LEADERSHIP AND TRUST

The importance of trust as a factor in the relationship between managers and employees in the work environment has long been acknowledged. Recent studies (Butler et al, 1999) point to the particular significance of "upward trust," an employee's trust in his or her superior or team leader. And the role of "downward trust"--or empowerment--is an issue of increasing concern for contemporary organizations. Mutual trust, or the lack of it, is a factor which has direct impact on the effectiveness of the leader, the performance of the employee or team, and everyone's job satisfaction.

In management research (Podsakoff et al, 1996), six types of behavior have been identified which are crucial to effective leadership, particularly in the context of work teams. These *transformational leadership behaviors* are so named because, when genuinely applied, they have the power to inspire and motivate people to transcend self-interests and perform beyond expectations (Burns, 1978). There is a profound interdependence between these behaviors on the part of the leader and the upward trust of the employees: If the leader demonstrates competence in the behaviors, he or she gains the employees' trust, and the combination results in superior performance and work satisfaction. Conversely, if the leader has the employees' trust, then his or her ability to manifest the behaviors is enhanced, with the same positive results.

The Six Transformational Leadership Behaviors
1. Articulating a vision for the future
2. Providing a role model
3. Fostering acceptance of group goals
4. Setting high performance expectations
5. Supporting employees or team members individually
6. Providing intellectual stimulation

It is important to recognize the contrast in these behaviors as they might appear in the outdated "command and control" model of organizational management, vs the more effective and humane model of a "learning organization" described by Peter Senge (1990) and others. In the old model for example, a manager might have been respected, or at least tolerated, for providing the role model of autocratic "hero," imposing his or her own vision, goals, expectations and control on

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subordinates. But such a role model is not only outdated, it is becoming counterproductive: Surviving and excelling in today's extremely competitive and ever-changing organizational climate requires flexibility, teamwork and on-the-spot intelligence from all players, leaders and employees alike. This condition cannot exist without mutual trust. The leader demonstrates trust for subordinates or team members by embodying it in the six behaviors, and the trust earned in return completes the dynamic of a healthy, innovative workplace.

Leaders with the courage to inspire trust and empower their people to continue learning, to innovate, and to perform at their best act less from a desire to control and more from a deeper sense of stewardship, or what Robert K. Greenleaf (1977) called "servant leadership."

The new model of leadership means that competence in performing tasks is not enough: competence in working with people is just as important, if not more so. Holding a vision, providing a role model, setting goals, establishing performance expectations, offering support, and providing learning opportunities all require that the leader be able to listen to, understand, empathize with, and cultivate his or her employees. If a competent leader is able to generate an atmosphere of mutual trust, the results will benefit everyone.

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