



## ***The Journey Ahead***

*Is Your Leadership Style Balanced?*

This summer we began work with a Chief Service Officer (CSO) in a customer service organization with call centers around the globe. His prime objective for the coming year was the recruitment and retention of employees with a ‘customer-focused’ mindset. He knew the value of a diverse workforce would flow over into satisfying worldwide customer demands, impact the standardization of the delivery process of a diverse vendor base; and enhance or break their global image as well. He expressed that several of the state-side centers had begun to experience employee conflict attributed to a mix of the generational workforce management styles. He stated that the company had its own distinctive personality; but, with the current issues he was certain leadership styles were unbalanced.

We were anxious to help him discover if the belief structure of the mix of generational core values was influencing leadership styles. Were they too autocratic, too transactional focused, overly bureaucratic, or overly participatory, never able to reach a final decision? Do the leaders at each center need a mix of leadership styles, a more evenhanded methodology? We are still working with this organization, but let’s explore a few of the common leadership styles practiced today. There are a few more leadership styles than we list here, but considered these were more relevant to our CSO’s situation.

- Autocratic leadership- leader exerts high levels of power over the employees or teams. Team members are given few opportunities for making alternate proposals, even if these would best serve the organization’s processes.
- Bureaucratic leadership- leader works “by the book”, ensuring that their staff follow procedures exactly, very appropriate for work involving serious safety risks such as, working with machinery, with toxic spills or at extremely contagious health conditions.
- Democratic leadership-participative leadership- this leader makes the final decision. They invite others to contribute to the decision-making process, increasing job satisfaction by involvement.
- Situational leadership-a leader that can instinctively switch between styles according to the staff and the corresponding work they are dealing with at the current moment, ensuring the right levels of product quality, environmental security; and employee motivation.
- Transactional leadership- leader is in the agreement with the team members to obey their leader totally when they take a job on. The “transaction” is that the organization pays the team members in exchange for their expertise and conformity.
- Transformational leadership- leader is a sincere principal who inspires the team members with a shared vision of the future. Transformational leaders are highly noticeable and are seen truly listening & engaging their staff.

As technology advances in all industries, this challenges the leadership style of command-and-control. The leadership methodology of the past century is inefficient in the motivation &



retention of people who are talented in the hi-tech fields, some even holding patents in the creation of the newer wireless tools.

The leadership of this century is a combination of earnest employee relationships and internal meaningful achievement. Great leaders have learned how to assimilate and execute many types of leadership. A balanced leadership style includes the creation of a positive work culture, constructing opportunities where the team's expertise is visible internally & externally, maintaining consistent communication between team members and other departments, sustains a certainty in the company's direction; and, acknowledges the achievements of individual members.

Remember that organizational 'systems' progress toward change cautiously. As you may want to integrate a leadership change, describe your perspective in positive terms using the benefits to the company's economic result and resolve the human apprehension of a change in your style. Last, define how your changes can be more strategically activated with their collaboration while developing new enthusiasm, corporate confidence, and vitality.

If you think your leadership style could use some integration of other styles, ask yourself:

- What style of leadership best describes you? Are you happy with that style or would you benefit from an integration of a few styles?
- What routine practices are fading out in your industry and how will that change your leadership style for the future of your business?
- What type of leadership relationships will your clients value in coming years?
- What technological changes will have a positive or negative effect on your business? What new concerns and problems will be generated by these technologies and may propel you to a new style of leadership?
- What would the people you've worked with do differently because they worked with you in the new leadership style?
- What elements of leadership will you use to purge out old language, delete old behavior patterns, or discard anything not useful to meet your collective goals?
- How will you measure the success of discarding what is not needed for the future goals?
- Do you, as a leader, understand the specific fears of your employees? What are they concerned about? How strongly do they feel about it? Do they perceive your stated strategies as beneficial or not?
- As the leader you aspire to be, how do you inspire and display enthusiasm for management of complex issues regarding performance without being autocratic?
- How will you nurture and encourage initiative and boldness, both verbally and visually?
- How will you sustain the balance of work and personal life for yourself as a great leader?

*"Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall."* Stephen Covey

If this resonates with your current situation, we invite you to realize your efforts with us.