

Applying the Transformational Leadership Theory in the Workplace

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Applying Transactional and Transformational Leadership Theories in the Workplace

Joan Oberto's vision when she accepted the role as Partner Relations Manager at Mage Software was to utilize her communications and software experience to inspire her team to achieve the organizational goals given to them. The team was recently formed to focus on a new product designed specifically for government, banking and non-profit industries. The main goals her team needs to accomplish are 1) to develop and cultivate existing partner relationships to increase consulting revenue 2) recruit new Partners and consultants in preparation for upcoming software release and her personal goal 3) to mentor, strengthen and unite team members in recognizing individual achievements while delivering superior service to their customers.

Joan has employees and has spent time observing them to determine areas for improvement. Walter Spencer, a Consulting Resource Analyst in charge of staffing engagements, has been with Mage Software the longest at a little over ten years. He has established relationships vital to his role, but his successes are minimal, achieving goals at a basic level. His seniority and vast knowledge has aided him but clearly added to his responsibilities, voicing concerns that his work load stands in the way of advancement. However, Joan's observations tell a different story and his desires to advance do not coincide with efforts he has put forth. His interpersonal communication skills within the team are minimally effective and, while he may get the job done, he dismisses the importance of group cohesion with his constant workload complaints.

Tim Rollins is the newest analyst on the team, joining the company a little over two years ago. He was hired specifically to negotiate government contracts and aid in the development of Partner relationships. He rose to fame using his charm, quick wit and industry knowledge,

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frequently rubbing shoulders with executives and senior management. His extensive knowledge of the inner workings of government agencies has proven successful but rarely shares information with the team. It is abundantly clear to Joan however, that while Tim's achievements earned him respect in the industry, his communication skills and absence of tact cause conflict within the team. His subtle comments have the tendency to alienate team members, leaving them less likely to seek his assistance. Joan does not think Tim realizes the extent to which his superiority type demeanor distances him from the team.

Bill Maynard, a Sr. Business Analyst in charge of managing the \$150 million a year services budget. He has been with the company seven years, having been promoted twice within the company. He serves as the liaison for professional services, connecting various departments together, solidifying his contribution to the team. He is credited for having a down to earth mentality, savvy business sense and ability to get the job done. Bill exhibits a robust desire to achieve customer satisfaction, always going above expectations. While he may strive to meet everyone's needs, Bill has found that being the main go-to person has its downfalls. Departments that are frequently overstepping boundaries have caused a shift in his priorities creating imbalance in his workload. Bill's ability to effectively communicate within the organization has led to an abundance of requests he struggles to keep up with. Joan's number one concern is that Bill will become overwhelmed to the point of seeking employment elsewhere.

The Transformational Leadership theory has changed the way organizations operate. Being a leader is more than managing people and achieving goals; it how the leader facilitates inspiration within teams. One aspect of this theory is referred to as transactional leadership. This type of leadership limits group success and diminishes job satisfaction when trying to achieve

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organizational goals. A study done on transactional leadership by Ronald Deluga suggests that “transactional leadership is acceptable as far as it goes, but fundamentally is a prescription for organizational mediocrity.” (Deluga, 1988) This translates how transactional leadership leaves little room for building group cohesion which is in contrast of transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership seeks a leader who has charisma, uses idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to achieve goals. Further proving this leadership style would be most effective. This paper will examine the techniques Joan will use under the transformational leadership style to motivate her team and achieve great success.

Joan has been given the opportunity to unite a team that has been designed specifically to ramp up partner activity while building relationships in order to boost consulting revenue. The team lacks cohesion and is often found operating separately. Joan must first establish charisma, idealized influence and individualized influence within the team. To do this, she needs to establish trust, build a positive rapport and set an example for them to follow. She accomplishes this by modeling ideal behaviors for her employees. According to Micha Popper and Eliav Zakkai, this is demonstrated by the leaders being “a sensitive psychological diagnostician who accurately discerns subordinates’ needs and expectations and responds accordingly.” (Popper, 1994) This means Joan must observe the team dynamic and select specific traits for which to build upon. She can persuade them to use their weaknesses as a platform for shared victory utilizing Walter’s complaining, Tim’s me only mentality and Bill’s need to please in illustrating how these seemingly negative traits strike the balance that makes the team so brilliant.

Joan must also provide intellectual stimulation, a task that may prove to be the most challenging for her. There is no question that intelligence is abundant between Walter, Tim and Bill. They all bring unique talents to the team but do not make the most of these talents when it comes to developing ideas together. Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater & Spangler pointed out that “behaviors related to intellectual stimulation include seeking differing perspectives when solving problems, suggesting new ways of examining how to complete assignments and encouraging re-thinking of ideas that have not been questioned in the past.” (Dionne et al., 2004) The intellectual contribution brought by the team is clear and Joan can put a new spin to their flaws to stimulate group cohesion. For instance, instead of Walter avoiding Tim, he can use this as an opportunity to offer his own recruitment strategies for non-government contracts since they are handled differently than what Tim is used to.

Finally and most importantly, Joan must use individualized consideration to prove to Walter, Tim and Bill just how much extraordinary talent they each bring to the team. It is her duty as a transformational leader to encourage individual growth and keep them inspired to reach potentials they never imagined. Walter’s lack of motivation has held him back, leaving him unsatisfied in his job. To address his concerns, Joan can propose various shadowing assignments with Partner consultants, exposing him to the other side of the business. The potential this offers could expose him to opportunities he has complained about missing out on. Since Tim has a need to control information, Joan can propose he step in as liaison for professional services. With efforts on both Bill and Tim’s part, Tim would be introduced to departments he would not normally interact with. Concerns can be readdressed with a fresh perspective, process improvements can take place and the rate at which information flows can be streamlined. By doing this restructuring, it validates professional services’ commitment to customer service,

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places importance on outside contributions, illustrating the desire to achieve organizational goals. These types of changes have never been attempted and are how Joan hopes to rebuild team cohesion and help balance the workload.

Joan Oberto's definition of leadership changed significantly over the years and altered her understanding of what defines a true leader. She has spent a great deal of time studying different leadership theories has witnessed firsthand how dysfunctional teams can become when management does not clearly communicate expectations. Joan's career journey, crediting her mistakes and successes, ultimately led her to the role she holds today; as Partner Relations Manager at Mage Software. Being her first leadership role, she is both excited and scared for the task that awaits her. Joan sought her degree in Strategic Communications to revolutionize the way Fortune 500 companies use communication and strong leadership when it comes to managing Partners relationships. She believes that by having leaders who focus on building group cohesion through effective communication, they can transform an entire organization to surpass the goals they set out to achieve.

Professor Tim Herrera Final Assignment Feedback:

This paper was very well written and professionally presented. You did a great job of establishing a complex and believable scenario and set out to illustrate your theory. You were able to use good sources and resources to support the points you were making and you did an excellent job of proving your points. I thought your analysis was solid and on-target. All in all, this report was very well done.

Great job! 200/200

References

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