the ability to keep own emotions in check, remain calm in harmful situations and maintain composure irrespective to one's emotions. *Motivation* it the ability to stay focused on goals despite setbacks, to have hope of success rather than fear of failure and to accept change to achieve goals. *Empathy* is the ability to understand verbal and nonverbal message of feelings from others, able to provide emotional support to employees and understand the links between emotions and behaviors. *Social skills* are the ability to deal with problems without belittling co-workers, avoid negative feelings to influence and to handle conflict with tact and diplomacy (Polychroniou, 2009).

### V. BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

Bottom-up approach involves proactive team input in the executing process. This approach allows employees to participate in management process. Discussion is made with leaders and employees and the decision is made by the whole team taking into considerations of opinions from employees. With a project facilitated by a number of people, the flow of the project will be smoother and fewer errors will be made as there will be more eyes looking through the process. Employees also get the opportunity to take lead on projects or productivity activities (Jagoda, Lonseth, & Lonseth, 2013). With the chances available, employee's performance will be better by gaining more experience. The company's productivity would increase to as this approach allows managers to spend more of their time on long-term improvements (Jagoda, Lonseth, & Lonseth, 2013).

### VI. BEING LED THAN TO BE MANAGED

Employees generally prefer to be led than to be managed. Being led means to have a leader to guide employees through a project, where the leader works closely together with employees. A leader mentors the employees and molds them into efficient and effective workers (Jagoda, Lonseth, & Lonseth, 2013). Being managed signifies to be under a close supervision and to do what is being told. There is less flexibility in being managed. The term 'manager' has a paternalistic relationship link where it propose people in the upper organization have better experience of operational excellence than those working on the floor (Jagoda, Lonseth, & Lonseth, 2013). This can create a gap between leaders and employees. A leader who behaves like a leader than a 'manager' will work closer with employees to understand their personalities better. It will also help groom the skills of employees to show better performances.

## VII. ETHICAL LEADER

An ethical leader leads his/her employees by knowing and doing what is right. Decisions have to be made ethically and attitudes together with interactions have to be ethical too. According to Brown et al. (2005) who emphasis on social learning, "Ethical leadership is the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making". Being an ethical leader is important because employees are perceived to imitate examples from their supervisors. Humans have a watch and learn capability. Employees apply this by watching cues of how their managers behave, consciously and unconsciously on the behaviors that are important and what types of behaviors are acceptable in the workplace (Mari Huhtala, 2013). When a manager behaves unethically, he/she sets a negative example which translates to the unethical behavior of the manager is acceptable in the company. This could eventually risk the company of being exposed to breach of ethicality. Employee's performance at this rate could be lowered when unethical acts like bribery occurs in the company.

Ethical leadership can measure an employee's trust and satisfaction with the leader, increases employee commitment and enhance their willingness to report any dissatisfaction or problems to the management. However, leaders cannot simply put on a mask in fulfilling being an effective leader. Any dishonest can risk the credibility of a leader and put down the morale of employees (Leaders' focus on followers' needs: Asian perspective on knowledge workers, 2013).

## VIII. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership has a key role in leadership engagement. There are distinctive attentions paid to employee's attachment to the company and their relationship with leaders (Tebeian, 2012). There are four components of transformational leadership: the first is idealized influence, where followers trust and identifies with their leaders; the second which is inspirational motivation, where leaders provide meaning and challenge in employee's work; the third is intellectual stimulation, where leaders invigorate employee's ability to adapt and creativity in a blame free context; and fourth being individualized considerations, where leaders support employee's needs for growth and workplace achievement (Xu & Thomas, 2011). According to Kahn (1990) in relative to employee engagement; trust in leader, support from leader and creation of a blame-free environment psychological safety component allows employee's engagement (Xu & Thomas, 2011). The transformational leadership brings the leader closer to the employee which helps the leader understands the

employee better. A better understanding will result in better employee performance.

## IX. INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR

According to Axtell et al. (2000), the process of innovation starts with two main phases which is the initiation and implementation. The two phases are divided by the emergence of an idea of innovation. According to King and Anderson (2002), the first stage ends with an idea production and followed by the second stage where it ends as soon as the idea is implemented (Jeroen P.J. de Jong, 2007). The innovative behavior can be seen as a multi-dimensional, overarching model which takes over all behaviors in which employees are able to give their contribution to the innovation process.

Creativity is the involvement of more than just idea generation that is a combination of generation, promotion and application of new ideas (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013). The creativity of an employee has a close influence on the innovative behaviors. With high creativity, employees can enhance their performance of their work. Leaders need to pay attention to the implementation of creative ideas from both the leader and also the employees. Leaders can enhance creativity of employees by intellectual stimulation, stimulating knowledge diffusion, providing vision and giving support (Jeroen P.J. de Jong, 2007).

## X. THINKING ACCORDING TO MISSION

Leaders add value to companies by bringing awareness, change and cognitive restructuring which carries better results for the company through leading employee towards the company's mission (Conte & Novello, 2008). Leaders need to think and make decisions in line with the company's mission and goal. According to Drucker (1999), "the foundation of effective leadership is thinking through the organization's mission, defining it and establishing it, clearly and visibly." (Leaders' focus on followers' needs: Asian perspective on knowledge workers, 2013). The leadership style of contingent adaptation is required to meet employee's expectations on what makes a good leader. Besides that, leaders have to motivate employees by ensuring that they can relate to the corporate visions and also making sure they are part of the developmental processes by involving them (Singh, 2008).

## XI. MOTIVATING EMPLOYEE

According to Georgopolos et al. (1957), employee productivity is assumed to be the result of employee motivation. The motivations were results from employee's goals that were based on their needs and also their perception of the path in meeting those needs (Abd-El-Salam, Shawky, El-Nahas, & Nawar, 2013). Companies should ensure goals are clear and remove



barriers to increase employee's need to meet the goals. Leaders have to be knowledgeable on variety of motivational policies and match them according to different employees as not all the same motivation policy works for everyone. Leaders are to choose the right assumption for each employee, identify their interests and provide chances for employees to perform on projects they find rewarding (Abd-El-Salam, Shawky, El-Nahas, & Nawar, 2013). Although this approach might be quite taxing, leaders can achieve employees that produce higher quality works, higher performance and better satisfaction as a result.

## XII. DISCUSSION

As many scholars has discussed, leaders need to possess great skills in this changing environment to lead employees towards giving a great performance. Not everyone is gifted with perfect leadership skills and this requires leaders to learn the right way into becoming a great leader. First impression is always the foremost important thing in meeting for the first time as it will be a memory which will be vivid. The first impression of a leader on his/her employee is equally as important as the first impression of an employee on his/her supervisor. By having good impressions of each other, the path towards achieving a good performance has become multiple times smoother. The leader with a good impression of his/her employee will view them in a positive manner. Even in times where an employee makes a mistake, the leader becomes more tolerant towards the mistake. It gives the employee a chance to redeem himself and to work harder next time. As for an employee, a good impression of his/her supervisor will boost his/her efforts in work; have better communications on work related topics and thus improving employee's performance. However, leaders should not sidetrack on his judgment on whether an employee is actually performing well or underperforming. Humans might tend to misjudge to fit their believe and making sure they are right; for example in a situation where a leader will look past a wrongdoing of an employee because he/she wants to believe he/she has made the right positive first impression on the employee. Leaders need to have rational thinking to ensure he make the right judgments and decisions.

In this competitive economy, innovation is a way to staying alive. Instilling creativity among employees in order to generate innovation is very important. Leaders need to set an example by being creative so employees will follow on the lead. Actively making employees participate in projects, discussions and decision making can enhance the creativity of employees. With decentralization, the gap between managers and supervisors has become smaller. Leaders communicating actively with employees, getting their ideas and accepting their suggestions can trigger employees to think more

creatively. Employee will perform even better with their creative skills being put into use. Most of the latest skills involve in understanding employee's emotions, motivating them and creating a closer relationship with them. Creating a good relationship with employees is definitely a good thing which can help improve employee's performance.

## XIII. CONCLUSION

The secret to a successful company is having great leaders. Almost all of the companies listed in the Fortune 500 have exceptional leaders who have the right behaviors in making decisions and leading the company and employees to success. Leaders are important in guiding employees into the right path. Having the right behaviors and skills are vital to ensure employees have good performance. As time passes by, there are many things that change. Hence, it is important to change according to environment and not get caught away. It is important that leaders evaluate themselves, checking on themselves if they have the new required skills needed to lead employees into performing better. Leaders will need to have proper first impressions on their employees, a sustainable leadership model, emotional intelligence, bottom-up approach, leading employees instead of managing them, be ethical, has transformational leadership, practices innovative behavior, think according to missions and motivate employees.

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