

Perspective: Teleo - Leadership

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Teleo-Leadership and why you want to implement it!

It is now well documented and known; change, ambiguity and uncertainty have now become the norm of organizational life. A plethora of scandals, such as the meltdown of corporate ethics, tough global competition, announcements almost everyday of downsizing, and the list goes on, can be found all over the environment. Turning such events into opportunities is what is now characterizing the work in the social sciences. Common questions nowadays are about what contributes to a business to succeed? What conditions bring the best in our business partners, from top executives to the newest staff member? Research shows that the answer is not found in a balance sheet. Part of what is needed to succeed is psychological in nature. Psychological factors have not been considered very much by organizations before. This seems about to change as the spread of what is now known as Positive Organization Behavior advances throughout the world. Its research is continuously bringing about evidence based models that highly impact performance. We know that leadership is one of the most complex social phenomena to understand, let alone develop. The new conditions have brought up to the forefront the need to implement effectual leadership. Drawing from the fields of Positive Psychology and Positive Organization Behavior, our approach, which we call Teleo-Leadership encourages all of you to move away from traditional approaches that focus on identifying faults in people that need to be fixed. Instead, figure out what positive strengths people have and build from there.

Teleo-Leadership: what is it?

Teleology can be traced back to the Greeks: teleos - goal, which says that a person is best understood in terms of where one is going. Teleology implies purpose, moving toward goals, an individual in a constant state of striving toward, becoming. It embraces questions such as “what is one after? What is our goal? It simply says that we understand people and their behavior in terms of their goals. We conceive goal orientation as being genuine, given a person’s experiences (thoughts, emotions, values, beliefs, “the real me inside”) and acting in line with this real self. Listening and understanding other people’s goals requires empathy, comprehending different perspectives and worldviews. Teleo – Leadership depicts the type of positive leadership needed in contemporary times, where change is intensive, previous roles do not work and where the best leaders will be transparent with their intentions, showing a clear link between espoused and internalized values and actions.

Constituent Elements of Teleo – Leadership

The components of leadership are always related to the leader, followers and context.

Regarding the leader and followers, life experiences and their interpretation (mental set) play a major role as psychological antecedents to self-awareness. Among some of the key psychological elements are the positive psychological capabilities named by F. Luthans (2007) as Psychological Capital. PsyCap addresses who you are and who you are becoming. It is an individual’s positive state of mind, which includes and integrates the factors of optimism, hope, efficacy and resilience. This core positive construct has shown that when applied higher levels of performance, satisfaction, commitment, low turnover, work happiness, financial impact and high RoI are achieved.

Confidence (efficacy) is a belief an individual has about the own ability to mobilize the motivation , cognitive resources and action steps necessary to execute specific tasks in a given context. Snyder (2000) defined **hope** as a positive motivational state of the sense of success resulting from the interaction between willpower (goal oriented activity) and ways to achieve them (paths).

Optimism is seen as a positive experience for the future. **Resilience** is an ability to recover quickly from adversity and is commonly taken as an excellent index of personal potential that can be cultivated.

Teleo - Leadership Style Cluster

The proposed model is inclusive of four styles and therefore constitutes a cluster.

- 1) Ethical style: high moral standards. They sacrifice their own gains for the good of others. Positive role models who see the good in others and make an effort to develop people's strengths further than where they are.
- 2) Inspiring style: They expand their selves as much as possible and as a result they are inspiring to others. They work hard to achieve a state of becoming and stay in a state of striving forward. They are courageous and pursue high goals. They are persistent, flexible, focused and gain followers to pursue a vision.
- 3) Cognitive stimulating style: perceive new emerging situations and markets changing and move organizations toward shared leadership. Those conditions demand to question core assumptions in order to generate a knowledge based and learning culture. They tap into followers know how, who are encouraged to observe future trends and learn new approaches. It results in creating unity through diversity: integrating into new ideas and initiatives – creativity.
- 4) Personal consideration: leaders get to know each one who works with them and help develop their full potential. They know people's needs and likes and challenges them as well as support them. They influence them and others through them, who also they will need to develop and support.

Positive Organizational Context

Organizational context is emphasized today in leadership and executive development because it occurs in a dynamically emerging context. According to Avolio (2003), like the individuals, context needs to be readied for leadership development to be sustained and for achieving a positive effect on associates. Cultures are optimized as characterized by their transparency, energizing and intellectually stimulating features, which support the development of leaders and followers to develop to their full potential. Teleo-leaders care about the development of others as much as getting the tasks successfully accomplished. A mature context is conducive to the self – regulation that leaders and followers are required to develop fully as teleo – leaders. Along with the vision, mission, strategy, context includes the work team and the next higher level of leaders in which the person is embedded.

Leadership development can occur in many situations and places as long as one stops to reflect on what has happened, then one thinks about what one wants to happen next, and then after next.

**The Teleo – Leader model development training sessions will be offered in late January 2011. Please see our web site for specific dates and location: www.borboa.ch
Please contact us at : info@borboa.ch or call us at 044 740 96 02**