

Executive Leadership Final

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Executive Leadership V566

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

When developing a course of study in any topic it is critical to formulate a well thought out lesson plan. Obviously the goal of instruction is that the students will learn and be able to put to use the information that is presented to them. Therefore, it is important to decide what the course objective(s) is and design your course around those objectives. In this short paper the objectives are for the students to have a well-rounded understanding of leadership, identify their leadership style, and identify the qualities that make successful leaders successful.

I have identified three main topics that I plan to cover in my course design; course design, teaching points and grading mechanisms. The class structure must have at least these three areas to ensure the students are able to meet the objectives which have been set forth by the instructor.

## **COURSE DESIGN:**

We all learn differently, therefore, it is important to design a course that will take into consideration the various learning methods which may be present in the classroom. It is equally important to make sure the course is both interesting and challenging. In the journal titled, *Designing and Teaching a Course*, Russell Fernald (1998) lists the following five considerations when preparing for a course of instruction; considering the audience, setting course objectives, determining the class format, questions about course design, and planning to evaluate learning.

If the instructor is to be successful each of these considerations must be planned for and implemented. It is critical to understand what type of audience will be receiving the information and to design your course appropriately. For example if you are teaching an undergraduate course you do not want to present information that is intended for students who are learning at a Masters level. Furthermore, deciding the appropriate class format will go a long way in fulfilling

the course objectives. Fernald emphasizes the need to engage students if they are to remain interested in the topic. With this mind it is important to utilize different presentation methods to ensure the various learning styles are addressed.

In my course designed I intend to use the following instructional methods; lecture, guest speakers, case study, and reading assignments. With a balanced approach to presenting the material the students will be more likely to absorb the information. By mixing in practical applications they will have the opportunity to use the information they have learned. Moreover, classroom participation on part of the students will be required with a percentage of their grade based on how well they interact and contribute to discussion.

### **Lectures**

I will incorporate lecture time in which the teaching points will be addressed. At the beginning of each class I will hand out, to the student, copies of the PowerPoint slides that will be used during the lecture time. By distributing the slides at the beginning of the class this will ensure the students can take good notes but also pay closer attention to me as I present the information. Oftentimes copious amounts of information is given during the lecture causing the student to concentrate more on writing down every detail and less on the information being given by the instructor.

### **Guest Speakers**

There is no better way to learn about leadership than to hear about real life experiences from those people who serve in a leadership role. I will schedule a guest speaker, for every other class, who will share his/her experiences in leading an organization. The students will be tasked with asking questions, then at the end of each class sharing something they learned from the speaker and how they can better use the information in leading at their current place of

employment. Moreover, prior to each speaker coming to the class the students will be required to research the leader's organization and formulate their questions based on information they have gathered about the organization and the leader.

### **Case Study**

During one class period the students will be required to intern with a leader of their choice. Although it is impossible to learn every aspect of leadership during a three hour internship it will give the student the opportunity to put into perspective some of the topics they are learning in class. By going into the field and meeting with a leader who has experience in organization leadership the student will gain a better understanding of the principles that are being taught in the classroom. Additionally, as part of this assignment the students will be required to document their experience I will elaborate more about this when I cover the grading mechanism section of this paper.

### **Reading Assignments**

Choosing the right reading material for the course is extremely important to ensure the students are grasping the concepts being taught in class. The material must be appropriate for the level at which they are learning. I will choose a text book which covers as much as possible the teaching points that are previously listed. Moreover, to compliment the text book I will assign a designated leadership book written by a proven and successful leader.

### **Class Structure**

I visualize a class structure as follows;

1. Week 1 – introduction, class expectations, short lecture on definition of leadership, assigned reading for week two.

2. Week 2 – guest speaker, lecture over reading assignment, discussion time over guest speaker.

Around the fifth week the students will complete their internship. During this time the students will not attend class, but will instead meet with the leader of their chosen organization.

The remaining schedule will continue as listed above with a mixture of lecture, guest speakers, and classroom discussion.

### **TEACHING POINTS:**

When teaching on a subject such as leadership, where literally thousands of books, articles, and journals have been written it is difficult to identify those areas which are important without covering volumes of information. Therefore, to be successful in fulfilling the course objectives, I have identified ten topics which I believe are important in this course of study. I will list and very briefly describe a few of the more important topics.

#### **1. Definition of Leadership**

Prior to delving into the specifics of leadership it is important for the students to have a definition of the topic. Although there are many descriptions of leadership, in his book titled; *Leadership in Organizations*, Yukl (2010) defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (p. 8). Once the groundwork has been laid it will be much easier for the students to understand just what a leader must be able to do in an organization if he/she is to be successful.

Furthermore, it is critical for the students to understand what characteristics all good leaders must have if they are to gain the trust and respect of their followers. In his book titled, *Challenging the Law Enforcement Organization: Proactive Leadership Strategies*, Jack Enter

(2006) states there are seven laws of leadership; integrity and honor, servant hood, mentorship, professionalism, positive attitude, reinforcement and accountability, and proactive communication (p. 32). I believe a big part of one class must be dedicated to discussing why each of these characteristics is important.

2. Difference between a leader and manager
3. Understanding leadership styles
4. The concepts of power and influence
5. What are the skills and traits of a leader/manager
6. Theories of leadership (Charismatic and Transformational)
7. Leading change in an organization
8. Effective communication
9. **Ethics in leadership**

For a leader there is perhaps nothing more important than her ethics. If she expects the other members of the organization to behave in an ethical manner then she must set the example both at work and away from the job. In Dr. Dibie's course pack for this class; Pierce and Newstrom (2008) define ethical leadership as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (p. 181). The students should learn the ethical or unethical decisions you make as a leader will either help you gain the trust of your subordinates or cause you to become an ineffective leader. Most people want to be lead by a person who does the right thing even when no one else is looking.

10. Building and developing leadership skills

Even though I chose to only elaborate on two of the topics this should not in any way reduce the importance of the other items. I believe it will be essential that the students have a good understanding of all the teaching points, but the two I have highlighted here I find to be the foundation of instruction for the other topics.

### **GRADING MECHANISMS:**

The only way for the instructor to know if the students have mastered the course and learned the information is to have some way to grade their progress. For this course design I have decided to use five methods; midterm, case study involving the internship, presentation of the case study, participation in the class discussions, and a final examination.

#### **Midterm**

The students will be required to complete a midterm which will be a fifty question test comprised of multiple choice, fill in the blank and several short essay questions. The test will be used to gauge where the students are at this stage of the class. I will arrange to meet with all students who score less than 80% on the test.

#### **Case Study for Internship**

The student must interview the leader of their chosen organization. They will be required to complete a 10 page paper based on the earlier definition of leadership and how their leader compares to this definition. Furthermore they must use the seven laws of leadership and describe how their leader either excels or needs help in each category.

#### **Presentation of Case Study**

The students will be required to give a fifteen minute presentation in class over their case study. This lecture must include a PowerPoint presentation which must be sent to the instructor prior to giving the presentation.

### **Class Participation**

All students are required to participate in classroom discussion. It is critical that the sharing of opinions and information be encouraged. As mentioned before all students will be required to research the special guest speaker and have questions available after the presenter is finished. Furthermore, at the end of the class each student will be required to comment on the speaker and participate in classroom discussion concerning the topic for the evening. Finally, depending on the number of students in class the instructor will assign a student to introduce the guest speaker.

### **CONCLUSION:**

We all learn differently, therefore, it is nearly impossible to create a course which can cater specifically to each style. I have listed three topics I feel are critical when it comes to creating a course that will allow the student to be successful. The foundation of any course should be the design – how do you plan to present the material. Second, what are the teaching points that you hope to get across to the student. Third, how are you going to measure what they have learned? If each of these topics is incorporated into the course then the students are likely to meet the objectives set forth by the instructor.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

People are looking for leadership in every aspect of their life. As long as mankind has existed a leader has arose from within the masses. However, as we look back in history not all leaders have been effective, so what makes an effective leader? Considering many scholars and researchers have pondered this question for hundreds, if not thousands, of years it is difficult to grasp all of the variables that make a leader effective. In this paper I will define what a leader is. Furthermore, I will speak briefly about leadership styles, power and influence, and personal integrity and ethical leadership. I believe these three core elements go a long way in making an effective leader.

## **WHAT IS A LEADER:**

It is usually beneficial to define the term you are discussing before you try to answer the question. When it comes to the term “leader” there are many thousands of books, articles, and journals written about this subject. I believe people have been trying to define what a leader is for hundreds of years. Certainly, depending on which book you read there may be a different view points on just what a leader is and what characteristics make a leader. In Yukl’s book alone he lists ten different definitions of leadership that he has compiled from other authors. I believe the simplest of these definitions is “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization (Yukl, 3).

In this definition I would like to pick out two words – influence and motivate. I will define each word a little more in depth to show their importance in this definition and why both are important to any leader who wants to be successful.

### **Influence**

Influence is defined by merriam-webster.com “as the power or capacity of causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways”. The goal of all organizations is to be successful, to make a profit, or provide a needed service to the customers in a satisfactory manner. If these goals are to be met then there must be a leader who has the ability to guide the employees in meeting them. Dr. Dicie stated in class “if you are leader and you have no followers then you are just taking a walk”. A leader must be able to influence the followers to take that walk with her. I will speak later about power and influence and why it is important if a leader is to be effective.

### **Motivate**

Motivate is defined by the freedictionary.com as the ability “to provide with an incentive; move to action”. As a leader you are tasked with the trying to motivate your people to action. In most cases people want to know why they should be interested in meeting the goal of the organization, what is in it for me, or just how will the leader’s vision affect me and the organization. A good leader will need to be able to motivate her people to meet the goals that have been set forth. It will be critical for her to find what those motivators are within each person and capitalize on them to move her people in the right direction.

Since the beginning of time people have constantly looked for a leader. In the Holy Bible we are told; “But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king (I Samuel 8: 6-7 The New International Version). If God has difficulties getting us to follow his leadership then you can imagine there will always be those within an organization that will not want to follow. However, even with this being said people are looking for a leader.

So what are those important variables listed in Yukl's book that make a leader effective?

I will discuss but a few that I feel are critical if a leader is to be effective and successful in guiding her people to the realization of the goals set forth by the organization.

### **LEADERSHIP STYLES:**

There are many different styles of leadership and none are completely right or wrong. I believe one of the most important lessons we have learned in this class is that as a leader you must be willing to adapt and change your leadership style to the situation at hand. It is important to realize you may need to be an authoritarian on one day and be more participative the next day. In chapter 4 of this book Yukl lists three leadership styles; participative, delegation, and empowerment.

#### **Participative**

Yukl states "participative leadership involves efforts by a manager to encourage and facilitate participation by others in making decisions that would otherwise be made by the manager alone" (p. 116). It is important as a leader to get input from her subordinates. The leader does not have the answer to every question. There are many qualified people working in an organization who have specialized skills because they are on the front line doing the job. An effective leader will seek input from her people.

#### **Delegation**

There is a fine line between delegation and dumping. Yukl defines delegation as "the assignment of new responsibilities and additional authority to individual subordinates or to a team" (p. 117). A leader cannot do everything and must identify those people within the organization who can carry the load. If done properly delegating will allow the subordinates to take ownership in the organization. It will sponsor growth within the organization as the

employee learns a new skill and is better prepared to move into a leadership position. An effective leader will find a way to delegate tasks without dumping her responsibilities onto the employee.

### **Empowerment**

If a person feels as though they have some ownership in a situation then they are much more likely to be engaged. The third concept listed by Yukl is what he terms psychological empowerment which he defines as; “a combination of meaningful work, high self-efficacy, self determination, and ability to influence relevant events” (p. 117). In short all of us have our opinions and in most cases want to share them. We also want to have the feeling of belonging and know that what we do at work makes a difference. An effective leader will find a way to empower her employees. Much like the participative approach she will ensure her employees are involved in the decision making process, even if it is only listening to their thoughts about a particular matter. Furthermore, she will ensure her subordinates realize the importance of their work and how each job plays an important part in meeting the goals of the organization.

To be an effective leader it is important to identify your leadership style and be able to adjust to the situation. A perfect example is the case study that we did in this class. As a new leader coming into an organization it is critical that you take time to learn about that organization and adapt your style to the needs at hand. In the case study the employees were use to the authoritarian style of one leader and when the new leader came into the organization with his participative style it did not work.

Perhaps the most important variable that all leaders must understand is that one style of leadership is not necessarily better than another and more importantly an effective leader will learn to adapt his/her style to the situation.

## **POWER AND INFLUENCE:**

It is simple, if you do not have the power to effect change or the influence to convince your people that change is necessary -- then you will be an ineffective leader. In chapter 6 of his book, Yukl states; “influence is the essence of leadership” (p. 151). Influence is not something that you gain just because you have a management position. It is something you gain over time by showing people you are trustworthy, reasonable, reliable, and knowledgeable about your job. Furthermore, influence does not occur only from a leader down to her subordinates but can also happen the other direction. Yukl goes on to say that effective managers have influence over their superiors and peers. Oftentimes a leader is able to convince her subordinates into carrying out requests or supporting an idea because of the influence they have been able to establish over time.

Power goes hand in hand with influence. Yukl defines power as ‘the capacity of one party to influence another party’ (p. 152). He lists several examples of power in his book, however, I will touch on just three very briefly.

### **Legitimate Power**

Legitimate power is seen as the power given to a person who has a position of authority within an organization. Their influence may exist because of the position they hold. Normally subordinates will agree to comply with rules and directions from a person in a leadership position because they recognize the position as one of authority. However, this does not necessarily mean the person holding the position exerts influence in and of herself, but perhaps only because of the position. Therefore, if legitimate power is the only power the leader possesses, employees may work behind the scene to undermine their authority.

### **Referent Power**

Yukl states; “referent power is derived from the desire of others to please an agent toward whom they have strong feelings of affection, admiration, and loyalty (p. 160). Some leaders are generally well liked within their organization. Perhaps she is friendly, outgoing, trustworthy, and has a sincere concern for her employees. When these types of qualities exist it is typically easier for the leader to influence others with little or no effort. The other employees simply trust and respect the person and are willing to accept the power they have over them. Moreover, they are very likely to carry out request from someone they respect and admire.

### **Expert Power**

Expert power is held by those people who have specific skills and knowledge in their area of expertise. Those people working around a person who holds expert power are normally drawn to them because they have the understanding on how to complete the task. Usually a person will hold expert power because they have performed the job for many years or they have special training on how to do the job. Typically it is much easier for a person with expert power to have influence over someone who knows less about the job. Therefore, that person is more likely to carry out the task requested because they are willing to take back stage to person with more knowledge.

I have spoken briefly about influence and the three types of power listed in the book. Just like the leadership styles I spoke about earlier no one power is better. In fact to be an effective leader it is important to have a little of all seven of the powers listed by Yukl. The bottom line is for a leader to be successful in an organization she must have the influence to affect change when change is needed and the ability to influence the employees to work toward the goals of the organization.

## **PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP:**

In his book Yukl speaks about those traits that make a good leader. Although, there are many traits and characteristics that go into making a good leader, I believe none are more important than integrity and ethics. He states the meaning of personal integrity is; “when a person’s behavior is consistent with espoused values and the person is honest, ethical, and trustworthy” (p. 203). To me a simple definition is doing the right thing when no one else is looking. However, what is more difficult to define is what the right thing is and what is ethical? Yukl acknowledges that ethical values can differ depending on your culture background. However, he states; “that in cross-culture research on the essential traits for effective leadership, integrity is near the top of the list in all cultures” (p. 410). Furthermore, a basic definition for integrity is given as honesty and consistency between a person’s espoused values and behavior.

As a leader it is important to establish your values early and to live by those values. People may not always agree with your values, but they are more likely to respect and trust you as a leader if you don’t say one thing and do another. Finally, there is no substitute for integrity when it comes to gaining the respect of your co-workers. It is important to understand that as a leader people are watching you every day. To be an effective leader you must have high ethical values and unwilling to compromise on your integrity.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Without a doubt there are numerous variables that make an effective leader. In his book Yukl has touched on many of these topics. I have first defined what a leader is and then spoke briefly about three topics I feel are core elements to making an effective leader. Obviously, there are more specific traits and characteristics that are necessarily for a leader to be successful;

however, I believe an effective leader must excel in the three areas I have mentioned if they are to be an effective leader.

It is critical that a leader be willing to adapt and change her leadership style to the given situation. Second, if a leader is to be successful in her organization then she must realize that influence, as Yukl proclaims is “the essence of leadership. Moreover she must realize this influence can come from different types of power and work towards having some effect in each area. Third, without a strong ethical sense of responsibility and being beyond reproach when it comes to integrity, a leader cannot be effective. A person who has as their foundation all three of these core elements stands a good chance at being an effective leader.

## References

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