

Leadership Development and Action Plan

Leadership Thoughts - "My True North"

Lamark Shaw

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

Introduction and overall goals

In this introduction, I will focus on my sharing my understanding of leadership and my true north.

What is leadership? Various definitions exist; Yukl (2012, p. 66) postulated that, “the essence of leadership in organizations is influencing and facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.” Maak & Pless (2006, p. 5) argued that leadership is “the art of building and sustaining morally sound relationships with all stakeholders of an organization.” Maccoby (2000) maintained that, “leadership is a relationship (selecting talent, motivating, coaching, and building trust) between the leader and the led that can energize an organization.” Summarizing the three definitions of leadership, it is safe to conclude that leadership is associated with influence and relationship. Subsequently, leadership’s role is to motivate others into some sort of action

What does the phrase “My True North” mean? George & Sims (2007) described “True North” as the inner compass that directs you effectively through life. It defines you as a person and keeps you principally grounded. It symbolizes what is most significant to you; “your beliefs, values, motivations, and sources of satisfaction” (George, 2012, p. 34). Many people recognize their True North; however, external forces often pressure them to abandon their True North – primarily for personal gain. This is an interesting topic because focusing on personal gain may perhaps lead to greed which can lead to corruption. George (2012, p. 32) argued, “many leaders placed self-interest and short-term shareholder value ahead of building their institutions for the long term.” This misguided, contentious approach [greed] will ultimately – in the long term – negatively affect organizational sustainability. Greed refers to the desire to achieve the best potential outcome for oneself (Kollock, 1998) or the aspiration to benefit from other people’s

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

contributions without cost (Rapoport Eshed-Levy, 1989). Greed involves the aspiration to exploit others' valuable efforts without reciprocation.

Overall goals

My overall goal is to develop the ability to motivate others [into action]. I enjoy teaching/facilitating training...I am extremely fascinated with intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation. The foundations of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are multifaceted and have always been an interesting topic. The constant state of flux related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, [connectedness/disconnectedness of these factors] on employee motivation and the paradoxical mechanism of those factors seem to have significant affects on motivation. Mundhra & Jacob (2011) studied the effects of intrinsic motivators on the performance of the employees. Mundhra & Jacob (2011) stated, "our study suggests a strong link between intrinsic motivators and the performance of employees" (p. 21).

Ultimately, my overall goal is to improve my ability to motivate others.

My leadership Development and Action Plan

The origin of Self-awareness

Self-awareness is not a contemporary concept. "The importance of self-awareness was iterated with the mandate "Know thyself," urged first by Thales of Miletus and later by Socrates, more than 2,500 years ago" (Taylor, 2010, p. 57). Theoretically, this cognitive awareness approach has obtained significant attention because leadership understands that in order to help others, you must first help yourself.

Self-awareness

Fundamentally, my leadership development and action plan commence with understanding myself – self awareness. According to Ashley & Reiter-Palmon (2012, p. 2), "a

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

growing body of empirical research suggests that self-awareness is associated with successful leadership.” This epistemological construct holds that self-awareness enhances the likelihood of leadership success. The rationale here is as we appraise our actions, principles and values, we focus on improving deficiencies. Ashley & Reiter-Palmon (2012, p. 2), went on to say, “leaders higher in self-awareness tend to get better outcomes than those with lower levels of self-awareness.”

The inner work and inner shift to continue

Baumeister (2005) concludes self-awareness is “anticipating how others perceive you, evaluating yourself and your actions according to collective beliefs and values, and caring about how others evaluate you” (p. 7). I concur with this philosophy. Further, I suggest that being self-aware is a cognitive disposition that increases over time. In other terms, as you think about improving yourself, you will put more effort into that process. This insight may perhaps be utilized to improve leader / follower relationships.

Lastly, this theoretical perspective [self-awareness] holds promise for leadership development and may perhaps present ideologies for increasing effectiveness.

Below is an excerpt from one of the Reflective Best Self Exercise, written by a former colleague;

“Self Awareness – Lamark has the ability to recognize and understand his own emotions, moods, and motivations. He exhibits self-awareness and is able to construct an accurate picture of his own strengths and weaknesses. It is his ability of looking within, and understanding his individuality, and how his actions can affect those around him. The self-awareness of Lamark brings to him a sense of self-confidence and a strong feeling of self-worth. This allows him to recognize

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

his thought process when making decisions, and why he behaves in different ways when placed in various situations” (RBSE Stephens, 2013).

Self-awareness (purpose)

In simple terms, as a leader, I truly want to do a good job. That is the purpose of self-awareness. I believe that leaders should have passion for their jobs. Passionate leaders are committed to excellence. Impassionate leaders are compliant (there is a huge difference between compliance and commitment). My values are based on being passionate for what I do.

Values and Principles

Values and principles are feelings that people have regarding what is right and wrong. According to Robitschek, Ashton, Spring, Geiger, Byers, Schotts, & Thoen (2012), research has corroborated the theoretical proposition that values and principles are determinants for personal growth (p. 275).

Steps to explore and build value

I will continue to pursue educational opportunities. Learning is a life-long process and the knowledge gain will allow me to influence more people.

Theoretically, as leaders improve themselves, they would be better equipped to help others. Personal growth and development is a life-long process and it should be an intentional process practiced by all leaders. Robitschek, et al., (2012) argued, “given the universal need for lifelong personal growth, this concept of intentional personal growth is relevant for all people” (p. 274).

Values and principles guide or inspire attitudes and actions. Values and principles are basic convictions that people have concerning what is right and wrong, good and bad, important and unimportant (Hodgetts, Luthans & Doh, 2006). Reave (2005, p. 655) argued that “showing

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

respect for others, demonstrating fair treatment, expressing caring and concern, listening responsively, recognizing the contributions of others,” must be the values and principles of leadership.

According to George & Sims (2007, p. 86), “the values that form the basis for your True North are derived from your beliefs and convictions.” I truly agree with this statement since your beliefs and convictions affect your decision making.

Motivation = the heart

Glory seekers

My motivation is truly from the heart (not glory). Alternatively speaking Pattan (1984, p. 7) argued “desiring prestige, fame, and glory is distinctively human. We want to be recognized for our achievements, respected, admired, and bestowed titles” – glory seeker. Glory seekers have divergent interest and suffer from disconnectedness. Often organizations are faced with disconnected or bad leaders. According to Bennis (2007, p. 1), “bad leadership at Enron alone impoverished thousands of employees, stealing their livelihoods, gutting their retirement accounts, and tearing them apart with stress.” Although various scholars have contextualized/re-contextualized the phenomenological unpredictability of bad leadership, bad leadership has complicatedness that is difficult to compartmentalize. In other terms, often, bad leaders seem to be honest and trustworthy [charismatic]; however, this is only a deceitful falsehearted attempt to gain the trust of others.

Motivation from the heart

I genuinely lead from my heart. One of the greatest feelings for a leader [me] is simply to understand, motivate and help others. I am the Sales Manager/Buyer of a high-fashion retail clothing store – UMF. UMF specialization [niche] is fashion forward clothing (with 24 – 34

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

employees [34 employees at high season]). Other leadership contexts are, facilitating night classes [Adjunct Instructor at Bryant&Stratton College, “Business Law,” also, Adjunct Instructor at Daemen College “Career Development”]. I am passionate about my work (Sales-Manager/Adjunct Instructor). In each role, my objective is to develop others which involves; mentoring, training, educating...

Motivation from the heart – My Story and how I lead from the heart

Leading others involves an enormous amount of courage. When I share my story, I express the importance not allowing fear to stop you. The leader’s role is to motivate – influence others to achieve a goal. Frequently there will be fearful situations and challenges. This information has helped me develop as a leader because it taught me to confront my fears.

I sincerely love my jobs. Bryant (2010, p. 33) postulated that “what you don’t love, you fear.” This is a compelling statement and I am not sure if I fully agree. However, I do believe that leaders should have a level of determination that compels them to move forward – past fear.

I learned that “experience could be a harsh teacher” (Hill, 2004, p. 122); however, my experiences have prepared me for even tougher decisions that I had to face. Leadership is an art that cannot be taught in a classroom (Hill, 2004). Leadership is learned by doing (Hill, 2004); however, leaders must possess certain traits to be effective. One important trait that leaders must have is integrity. Brown & Trevino, (2006) argued that, “observers have long believed that personal traits such as integrity would be important to perceptions of leadership effectiveness” (p. 597). If the leader lacks integrity, then the followers lose confidence.

Support Team

My support team consists of, first and foremost God, my family, close friends and colleagues. These groups represent my leadership support team. Teams are built on systemic

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

foundations and team members should understand the inter-connectivity, interrelationship and the interdependency of the team (the team is one).

Support team effectiveness is not about individual ability/effort. It requires collaboration and cooperation, and the goal is to present a comprehensive package.

The benefits gained from my support team efforts are numerous;

- Teams members encourages me to go farther
- Team members may assists me at solving problems
- and my team can help me to achieve complex goals

The types of relationships I will continue to build and sustain

My support teams are those particular persons with whom I have valuable close relationships. These relationships are important and I will continue to develop them because they keep me grounded and bring meaning and value to my life. This psychological disposition coalesce communitarianism epistemology. Communitarian ideology sees concrete communities of relationships with fundamental meaning and value (Wagner, 1995). This personal interdependency emphasizes the critical role/representativeness of relationships (fundamentally a normative theoretical framework that creates interconnectedness that should be preserved and maintained).

New relationships to seek out

I would like to seek out relationship with ethnic groups different than my own. When it comes to influencing others ethic groups, individuals are exceptionally multifaceted in their psychological make-up. And when leadership is left with the challenge of motivating diverse populations, the complexities are multiplied (especially in large organizations). As a leader I need cultural diversity to explore and understanding of why people act as they do.

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

Hill (2004) stated that, leaders are faced with the challenge of, “building effective teams of diverse individuals dispersed across multiple locations” (p. 123). Consequently, I must understand that globalization has forced leaders to motivate people of different backgrounds.

I believe that I can get along with any group. Below is an excerpt from one of my respondents:

“Lamarck has the ability to manage relationships and get along with others. His proficiency in finding common ground with others, and building rapport is well-developed. His ability to champion change through the management of relationships with people. I’ve personally witness Lamarck leverage the networks he has developed to cobble together effective teams. He communicates and interacts effectively with those individuals around him” (RBSE, 2013)

Integrated Life and self discipline

Living an integrated life has been a challenge for me. I mentioned earlier that; I am the Sales Manager/Buyer of a high-fashion retail clothing store – UMF. As well, I teach night classes [Adjunct Instructor at Bryant&Stratton College, “Business Law,” also, Adjunct Instructor at Daemen College “Career Development”]. This schedule creates family complexities and causes work/life imbalance. I need to adopt an integrated approach that will generate work/life balance.

In some situation I can observe how work/life imbalance has cause work/life conflicts. Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman (2001, p. 144) defined work/life balance as the degree “to which an individual is simultaneously able to balance the temporal, emotional and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibility.” Sarker, Xiao, Sarker & Ahuja (2012, p.

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

147) argued, “individuals who hold the overlapping perspective may accept the overlap, they tend to face greater degrees of conflict as they attempt to balance the two domains.”

Straightforwardly, without an integrated life, one does not have a life story. As I reflect back, I can recall numerous soccer games, basketball games, dinners and other events that I have missed because of my imbalanced work/life circumstances. On one occasion, my son’s school was sponsoring a skating party. The skating party started at 6:30pm and because I teach night classes, I could not attend the skating party with my son. I understand that this may perhaps sounds like a minor occurrence; however, to my son it was huge. I did not sense that my absence would impact him. In retrospect, I realize that this skating party was enormously important. All of his friends [and their dads] were there. That was an “epic-fail” for me.

I see myself as not living an integrated life; however, others tend to see me differently.

Below is another excerpt from my RBSE:

“Lamark at his best he focuses on other people and how he can best serve them. He has his relationships with people in the forefront of importance and all other decisions or actions are weighed against those relationships first. Lamark has the ability to be open to other people and draw out the best in them by being authentic, light hearted and humorous when appropriate; dead serious and laser focused when that’s required; or loving, caring and powerful when that’s required. People know that they can count on Lamark for compassionate, yet straight talk that creates a space, or clearing, for integrity and love” (RBSE, Stephens, 2013).

Self discipline

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

Self discipline has been one of my strengths for a very long time. I find it extremely easy to set a schedule and stick to it. I tend to follow-up on almost all of my promises. Mangan (2009) “linked the idea of self-discipline to self-interest” (p. 95). I am truly self-interested; however, not for egocentrically purposes. My objective is to help others.

Theoretically, as leaders improve, they would be better equipped to help others. Personal growth and development is a life-long process and it should be an intentional process practiced by all leaders. As a leader I know that in order to grow others, I must continue to grow. Leaders, “provide their people with the opportunities, responsibilities, and training they need to grow and to flex their leadership muscles” (Kaye 2004, p. 16).

My motivation and commitment is to help others and organizations to grow. This is truly a normative theoretical disposition. “Seeking the best interests of both the individual and the organization, and constantly learning that organizations are able to create high trust and the high performance work cultures” (Caldwell, Dixon, Floyd, Chaudoin, Post & Cheokas, 2012, p. 179) that manufacture improved effectiveness/efficiency and enduring sustainability – everyone wins.

Reflected best self portrait

Many of my RBSE respondents felt that I have strong interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills involve various competences and in its true sense interpersonal skills are more than the ability to communicate well. It is also about sharing and understanding others (Malik & Ain, 2012).

According to Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy & Quinn (2005), “the second durable resource that can enable a revision of the RBS portrait is positive interpersonal relationships. We assume that all human beings have a need to develop and maintain enduring personal

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

connections with others, and these connections of affirmative belonging are sources of support (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).”

Below is an excerpt for my RBSE related to interpersonal skills:

“Lamark is an excellent mentor, who truly enjoys helping others. He has a way of making someone feel at ease. He actively listens to the individuals’ words and action. He has the ability to motivate them into action” (RBSE, Michelle Javonne, 2013).

List of enablers and blockers

Enablers and blockers may perhaps derail a leader’s plan of action. The epoch of leading has experienced a archetype adjustment – now leader are worried about inspiring [influence] others into action. Cogner (2006) argued, “foremost among the new leadership skills demanded of this era will be the ability to craft and articulate a message that is highly motivational” (p.31).

The rationale of articulating your vision is to reflect on the choices, best-self stories/examples, enablers and blockers to amplify the conditions or relationships that allowed you to be your best to make your best self even better. This will help the leader to maintain his/her focus.

My personal vision statement

My personal vision statement is rooted in principles and philosophies underpinned by my values and ethics from a business perspective.

I am truly committed to learning and growing. I have passion for improving and I will never let fear impede my growth. I will continue to challenge myself to experience new situations. My efforts are geared overwhelmingly towards a sense of purpose. More specifically, my purpose is to have a positive impact on society in the course of leading.

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

I believe that have the capacity to clearly share the vision all through the organization and achieve “buy-in” from shareholders. I believe I have the capacity to motivate and promote a team environment. I believe that I am an active listener and I have the capacity to understand others’ standpoint (which is a vital part of communication). Finally, I believe that I have the aptitude to look at my surroundings holistically (to understand the interrelatedness, interconnectedness and interdependencies of my environment and my decisions).

Contribution gap analysis

Leadership development plan of action is a process concerned with efficiently/effectiveness and is often looked upon as the catalyst to growth. To achieve growth, leaders must look for opportunities to eliminate gaps (take proactive initiatives focusing on resourcefulness and innovation to reduce gaps). Successful leaders are aware of potential gaps and work to satisfy those issues.

Foremost leaders should identify gaps to conceptually construct a methodological approach to maintain their plan of action. After investigating the possible gaps, then the leader should identify alternatives to their situation.

One principal gap I need to work on may perhaps be found in perspective – how employees perceive my kind/nice disposition. This gap is the difference between employee perspectives – how employees perceive my kindness and my perspective – the ability to remain effective and still focus on building relationships. Employees may interpret my caring disposition for weakness and attempt to break or ignore company policies, not fearing consequences.

Can scientific methodology help me as a leader?

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

“Frederick Taylor (1917) developed scientific management theory (often called "Taylorism") at the beginning of this century. His theory had four basic principles: 1) find the one "best way" to perform each task, 2) carefully match each worker to each task, 3) closely supervise workers, and use reward and punishment as motivators, and 4) the task of management is planning and control” (Walonick, 1993). Taylor studied the organization’s human resource behaviors in an attempt to influence/motivate others. Taylor’s methodological approach – organizing principles and underlying rules, was sought after by various organizations because it proved successful in the many industrialized and non-industrialized companies. Walonick (1993) states that, “initially, Taylor was very successful at improving production. His methods involved getting the best equipment and people, and then carefully scrutinizing each component of the production process. By analyzing each task individually, Taylor was able to find the right combinations of factors that yielded large increases in production.”

Old methodology does not work

According to Walonick (1993), Taylor's scientific management theory has not fared well in modern companies. The philosophy of production first, people second has left a legacy of declining production and quality, dissatisfaction with work, loss of pride in workmanship, and a near complete defeat of organizational pride.

Taylor’s methodology applied to today’s followers may:

- Adversely affects attitudes
- Negatively affect behavior
- Create a culture of individuality
- Cause problems with employee-retention

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

Timeline: for my leadership development and action plan

My ultimate goal is to teach business classes (full-time) at the University of Buffalo (UB). This has been a personal aspiration for the last several years of my life. I truly have a passion for teaching. Years ago I wrote my personal commercial and in my commercial I talked about teaching at UB. A personal commercial contain affirmations [goals and objectives]. I have been teaching at Bryant and Stratton and Daemen College for the last five years. This has experience has allowed me learn excellent some teaching skills that I will hopefully utilize at UB.

Below is my plan of action time-line

2013 Complete my PhD at Capella

2014 Continue to teach at Daemen College

2015 Apply to Daemen's Business Department (Adjunct Instructor)

2016 Apply for a position at the University of Buffalo (Business Department).

My personal vision statement (From 07a1, 2013)

“Hogan & Kaiser (2005, p. 174) argued that good leaders are capable of projecting vision and they should have the ability to, “explain to the group the purpose, meaning, and significance of its key undertakings.”

My personal vision is based on fundamental business principles such as:

- 1) Team-effort
- 2) Developing and adhering to unyielding core values.
- 3) Shaping company culture – Inclusion
- 4) Stimulating intrinsic factors such as creativity/resourcefulness, entrepreneur mind-sets, and high internal locus of control.

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

These principles are underpinned by personal vision statement, which is: First, I will clearly sharing vision throughout organization. Second, growth is a journey not a destination. Third organizational components are interrelated, interconnected and interdependent (systemic) my behavior affects the entire organization.”

Conclusion:

Leadership is concerned with the distinctive contributions of different forms of knowledge and how to fundamentally institutionalize that knowledge and influence others. Straightforwardly, understanding social norms becomes significantly important to this process (codes of behavioral conduct).

Leadership is a field of study that investigates the impact of individuals, the environment, and the structure has on the behavior of individual (to improve an organization’s efficiency and effectiveness). My goal is to continue to study these processes to ultimately improve my leadership ability.

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

References:

Baumeister, R. F. (2005). *The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Michael E. Brown, Linda K. Treviño, (2006), Ethical leadership: A review and future directions, *The Leadership Quarterly*, Volume 17, Issue 6, Pages 595-616,

Bryant, J. (2010). Leading with love in a fear-based world. *Leader To Leader*, 2010(56), 32-38.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R., Floyd, L., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of business ethics*, 109(2), 175-187. doi:10.1007/s10551-011-1116-2

George, B. (2012). True North Groups: A big idea for developing leaders. *Leader To Leader*, 2012(63), 32-37. doi:10.1002/ltl.20007

George, B.(with Sims, P.). (2007). *True north: Discover your authentic leadership*.** San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hill, L. A. (2004). New manager development for the 21st century. *Academy Of Management Executive*, 18(3), 121-126. doi:10.5465/AME.2004.14776182

Hill, E. J., Hawkins, A. J., Ferris, M. and Weitzman, M. (2001), "Finding an extra day a week: The positive influence of perceived job flexibility on work and family life balance," *Family relations* (50:1), pp. 49-58.

Hodgetts, Luthans & Doh (2006), *International management: Culture, Strategy, and Behavior* (6th ed.).McGraw-Hill

Kaye, B. (2004). The leader's role in growing new leaders. *Leader To Leader*, 2004(32), 16-19.

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

- Kollock, P. (1998). 'Social dilemmas: The anatomy of cooperation'. *Annual review of sociology*, 24, 183–214.
- Maak, T., & Pless, N. (2006). *Responsible leadership*. New York: Routledge.
- Maccoby, M. (2000). "Understanding the difference between management and leadership." *Res. Technol. Manage.*, 43(1), 57–59.
- Malik, S., & Ain, Q. (2012). Prospective Teachers' Awareness about Interpersonal Skills- A Comparative Study. *Interdisciplinary Journal Of Contemporary Research In Business*, 3(11), 514-522.
- Mangan, A. (2009). 'We're not banks': Exploring self-discipline, subjectivity and co-operative work. *Human Relations*, 62(1), 93-117.
- Mundhra, D., & Jacob, W. (2011). Intrinsic Motivators in the Indian Manufacturing Sector: An Empirical Study. *IUP Journal Of Organizational Behavior*, 10(2), 21-39.
- Pattan, D. E. (1984). The Business of Ethics and the Ethics of Business. *Journal Of Business Ethics*, 3(1), 1-19.
- Rapoport, A. and Eshed-Levy, D. (1989). 'Provision of step-level public goods: Effects of greed and fear of being gyped'. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 44, 325– 44.
- Reave (2005), "Spiritual Values and Practices Related to Leadership Effectiveness," *The Leadership Quarterly*, volume 16, issue 5, pages 655–687.
- Roberts, L., Dutton, J. E., Spreitzer, G. M., Heaphy, E. D., & Quinn, R. E. (2005). Composing the reflected best-self portrait: building
- Robitschek, C., Ashton, M. W., Spring, C. C., Geiger, N., Byers, D., Schotts, G., & Thoen, M.

RUNNING HEAD: My Plan of Action

- A. (2012). Development and Psychometric Evaluation of the Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II. *Journal Of Counseling Psychology*, 59(2), 274-287. doi:10.1037/a0027310
- Sarker, S., Xiao, X., Sarker, S., & Ahuja, M. (2012). Managing employees' use of mobile technologies to minimize work-life balance impacts. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 11(4), 143-157.
- Taylor, S. N. (2010). Redefining leader self-awareness by integrating the second component of self-awareness. *Journal of leadership studies*, 3(4), 57-68. doi:10.1002/jls.20139
- Wagner, A. (1995). Communitarianism: A new paradigm of socioeconomic analysis. *Journal Of Socio-Economics*, 24(4), 593.
- Walonick, D. S., *Organizational theory and behavior* (1993), Research in organizational behavior. Staw, B. M. and Cummings, Retrieved 3/15/13 from:
www.statpac.org/walonick/organizational-theory.htm
- Yukl, G. (2012). Effective leadership behavior: What we know and what questions need more attention. *Academy of management perspectives*, 26(4), 66-85.
doi:10.5465/amp.2012.0088