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OL600

Snowball Questions

Week 6

1. Write a paragraph detailing your understanding of (LMX) Leader-member Exchange Theory. How does the Theory work? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory?

Answer.

Theory believes the leaders develop relationship bonds with followers based on the followers' willingness to support the leader. Followers who have strong personal relationships with the leaders are willing to go beyond the norm to please their leaders and in doing so they become part of the "in group." Followers who do not develop a strong personal relationship with their leaders fall into the "out group." The out group or groups, with whom the leader knows little to nothing about, receive less positive attention and benefits from their leader. In fact, due to the leaders vague knowledge of the out group or groups, leaders tend to assume a directive leadership style when dealing with these groups.

Successful leaders must build personal and fostering relationships with followers. Leaders need to develop relationships with all follower groups, especially those groups perceived as strangers or mere acquaintances. By providing these out groups the same opportunities to receive attention and benefits as those of the "in group", leaders

build a sense of trust, open lines communication, and build a sense of cohesiveness within the organization.

Leaders who fail to see how their relationships affect follower groups, within the organization, assume the risk developing a polarization attitude. This attitude may be perceived by the out groups and favoritism or discrimination. Thus, those who consider themselves as members of the out-group will tend to be less productive and possibly feel no sense of loyalty to the organization.

Strengths of this theory-

Describes how things work in terms of those who contribute more to the organization than that of others. The theory addresses the specific relationship bonds between leaders and followers. Finally, it is prescriptive in nature, in that it advocates leaders open lines of communication between themselves and their followers.

Shortcomings of the theory-

The theory seems to support the concept of the privileged group. The theory fails to identify how high-quality relationships are developed between leaders and followers. Finally, researchers question the measurement techniques.

Case 7.1 Northhouse

What observations would you make about Carly's leadership?

Answer.

Carly has developed a partner relationship with John's team. Because of this partner relationship, John's team feels a sense of autonomy and a strong self worth. The relationship between Carly, Terri, and Julie is one of acquaintance. Terri and Julie's teams are on the fringe between the in-group and out-group. These two teams feel left out and have become disgruntled and distrustful of their peers. Carly and Sarah's relationship is that of strangers. Sarah wishes to do only what is required by her job description and no more.

Is there an In-group and out group, and if so why?

Yes.

John is in the in group, because he and his team are willing to go beyond the norm to accomplish tasks assigned by Carly. Terri and Julie teams are out-groups. They may be achieving results, but are not negotiating with Carly for additional requirements. Sarah's team is definitely in the out group range. Sarah attitude is the primary cause for this out- group relationship. She has no desire to go beyond her contract or job description.

In what ways is Carly's relationships counter productive to the over goals of the company?

Answer.

Her leader relationship with John's team indicates a distinct favoritism, and this favoritism is stifling the creativity and production other three teams. Creativity is one of the main goals of the company and is specifically required in Carly's department. Additionally, by overly acknowledging John's team and providing mixed signals to Julie and Terri's teams she has created a sense of discrimination within her department. This perceived discrimination is negatively affecting the departments' cohesiveness.

Do you think she should change her approach towards the associate directors?

Yes.

What should she do differently?

She should make the offer to improve the social exchanges to the other three teams. She should begin the process by sharing the additional resources and information with the "out-groups". Once Carly has accomplished the realignment of assets, she should encourage and provide some positive coaching to these teams. This will allow Terri and Julie's teams the opportunity to begin networking

and re-energize their creative juices. Sarah's team needs a big shot of encouragement and possibly some direct leader involvement to break the stranger barrier.

4. Give examples of the "accountability Paradigm" as found on p. 79 of the Spear reading?

Answer.

In the old system, my value as employee is only as good as, what my boss and my fellow workers think it is. This type of situation leads to competition and distrust. Ultimately, this type of attitude can lead to a dysfunctional organization.

The new paradigm believes ones personal values, a sense of shared vision, and the sharing of power determines ones self worth. This concept of shared vision and power provides the concrete that holds the organization together. Shared vision and sharing of power motivates and energizes employees to exceed the expected norms.

Example two-

In the hierarchy system, the boss believes his employees must honor commitments of the job description for which they were hired. This type of mentality can leave to mistrust between the leader and the follower. The Servant leader/coach/ mentor system-- everyone works together to meet the individual personal needs of the group

members. In doing this, the leader and the group find ways for members of the group to win and mature as individuals.

4. Discuss how the "Accountability Paradigm" would work or not work in your work place.

Answer.

I have a boss who is the manager of the store in which I work. I also have a merchandiser who oversees my department's strengths, weaknesses and performance. Both people I am accountable to. I have six employees that are accountable directly to me, but also accountable to my merchandiser and my boss. I train my employees to my expectations, they bring to the table their talents and strengths, which also "feed me" I learn from them when they learn from me or teach me what they know. This also happens when I deal with my boss and merchandiser. We teach each-other, we lead each other, we grow together. I am accountable to each, yet am a leader and a follower to each.

In some degree, my company has attempted to institute some forms of the Accountability Paradigm. It tries to empower its employees, with the concept of individual initiative and power sharing (some stores have two managers). However, at the same time Safeway preaches individual initiative and power sharing, the Safeway system requires that individuals remain fixed within their specific roles and duties. A system, which requires individuals to remain within a regimented structure, controlled by position, department and tradition

really tends to stifle individual creativity and individual motivation. Thus, there is very little individualism and therefore, the positive qualities of individualism is reduced significantly. Significant change will only occur at Safeway when leaders begin to recognize the fact that employees in every position are the tools, which make the systems and production function. Unfortunately, Safeway seems to place little value on the workers and great deal of value on the machines and systems.

***5. After reading the Wren assignment discuss your views of women in leadership roles. Do they lead differently than men? Why or why not?
Answer.***

I believe that today's women in the work place are still discriminated against, but not as much as in past times. The reason discrimination varies is because of perceptions that women are inherently weaker and unable to manage. Also, there are some perceptions that women will take away jobs that are traditionally male dominated. Against the odds, some women do make the transition to workplace leaders.

Women who do make the transition to work place leaders tend to have a different approach to leadership. Women leaders are more willing to share power with their employees, encourage group participation, and tend to develop individual employee self esteem.

Male leaders, on the other hand tend to be focused on the bottom line and not the individuals involved in creating the bottom line results. According to Spear, it appears most women leaders believe in an interactive team style of leadership.