**Leadership styles handout**

**Character traits of effective managers**

A number of character traits of effective managers have been identified as Empathy, Hardworking, Enthusiasm, Inspirational and Self awareness.

**Leadership**

Leaders may perform similar functions to managers, but in addition they also inspire and motivate the workforce, they consider long-term strategy, the challenges facing the business and how to overcome them. Managers control and direct the workforce to follow the principles or values that have been established by the leaders.

Being a good leader involves getting people to understand and believe in your vision to work with you to achieve your goals. Good leaders also have charisma, then inspire people to follow them E.G Winston Churchill (We will never surrender).

Charismatic leadership is the process of encouraging certain behaviours in others via force of personality, persuasion and eloquent communication. Charismatic leaders inspire their followers to do things or to do things better; this is done by conjuring up enthusiasm in others for a stated vision or goal.

**Role of leaders**

Create visions and aims, Create new roles and jobs, Decide on structures, Anticipate problems, Establish objectives and Empower and delegate. Because leaders need to lead and fulfil a number of challenging roles, a leader needs to have a number of characteristics that will help them lead their business.

**Leadership characteristics**

These might include the following:

Intellectual skills; interpersonal skills; realistic aspirations; vision; communicative skills; creativity; innovation; commitment and the ability to identify and respond to changes.

It is unlikely that any leader will have all of these characteristics – indeed no single one of these characteristics is essential for a leader to be successful. A good leader is the one that adapts to the needs of the employees through identifying problems and creating solutions.

**Leadership styles**

In the long run, there is no one leadership style that suits any particular organisation. Market circumstances change, internal circumstances change, external pressures change, or alternatively there may be a period of stability. These factors mean that as the business adapts to these different circumstances, then the type of leader that is best suited to the business will also alter.

The type of leadership required to force through restructuring or rebranding of an organisation will be very different from the leader who most effectively oversees a period of stability. The leadership styles we examine below may then be broadly suited to a particular business form or structure but there will be times when the style is easily transferable to organisations that have previously been run in different ways.

**There are five main leadership styles: Autocratic, Paternalistic, Democratic, Laissez-faire and Bureaucratic.**

**Autocratic leadership**

This style of leader gives orders which are to be obeyed without question. Probably a Theory X manager, who has no time for consideration of Maslow’s higher needs or Herzberg’s motivating factors. This type of manager can be effective when rapid restructuring is required but to be effective he/she will rely upon a strictly hierarchical organisational structure. There is no employee involvement in the decision-making.

**Paternalistic leadership**

These leaders are similar to autocratic leaders in that they make all the decisions and there is no employee involvement. However, paternalistic leaders may attempt to persuade the employees that the decisions made are in the best interest of all concerned. Paternalistic leaders will consider the welfare of the employees.

**Democratic or participative leadership**

This type of leader consults with subordinates in the decision-making process. Subordinates are involved with managers in designing their jobs and the tasks involved. This philosophy is ideally suited to the implementation of ‘soft’ HRM policies. Democratic leaders will need to communicate effectively with employees in order to consult, persuade and receive feedback.

A democratic style of leadership can result in a workforce that is motivated and committed to the organisation and can also promote creativity and better quality decisions.

**Laissez-faire leadership**

This occurs when the leader has minimal input and subordinates are largely left to get on with their jobs. Minimum guidance is offered and workers are given a great deal of scope to demonstrate their capabilities. The danger with this style of leadership is that if workers are not motivated or committed to their work, their productivity can be low.

**Bureaucratic leadership**

Bureaucratic leaders focus on developing the specialisation of jobs and departments. They have a reliance on formal procedures and clearly-marked status definitions.

Bureaucratic leadership operates within hierarchical structures. Employees are allowed to use discretion only within delegated limits. Job roles are defined formally by the use of clear job descriptions, and an obligation to stick to these job descriptions severely limits the employees’ ability to act in situations that are unusual or unexpected.

It is argued that in a bureaucracy each employee within the organisation knows precisely what their duties are and therefore many tasks will be performed a lot quicker and more efficiently. Another advantage is that workers who are secure in their roles are, therefore, more likely to cooperate with other workers. The main disadvantage of this type of leadership is the discouragement of innovation and the ability to adapt to change.

**What makes a successful leader?**

What makes successful leadership is open to question. Different styles suit different circumstances and the same leader can use different styles with different groups of workers. A good leader is one who can adapt their style or approach to different situations; this is known as a contingency approach to leadership. Leaders can be task or people-orientated and this orientation will dictate their approach to control, job design and motivation.

Leaders must plan, motivate and control, but how they best do this is a question of circumstance. Using an autocratic style with a group of computer games developers may be a mistake but using the same style within the armed forces makes a great deal of sense.