

Leadership

**“Leadership
is
About Vision
and
Responsibility
not
Power.”**

-Seth Berkley

CASE CHAPTER 1

You are a True Leader: George Inspiring Employees in Canada

Soleman Mozammel

Business Administration Faculty,
Arab Open University, Kingdom of Bahrain.

Soleman.mozammel@aou.org.bh

Leadership

Leadership in simple refers to an ability to guide, lead and inspire individuals, teams or entire organizations. This ability to guide, lead and inspire is generally to help establish right approaches, behaviours and practices to achieve specific objectives. (Yammarino, 2013).

A leader is the one who selects, equip, train, and influence one or more followers who have diverse gifts, abilities and skills. Leaders focus the follower(s) on the organization's mission and objectives, causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional and physical energy in a concerted, coordinated effort to carry out the organization's mission and achieve its objectives (Wolverton, Gmelch, & Sorenson, 1998).

Leadership is one of the most discussed topics in both academics as well as in practice. Individuals serving as leaders have a greater responsibility to direct individuals and teams by using their skills and experience to help achieve the required outcomes. Today, leadership is an element which has a significant impact on the efficiency of organizations, employees, and managers (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005).

Importance of Leadership

Leadership has a central role in any organization. Similar to the idea that a ship cannot sail without a captain; an organization cannot objectively work and sustain without effective leadership in the competitive market. Here, leadership holds a significant contribution towards setting a clear vision and communicating it across the organization. In common words, leadership serves to set pitch, tone and pace for the enterprise. Therefore, leadership has turned out to be a highly significant element across the public as well as private organizations (Goldman, 1998).

A Great Leader

Gong, Huang and Farh (2009) emphasized that an excellent leader not only inspires subordinates' potential to enhance efficiency but also serves to assist them in achieving organizational goals. In line with that, leadership is termed as the main factor in enhancing organizational performance. It can be understood that there is a strong link between leadership styles and high organizational performance. (Yammarino & Spangler & Bass, 1993). Further studies have suggested that effective leaders can facilitate in enriching performance when organizations face challenges (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000).

Great leaders spend their life as a mission to serve organizational targets. They are hard hitters and earn respect with hard work and dedication. When it comes to direction, they articulate a clear vision with a strategic focus. Pushing people to give their best is also a prominent characteristic of great leaders. Alongside this, leaders do not work but for a greater cause. They work with humility and unmatched determination to inspire others to serve with a greater purpose. In a nutshell, one can underline a series of characteristics of great leaders. No to forget that these characteristics may carry from one style of leadership to another, which is why individuals as leaders express different characteristics.

Leadership Styles

Both academic and practitioner-based literature have highlighted different styles of leadership out of which, transactional and transformational have been termed as highly important styles of leadership (Den Hartog, Van Muijen & Koopman, 1997).

Transactional Style of Leadership

Transactional style of leadership is a style which is primarily based on the concept of exchange. Therein, the leader works to develop a reward-based relationship with the subordinates. Transactional style leaders generally focus on developing a healthy relationship between their employees through contingent rewards while ensuring to serve their needs in the best way possible. Typically, transactional leaders are more effective for stable business environments whereby, employees could be motivated through rewards to achieve business goals (Chaudhary & Javed, 2012).

Transactional leaders usually allocate tasks for their subordinates with objective guidelines to follow for effective action. These leaders engage themselves in the company with an outcome-based approach which is generally tangible in nature. Important to note that some writers have also indicated to transactional leaders using punishment or severe consequences alongside rewards to push non-performers. Therein, it has been noticed that individuals with a transactional style of leadership tend to explore employees' interest to shape their rewards and consequences which makes them effective in achieving organizational goals through them (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Transformational Style of Leadership

Generally, transformational style leaders are the one who strives to inspire others for the achievement of goals and objectives in a particular situation. In academic literature, transformational leaders are the individuals who are passionate about articulating a vision to the subordinates; identifying roles and responsibilities; support work and

setting up of behaviour and energizing through personal charisma and involvement. Therefore, some of the most prominent arguments about the transformational style of leadership is that they are the one who strive to serve all stakeholders within an organization through taking measures that inspire employees to give their best towards assigned goals (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996).

Transformational leaders are also called dynamic leaders since they facilitate subordinates across the board on all matters related to the assigned work. When organizations have transformational leaders, employees are generally seen looking up to them for vision guidance and support. Usually, transformational leaders have many followers who consider them as role models in their professional life. Such a leadership style is all about the dynamic organizational settings to bring efficiency and effectiveness in the work processes. Transformational leaders, who always believe on the active human resource practices, try to increase the real value of followers through excellent performance and also the confidence level of the followers that further lead them to their higher level of motivation and work involvement (Seibert, Wang & Courtright, 2011). Prominent authors have also reported that transformational leaders have the power of persuasion and influence, which may also result in changing the mindset of their employees. Such leaders do not believe in the achievement of organizational goals but also focus on the greater good of employees. They are seen taking steps to devise plans that best fits the organization and employees simultaneously with focusing on the carrot and stick approach (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Transformational leadership style is also popular for bringing attitude and behavioural shift at the workplace.

Transformational leaders ignite a sense of belongingness amongst their subordinates which energizes them to work beyond the requirement. Such leaders showcase personal commitment, involvement and engagement in employees and towards their assigned tasks which makes people equally passionate about the work thus, performing beyond expectations.

When compared, it has been reported that transactional leaders are good in helping organizations achieve their goals in a timely manner. However, when it comes to performing beyond expectations, such leaders seem to struggle. On the contrary, transformational leaders have been found effective in both. They are seen effective in achieving organizational goals as well as matters that require additional efforts and personal motivation from employees. Though, there are arguments also suggesting that some work environments and occupational roles require more of transactional style leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Vincent International

Vincent International is an educational consulting company that provides services to local and international students for admission in university courses. The company has been operational since 1998 and has a total of four parent branches across Canada and nine partnership branches in Asia and Africa. The company has headquarters in Toronto with staff that oversees all matters and business activities both locally as well as internationally. In detail, the company offers the following services to its clients:

- Admission in universities in Canada
- Documentation for Visa
- Travel and ticketing
- Consultation in Rejection and Appeal Cases
- Student Accommodation
- Student Loans (for local students only)
- Assistance in part-time employment and internships
- Organizing Graduate fairs
- Student Counselling

George at Vincent International

George Liam is the owner and chief operating officer of Vincent International. With more than 25 years of teaching and administrative experience, George has all the required knowledge and expertise. In his

own words, he said, *'education is my passion, and after retiring from the college, I decided to carry on serving this sector. Seeing Canada as a great country with a lot of potential to provide world-class education, I decided to serve aspiring students who wish to study in Canada. And so, I established this company in 1998 where we provide a wide range of services to both local and international students.'*

George`s Style of Leadership

George frequently travels to meet representatives from different countries, guiding them about company services and its expertise. Alongside this, he also pays regular visits to parent and partnership-based branches both locally and abroad which is why he is very familiar with literally everyone working for Vincent International. His employees love his approach to organizational and management and leadership. They see a great visionary leader in him which is why majority of its branches have very low employee turnover. According to GM student recruitment and scholarship unit, *'George inspires us with his talent, knowledge and expertise. He knows the industry and has great insight into everything Vincent International is engaged in. George guides us all, and we have a very strong bond with him.'*

To some of his subordinates,

'George is very transparent and open. We love talking to him and sharing ideas.'

'Mr. George is a great leader; he has an eye for detail which lets us understand every task easily.'

'George is a father figure. He is more than a conventional CEO. We look up to him for solution to all our problems.'

'He is a very approachable person. In discussions, he never sounds like a boss but a close colleague. I guess he is best in guiding people and loves simplifying things.'

'George has a vision for this company which now thrives in all of us. Because of his participative style, it becomes easy for us as managers to share our ideas, develop strategies and action plans together and work effectively. Also, his positive attitude is cherry on top, which makes people go for an extra mile whenever needed.'

These views about George lights up his style of leadership and how his direct subordinates and other staff members view him as a leader. However, some comments also indicated different views about him like,

'George is so humble and handy to his staff members that sometimes people take advantage of it.'

'He is the one with ultimate solutions to all queries and problems that Vincent faces which is good but, then knowing this, some people seem to be relying too much on him, and we see lack of initiation and critical thinking from them. I believe he needs to create a balance.'

'George, as a leader, is great BUT! As we are a target-oriented company and every branch has a target to achieve on a monthly basis. George being very democratic, welcomes everyone to do things their way to meet the students (customers) and company objectives best. As a result, some of the branches do not work objectively and we at the headquarters have to cross-check every documentation forwarded by them which at times is very frustrating. It doubles our work at the HQ. Sadly, George as a leader, does not penalize these branches or branch officers which I believe he should address very soon.'

Overall, George is seen as an inspiring leader to whom his employees look up to. He takes efforts to facilitate employees, works harder and servers as a visionary guide to help the company achieve its objectives. Nonetheless, there are different views about his style of leadership as well, which seems to be creating problems for few on some occasions.

Suggested Readings

Antonakis, J., & Day, D. V. (Eds.). (2017). *The nature of leadership*. Sage publications.

Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18(3), 19-31.

Rosenbach, W. E. (2018). *Contemporary issues in leadership*. Routledge.

Discussion Questions

Q1: What do you understand about the concept of leadership and the two styles discuss in the case study?

Q2: How do you see George as a Leader? What is his style of leadership and the characteristics he holds?

Q3: Do you see any weaknesses in his style of leadership?

Q4: Suggest George on improving his style of leadership.

Q5: Given the opportunity to lead, what will be your approach to leadership for Vincent International and why?

References

Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership*. Psychology press.

Chaudhry, A. Q., & Javed, H. (2012). Impact of transactional and laissez faire leadership style on motivation. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(7).

Den Hartog, D. N., Van Muijen, J. J., & Koopman, P. L. (1997). Transactional versus transformational leadership: An analysis of the MLQ. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 70(1), 19-34.

Goldman, E. (1998). The Significance of Leadership Style. *Educational leadership*, 55(7), 20-22.

Gong, Y., Huang, J. C., & Farh, J. L. (2009). Employee learning orientation, transformational leadership, and employee creativity: The mediating role of employee creative self-efficacy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(4), 765-778.

- Howell, J. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of applied psychology, 78*(6), 891.
- McGrath, R. G., & MacMillan, I. C. (2000). *The entrepreneurial mindset: Strategies for continuously creating opportunity in an age of uncertainty* (Vol. 284). Harvard Business Press.
- Piccolo, R. F., & Colquitt, J. A. (2006). Transformational leadership and job behaviors: The mediating role of core job characteristics. *Academy of Management Journal, 49*(2), 327-340.
- Seibert, S. E., Wang, G., & Courtright, S. H. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of psychological and team empowerment in organizations: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*(5), 981.
- Seltzer, J., & Bass, B. M. (1990). Transformational leadership: Beyond initiation and consideration. *Journal of management, 16*(4), 693-703.
- Wang, H., Law, K. S., Hackett, R. D., Wang, D., & Chen, Z. X. (2005). Leader-member exchange as a mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' performance and organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*(3), 420-432.
- Wolverton, M., Gmelch, W. H., & Sorenson, D. (1998). The department as double agent: The call for department change and renewal. *Innovative Higher Education, 22*(3), 203-215.
- Yammarino, F. (2013). Leadership: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 20*(2), 149-155.
- Yammarino, F. J., Spangler, W. D., & Bass, B. M. (1993). Transformational leadership and performance: A longitudinal investigation. *The Leadership Quarterly, 4*(1), 81-102.

