

LEADERSHIP AND MOTIVATION



As many of you know, our company specialises in the language and metrics of motivation. You would think - at least in business - that motivation was/is an indispensable part of the 'mix'. By which I mean: every organisation should actively consider a strategy for motivation for all its staff. The assumption, for example, that we have an HR department, so therefore it's 'covered' is often fallacious.

Why many organisations pay so little attention to motivation is a mystery, but when the same holds true, albeit to a lesser extent, for leadership, then something is seriously wrong. For if there is one factor that is consistently identified as being THE most important component of an organisation's success, then it is leadership. The quality of leadership is intimately related to results.

So it is that we need to take a wide - generic - look at leadership before narrowing down the attributes necessary for a specific organisation. What, then, are these generic attributes? What exactly are we looking for in a leader?

I think there are two main aspects of leadership that any leader has to be thoroughly conversant with. **First**, leaders must be able to work ON the business or ON the organisation. What does that mean? In essence I reduce this to two major skills: the strategy for the organisation and the implementation of the processes, systems, structures that enable the strategy to be delivered. **Secondly**, working IN the business or organisation. This working IN is not about the systems; it is about recruiting, creating and sustaining the winning teams. Such teams seriously leverage human productivity. As they say in the jargon: TEAMS - Together Each Achieves More.

But the final part of working IN drills down to the individual - the leader must not only build the strong, winning teams - s/he must also motivate every individual in the organisation, for it is the motivation that will provide the biggest impact on performance.

So, generically, leaders must work ON the organisation (strategy and system) and work IN the organisation (teams and motivation) too. Is there anything missing from this picture? Yes, I could argue that motivating people is a leader's skill that is not only inwardly focused on staff, but outwardly focused on suppliers, customers, and the wider audience of the world's opinion too. We might call this PR or negotiation!

But semantics aside, there is one major area I haven't covered - without which none of the other skills work effectively in the long run. It is more a quality than a skill. It is the leader's commitment to personal growth and to learning. Without that commitment and action, leadership is running on empty - and it soon shows.

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