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Effective managerial leadership and challenges in sport organization

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Abstract

Management and leadership are essential to professional practice in sport organization and managerial leadership combines management and leadership into a coherent integrated concept “managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right things and by virtue of their formal role in the sport organization, sports administrators are responsible for empowering subordinates to establish and achieve goals. Management is about coping with complexity and leadership is about coping with changes; both management and leadership are needed for a successful management and good management skills are needed to achieve goals. The extent of their leadership skills will largely dictate the outcomes of their actions with subordinates. The question is what makes an effective leader? The purpose of this paper is to express a perspective regarding managerial leadership, draw a lesson from managerial leadership literature, gain insight from researches about managerial leadership effectiveness and infer from this literature prescriptions for practicing sports administrators. This paper reviews, managerial leadership functions traits and skills, effective managerial leadership styles and challenges.

Keywords: Leadership, management, effective, challenges & sport organization

Introduction

Leadership constantly presents challenges both to the leader's abilities and a person, things and change; change brings challenge, and no matter how good a leader is, can't stop that from happening. How one handles those challenges will define one as a leader and have a great deal to do with how effective one can be. Some challenges come in the form of people or problems that present obstacles to reaching a goal. Far more come from within the leader, or from the situation of simply being a leader. Every leader must face many of them and learn to deal with them in some way. A challenge is an invitation to rise to another level, to test yourself and improve in the process, to show that you can accomplish something that may seem difficult, or even impossible. The challenges of leadership are ongoing and occur daily. Knowing when the greatest challenges are likely to arise, however, one can prepare to meet them successfully. It has been recognized that the difference between success and failure whether in war, business or game can be attributed largely to leadership. Writings on leadership have become a growth industry. Yet despite all the alternative given to it and its recognized importance, leadership still remains much of an unexplained concept considerable experience, actual data, and theoretical principles could be cited to explain the concept of leadership, ever though they seem to be inconsistent when placed together. Such contradicting points out the dilemma in the explanation of leadership. Most effective leaders demonstrate sincere interest in the personal welfare of their followers. This interest in can extend to concern about their families and personal lives as well.

Leadership is a key process in any organization. In the past Leaders masquerade their self – interest and personal preference as ethical actions. In fact school leaders acted more as managers of repressive institution. The globalization of economic systems, technological advancement and increased expectations have replaced past uncertainties with new and uncertain framework. Dynamic changes of attitude of leaders in sport organization, leaders were faced with the challenge of operation in a rapidly changing world. It is pertinent to note that success or failure of a sport organization is attributed to its leadership.

The Concept of Managerial Leadership

Managerial leadership is a term that integrates management and leadership into a coherent concept; the manager-leader dichotomy serves as a way of thinking for managers of sport organization. According to Griffin, (1999) ^[13] leadership is both a process and property, as a process focusing on what leaders actually do; leadership is the use of non coercive influence to shape the group's or organization's goals, motives and behaviors towards achievement of those goals. Mull, Bayless & Jamieson, (2005), sees Management as influencing operational functions and resources to reach a goal and that management is more aware of the human element, including individual and group feelings, attitudes, sensitivity to fairness and cooperation in the attempt to accomplish something. Further illustrate leadership Parks & affirmed that managerial leadership is the combination of management and leadership into a coherent integrated concept. Hartzell, (2006) ^[16] asserts that "Leadership refers to the personality characteristics and the behavior of people with authority and responsibility for leading groups. Theoretical Approaches to Managerial Leadership Management and leadership theorists have over the years developed several theories to explain how leadership is carried out in sport organizations: Four of the most common theoretical approaches were identified: The trait approach; the behavioral approach; Situational contingency approach and the new leadership theories of transactional/transformation.

Trait Approach theory: Is based on a set of universal characteristic associated with effective leaders. The traits of a leader may be classified in the areas of personality, abilities and physical attributes

Behavioral Approach theory: Believed that people need more than certain personality traits to be effective leaders, effective leaders demonstrate one or two major styles of dimensions: consideration and initiating structure. Considerations describe the extent to which leaders have relationships with subordinates that are based on mutual trust, respect and consideration of subordinates ideas and feelings. While Initiating structures, explain the extent to which leaders establish goals and structure their subordinates towards the attainment of those goals

Situational contingency approach theory: In this type of approach there is no single type best style of leadership for every situation; effective managers are those who can change their leadership styles to meet the needs of their followers and the given situation. There are several models of this situational approach to leadership: Fiedler contingency model; path-goal model and the situational leadership model. Fiedler contingency theory is that the performance of a group is dependent on the interaction between leadership style and situational variables;

Path-goal model: Determine the most appropriate leadership style for different situations, it focuses on how a leader influences followers' perceptions about work goals, self development goals and path-goal accomplishment.

Situational leadership model: This model comprises of four pattern of communication that managers may choose to use in talking to their followers: telling, selling, participating and delegating. In order to decide which leadership style is most appropriate managers must be able to assess the readiness of

their followers and the ability and willingness of the followers to perform task. Telling and selling are both primarily leader oriented and one-directional communications. Participating and delegating are primary follower-oriented and two-directional communications. From this model manager's primary style can be determined and by primary style is the behavior pattern managers' use most often when attempting to influence the behavior of others.

Transactional/transformation approaches to leadership:

This deals with the leaders impact on the organization than with leadership effectiveness with individual and groups within the organization, it focus primarily on relations that managers develop with members in their respective organization. Transactional leadership refers to three types of exchanges that occur between leaders and followers: contingent rewarding and management by exception (active) and management by exception (passive) (Doherty, 1997) ^[4]. Leaders reward or discipline followers in exchange for the followers performing a mutually agreed upon task; while transformational leaders raise the consciousness of their followers about the importance of outcomes and how to reach those outcomes by going beyond their own self interests.

Managerial leadership Skills: The term skill reflects the idea that one's ability to perform managerial tasks is not innate. It can be learned and developed through experience and formal training. Katz, (1974) identified the skills needed by managers of all types of organizations as: conceptual; interpersonal (human) and technical. Conceptual skills: refers to the ability to see the organization as a whole and the relationship among the parts that make up the whole organization; Interpersonal: The ability to interact with others and coordinate individual and group efforts in achieving an organization's goal. Technical skills: The specified knowledge, resources used in achieving an organization's goal.

Managerial Roles In addition to using a range of skills, managerial leaders must assume a variety of roles as they carry out the traditional processes of management, according to Mintzberg, (1990) ^[21] is a set of expected behaviors associated with a managerial position, based on this the typical manager portrays (10) roles, which are classified into (3) categories: Interpersonal; Informational and decisional.

Interpersonal Roles: Roles involving interpersonal relationship with others Muizberg, (19990) identified three types of interpersonal roles as figure head; leader and liaison when managerial leaders engaged in these roles there are primarily involved in interpersonal relationships with others. By figure head managers acting in symbolic and ceremonial ways (duties); Leader role implies relates to managerial leaders relationship with their subordinates. As leaders managers recruit, select, train, motivate, evaluate and direct the subordinates energies and efforts toward accomplishing organization's goals. Liaison role refers to a managerial leader's ability to develop and cultivate relationships with individual and group outside work unit or organization. Informational Roles: when managerial leaders' exchange and process information, they engage in informational role, these roles include monitor; disseminator and spoke person.

Monitors: Manager in the role of scanning the environment for information that can affect the organization

Disseminators: Managers in the role of passing information on others in the organization or work unit;

Spokespersons: Managers in the role of transmitting information to persons or groups outside the manager's respective organization or work unit.

Decisional Roles Decisional roles may be exhibited in four specific categories: entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator.

Entrepreneurs: Managers in the role of searching for ways to affect change and improve on organization.

Disturbances handlers: Managers in the role of responding situation that might disrupt the organization's normal operation.

Resource allocators: Managers in the role of determining how best to allocate resources to each employee, group, or work unit, or to the entire organization.

Negotiator: Managers in the role of conferring with persons inside or outside the work unit or organization to obtain concessions or to agree on pivotal issues.

Major Dimension for Classifying Managerial Leader

While all managers have formal authority for directing the work activities of others, different managers possess different degree of authority in the hierarchy of an organization; managers are usually classified as (1) top-level manager (2) middle-level manager (3) supervisor-level managers (Glueck, 1980)^[8].

Top-level managerial leaders: The executive or senior level managers of an organization who have the most power and authority;

Middle-level manager: Managers who are selected by and responsible to top-level managers, they are responsible supervisory managers and sometimes for technical specialist. Supervisor-level managerial leaders: Managers who report to middle –level managers and are responsible for non-managerial employees.

Characteristics of Successful Managerial Leaders

Identified seven key skills needed to be an effective and efficient leader. The generalize concepts these skills are relevant for managerial leaders in sport organizations they trust their subordinates; they develop a vision; they keep their cool; they are experts; they invite dissent; they simplify; they encourage risk.

Effective Managerial Leadership

Effective leaders are characterized by intelligence and self – assurance – Effectiveness is concerned with capacity to use strength, health and aspirations in individuals to achieve high performance. This creates a pertinent issue that organizations should show concern on how to recruit, develop, and keep officers who will become effective leaders. In developing the new paradigm of Managerial leadership Greenfield & Rabbin (1993) believe that all we can do is to work with the character of leaders. They believe that leaders have to be able to function in a context of Complexity, ambiguity, paradox and trust worthiness. Subjects should be able to have faith in their leaders. In an attempt to provide distinction between the two, the differences in terms of activity performance of the manager and leaders in an organization are tabulated below:

Table 1: In an attempt to provide distinction between the two, the differences in terms of activity performance of the manager and leaders in an organization are tabulated below:

Activity	Managerial	Leadership
Creating an agenda	Planning and Budgeting	Establishing Direction
Developing a human Network for achieving The agenda	Organizing and staffing	Aligning people
Executing plan	Controlling and Problem solving	Motivating and inspiring
Outcomes	Produces a degree of Predictability and order, and has the potential to consistently produce major results expected by various stakeholders (for example, for customers, always being on time, for stockholders, being on budget)	Produces change, often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential to produce extremely useful change (for example new product that customers want, new approaches to labour relations that help make a firm more competitive.

Source: Griffin (1999)^[13]

Managerial Leadership Challenges

Being a leader is in itself a challenge. The challenges of leadership are really of three kinds: external, coming from people and situations; internal, stemming from within the leader himself; and those arising from the nature of the leadership role.

Leadership itself

Managerial leadership makes great demands on people. As a leader, you are responsible for your group's vision and mission, for upholding a standard, often for being the group's representative to the rest of the world and its protector as well. These responsibilities might be shared, but in most organizations, one person takes the largest part of the burden. In addition to its responsibilities, leadership brings such challenges as motivating people - often without seeming to do so - and keeping them from stagnating when they're doing

well. Leaders also have to motivate themselves, and not just to seem, but actually to be, enthusiastic about what they're doing. They have to be aware of serving their group and its members and all that that entails. In other words, they have to be leaders all the time.

External challenges

It's almost impossible to imagine a situation where a leader doesn't have to cope with external challenges. In an organization, such issues as lack of funding and other resources, opposition from forces in the community, and interpersonal problems within the organization often rear their heads. Social, economic, and political forces in the larger world can affect the organization as well. To some extent, the measure of any leader is how well he can deal with the constant succession of crises and minor annoyances that threaten the mission of his group. If he is able to solve

problems, take advantage of opportunities, and resolve conflict with an air of calm and a minimum of fuss, most of the external issues are hardly noticeable to anyone else.

How to cope with external challenges

Be proactive: Regardless of the situation, it's important for leaders to do something. Waiting is occasionally the right strategy, but even when it is, it makes a group nervous to see its leader apparently not exercising some control.

Be creative: Try to think "outside the box," i.e. in unexpected but effective ways. If disaster has struck; how can you turn what looks like the end of the world into a new beginning? Can you expand your horizons and your reach through collaboration? Don't just look at the obvious, but consider a situation from all perspectives, and search for unusual ways to make things work. An important piece of information, one that's often quoted in community work, but which can't be overstated: the Chinese character for "crisis" combines the characters for "danger" and "opportunity."

Face conflict squarely: This doesn't mean come out fighting, but rather identify and acknowledge the conflict, and work to resolve it. This is true both for conflict within your group, and conflict between the group and others outside it. Far too many people, leaders included, act as if conflict doesn't exist, because they find it difficult or frightening to deal with. As a result, it only grows worse, and by the time it erupts, it may be nearly impossible to resolve. If it's faced early, nearly any conflict can be resolved in a way that is beneficial for everyone involved. It's a function of leadership to have the courage to name the conflict and work on it. If there's a philosophical difference among the staff of an organization, for instance, it's important that it be acknowledged and discussed.

Always look for common ground: If there's opposition to what you're doing, it may only be to one specific part of it, or may be based on misunderstanding. There are few groups or individuals who don't have some common interests. If you can find those, you may have a basis for solving problems and making it possible for people to work together.

Retain your objectivity: If you're mediating a conflict within the organization, don't take sides, even if you think you know one side is right. That will come out if you mediate objectively and well. If you're faced with detractors or opposition, don't automatically assume they're villains. What are their concerns, and why do they disagree with what you're doing? Don't get sucked into a fight unless there's really no alternative. Even rabid opposition can often be overcome through a combination of respect, political pressure, and creative problem solving.

Look for opportunities to collaborate: This is important both within and outside your group or organization. Within the group, involve as many people as possible in decisions, and make sure they have control over what they do. The more they own their jobs and the organization, the more enthusiastic they'll be, the more effective the organization will be, and the more effective you'll be as a leader. Outside the organization, try to forge ties with other organizations and groups.

Internal challenges

While leadership presents to each of us the opportunity to demonstrate the best of what we are, it also exposes our limitations. In many cases, good leaders have to overcome those limitations in order to transmit and follow their vision. Fear, lack of confidence, insecurity, impatience, intolerance (all can act as barriers to leadership. At the same time, acknowledging and overcoming them can turn a mediocre leader into a great one. One of the greatest challenges of leadership is facing your own personal issues, and making sure they don't prevent you from exercising leadership. Some characteristics can be double-edged swords, positive in some circumstances and negative in others. The real challenge is in knowing the difference, and adapting your behavior accordingly. Acknowledging the attitudes and tendencies that get in your way, and working to overcome them is absolutely necessary if you're to become an effective leader. Among the most common personal traits that good leaders have to overcome or keep in check are:

Insecurity: Many people feel, at least some of the time, that they're not up to the tasks they face. They may even believe that they're fooling people with their air of competence, when they know they're really not very capable at all. Insecurity of that sort keeps them from being proactive, from following their vision, from feeling like leaders. It can be crippling to both a leader and her group or organization.

Defensiveness: Also born of insecurity, defensiveness shows up most often as an inability to take criticism (other people might catch on to the fact that you're as incompetent as *you* know you are), and continuing hostility to anyone, even an ally, who voices it. Defensiveness often also includes a stubborn resistance to change ideas, plans, or assumptions, even if they've been shown to be ineffective.

Lack of decisiveness: Sometimes it's hard to make a decision. You never know till later - and sometimes not even then - whether you made the right decision. Maybe if you had a few more facts... The reality is that leaders are called on to make decisions all the time, often with very little time to consider them. It is important to have as much information as possible, but at some point, you just have to make the decision and live with it. Some decisions are reversible, and some are not, but in either case, it's important to learn to make a decision when necessary and understand that living with the consequences is part of being a leader.

Inability to be direct when there's a problem: Many people want so badly to be liked, or are so afraid of hurting others, that they find it difficult to say anything negative. They may be reluctant to tell someone he's not doing his job adequately, for instance, or to address an interpersonal problem. Unfortunately, by letting these things go, they only make them worse, which makes them still harder to address. It's essential to learn when firmness is necessary, and to learn how to exercise it.

Inability to be objective: Neither looking at situations through rose-colored glasses nor being always on the edge of hysteria is conducive to effective leadership. There's a difference between being an optimistic individual and being unable to see disaster looming because it's too painful to contemplate. By the same token, seeing the possible negatives in an apparently positive situation are not the same as being

paralyzed by the assumption that calamity lurks around every corner. The inability to accurately identify the positive and negative in any situation and react appropriately can create serious problems.

Impatience - with others and with situations: Given the importance of decisiveness and firmness, that patience is not a virtue a managerial leader needs. In fact, it is perhaps the most important trait to develop. People in unfamiliar situations need a while to orient them. Managerial leaders who are impatient may make rash decisions, may alienate staff members or volunteers or allies, and can often make situations worse rather than better. It's hard to be patient, but it's worth the effort.

Coping with internal challenges Listen: Listen to people's responses to your ideas, plans, and opinions. Listen to a broad range of people, not just to those who agree with you. Probe to find out why they think or feel the way they do. Assume that everyone has something important to say. If you hear the same things from a number of different and diverse sources, you should at least consider the possibility that they're accurate. If they're about things you do that you can change, you might give it a try.

Ask for 360-degree feedback and use it: This is feedback (people's views of you) from everyone around you - staff, volunteers, Board, participants, people from other organizations or groups you work with - anyone you work with in any way. As with listening, if you hear the same thing from a lot of different sources, it's probably true. Act on it. All the feedback in the world won't do you any good unless you do something with it.

Look at what's going on around you: Taking a look around will tell you a lot about what - and how - you're doing as a leader. Even if you're involved in a battle with the forces of evil, you can foster calm in yourself and those you work with. At the same time, your group could be on top of the world, and you and your colleagues could still be climbing the walls if that's the kind of atmosphere you create. If you're meeting their needs, the chances are they will be. If you're insensitive and impatient, if you play favorites, if you're disengaged from them and from the cause, or if you're downright nasty, they'll probably wish they were somewhere else.

Reach out for help in facing internal challenges: Most of us find it difficult to change entirely on our own. One of the greatest challenges of leadership is shouldering the responsibility it confers. Part of that responsibility is the responsibility to deal with those aspects of yourself that can keep you from being an effective leader. That's not easy, but the rewards are great.

Challenges stemming from the nature of the leadership role

A leadership position brings with it unique demands. Leaders can be looked on as authority figures, as saviors, as fixers of things that are broken, as spiritual guides, as mentors, as models, as inspirers, as teachers in short, they may be seen however others choose to see them. This in itself carries a set of challenges, in addition to those posed by what all leaders indeed have to do in order to keep things going. Some of the issues that leaders have to cope with specifically *because* they're leaders are:

Keeping an eye on, and communicating, the vision: As the guardian of a group's vision, it's up to the managerial leader to remind everyone of what that vision is, to keep it in mind in everything the group or organization does, to protect it from funders or others who would try to change it and to make sure it *does* change, if necessary, with changes in circumstances, the needs of the target population, or the available information. That means not being distracted from the bigger picture by day-to-day issues (even as those issues are addressed and resolved). It also means not substituting another, lesser goal (getting enough funding to start a specific program, for instance) that may be contrary to the true vision of the organization.

Keeping everyday under control while you continue to pursue the vision: You can't maintain the vision without making sure that there's paper in the printer, that you understand the legal implications of an action you plan to take, that people know what they're supposed to be doing on a given day, that there's enough cash in the bank to meet payroll, and that there's someone there to answer the phone, to pay the bills, and to look for funding. These aren't necessarily all things a leader has to do herself (although there are certainly organizations where that's what happens), but is responsible for making sure they get done, and that things run smoothly

Setting an example: If you want others in the group to show mutual respect, to work hard, to embrace the vision and mission of the organization, to include everyone in their thinking and decisions, you have to start by doing those things yourself, and behaving in the ways you want others to behave. A managerial leader who yells at people, consults no one, and assumes his word is law will intentionally or unintentionally train everyone else in the group to be the same way. A managerial leader who acts collaboratively and inclusively will create an organization that functions similarly.

Maintaining effectiveness over time: One of the hardest lessons of managerial leadership is that you're never done. No matter how well things go, no matter how successful your group or organization or initiative is - unless it's aimed at accomplishing a very specific, time-limited goal - you have to keep at it forever. Maintaining effectiveness is a matter both of monitoring what you do and working to improve it, and of keeping up enthusiasm for the work within the group. It's part of the managerial leader's role to maintain enthusiasm and drive, and to communicate and transfer them to others.

Avoiding burnout: This is a challenge not only for managerial leaders, because a burned out leader can affect the workings of a whole organization. Managerial leader burnout is a product of being overwhelmed by the workload, the frustrations, the stress, and the time demands of the position, multiplied by the number of years spent in it. It can reach a point where the managerial leader no longer cares about the vision, or the work of the group, by that point, the rest of the group is likely to be struggling, feeling rudderless and uncertain. Perhaps even more threatening than burnout is "burn-down" - the loss of passion and intensity that can come with familiarity and long service. You may still care about what you're doing, but the enthusiasm just isn't there anymore. In many ways, this condition may be even harder to deal with than burnout.

Finding support: Managerial leadership can be a hard and lonely road, or an exciting and collaborative trip to a new place. The managerial leader may have no one to share concerns with, and may have to find satisfaction, because others don't recognize the amount and nature of contribution.

Conclusion

Managerial leadership poses a host of challenges. They come in three categories: external (from people and situations); internal (from within the leader herself); and stemming from the circumstance of being a leader. They often arise in periods of instability or change, such when a program or period of work is beginning or ending, or when a group or organization is in transition. Some are concrete and limited dealing with a particular situation, for instance - but many are more abstract and ongoing, such as keeping your group focused on its vision over the long term. For each category of challenge, there are strategies that can help leaders cope.

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