

# Needs Driven Leadership

The secret to your leadership success is not written in this article, it is not in seminars, books or audio programmes. It is locked away in your people, in their minds and hearts.

To access this information you need to talk to your people, get to understand their criteria and then connect with their minds, touch their hearts and do this with congruence.

*"How would you know you were a good team leader?"*

*"Have a compelling vision and then inspire and empower the team to achieve it."*

*"Whose criteria are those?" I asked*

*"Mine, I suppose" he replied.*

*"What are the criteria of your team members, what do you need to be doing so they would consider you a good team leader?"*

*"Not so sure, probably the same as mine."*

*"Would you like to find out?"*

*"OK."*



When we flushed out the team's criteria, we found many differences. Criteria that were important to some were not to others. Pete was surprised that some did not want their hearts won - that concept had little meaning for them. Others did not want their minds won.

As the discussion went on amongst the team, it became clear what a difficult job Pete had if was to meet the criteria of his team members and be accepted by all as a 'good' leader. Things became even more complicated when we flushed out the criteria of the person Pete reports to and his criteria for considering Pete a good team leader.

It seems we cannot universalise on what makes a good leader, on why minds and hearts are won. Leadership, it would appear, is person specific. What is critical to one person will not be for another. Some people are turned off by the outgoing, dynamic, high energy, charismatic style of leadership. There are 'quiet' leaders in the

workplace who have genuine followers making real differences.

## Effective leadership

The most effective style of leadership would appear to be related to the personalities and needs of the people being led. People follow because their criteria are met. Leaders need to measure themselves against the criteria of their people rather than the textbook or the expert criteria. Successful leaders know the criteria of their people. They have fluency and flexibility in their leadership style. They individualise rather than universalise.

## Management and leadership

You manage systems, budgets, and time, but you lead people. Leadership is about the people side of things. It is about rapport, communication, loyalty, trust, helping

people believe in themselves and inspiring them to higher levels of performance.

Leaders need to understand people and the dynamics of behaviour. They need to understand what motivates people and how they can be inspired, excited and moved to action.

## We are dramatically different

The single biggest mistake people and hence leaders, make in their relationships, is to assume that people are like them, have similar needs and values and would like to be treated as they would. People are dramatically different, so different; it is as if they are from different planets. The criteria for winning minds and hearts can differ widely from person to person.

As early as the fifth century BC, Hippocrates described groups of human characteristics, each cluster very different yet equally valuable in its own way. There have been many variations and developments of these fundamental groupings over the years.

For the purposes of this article, I will describe three basic personality types - carers, doers, and thinkers. People will have a mixture of these motivations which in turn explains how they need to be treated.

## Carers

They value caring over achieving or getting things right. They are thoughtful, loyal, generous people who like to be accommodating. Usually they are good listeners and show a genuine interest in other people and their issues. They don't like conflict and work hard at keeping harmony in the team.

*Expect them to want a personal relationship with you and to value you for who you are.*

Leaders recognise the values that drive such behaviours will centre around partnership, teamwork, two-way communication, sincerity and harmony.

Leaders need to appeal to these values if they are to inspire action and get business results.

Typically, these people will want their hearts won, not their minds. The leader wins their hearts by his humanity and approachability. They need a leader to be friendly, likeable, supportive, empathetic and thoughtful

- someone who remembers the 'little' things. In this way the heart is won, loyalty grows and action inspired.

They will find it hard to respect someone who is arrogant, pushy, bossy, selfish, sarcastic, anyone who excludes them or abuses their generosity.

They feel particularly valued with opportunities to genuinely help others, when their support is recognised and when working for someone who is thoughtful.

## Doers

They value achieving over caring or getting things right. These are assertive, high energy, no nonsense type of people who love to achieve and get things done. They usually have little time for small talk and like to get straight down to the business in hand. They like their information concise, 'one-minute manager' style. Bullet points and summaries often characterise this style. They don't appreciate their time being wasted.

Leaders recognise the values that drive such behaviours will centre on achievement, success, competence, efficiency, speed, status and winning.

*Expect them to want a functional relationship with you and to value you for what you can do.*

Leaders appeal to these values to inspire, motivate and persuade.

Doers typically need both their minds and hearts won. They need someone driving forward with passion. They will follow a leader who has an exciting vision, someone who is dynamic, future orientated and achievement driven.

They will find it hard to respect someone who is complacent, talks problems, wastes time or makes excuses.

They feel particularly valued when asked to trouble shoot, to achieve against the odds. to meet difficult challenges and when given responsibility.





## Thinkers

Getting things right is more important to them than caring or being successful. They are fair, principled and usually risk averse. They tend to be prudent and would prefer not to make a decision than make a wrong one. They are the perfectionists of our world and are usually thorough in whatever they do.

*Expect them to want an intellectual relationship with you and to value you for how much you know.*

Leaders recognise the values that drive such behaviours will centre on quality, integrity, logic, accuracy and independence. Leaders link to these values when they need to influence, persuade and get rapport.

Typically these people will want their minds won, not

their hearts. Their minds are won by the leader's principles, integrity, accuracy and attention to detail.

They need a leader to be prudent, someone who respects systems and procedures and is concerned about standards. They will find it hard to respect someone who is frivolous, ignores the problems, exaggerates, is over familiar, someone who insists the deadline is met at the expense of quality.

They feel particularly valued with opportunities to increase their knowledge base, when they can do the job properly and when they are given problems to solve.

While some people do fall 'cleanly' into one of these categories, many of us have combinations of these motivations. The criteria for winning minds and hearts will reflect these 'mixed' values.

## Motivation

Influential leaders know their people. They know the value mix that drives an individual's behaviour and they appeal to these to create effective relationships. The leader recognises that to get people to do a worthwhile

job he has to give them a worthwhile job to do. A worthwhile job will embody that person's core values. There is likely to be little job satisfaction for a carer doing detailed research, writing papers from home with no contact with work colleagues.

By ensuring people have a worthwhile job the leader improves motivation and reduces the need for supervision. Comments like "Well it is a job - it pays the mortgage" indicate there is a lack of worth to be found in that job.



### The tail wag factor!

Money buys a dog but it is love (and food!) that makes it wag its tail. You might have high quality people in your team but you may not be getting high quality performances. If people are not being led according to their criteria, you will not get the level of performance they are capable of. It is all too easy to make your great people average and average is not good for business.

Organisations are not successful, it is the people in those organisations who are. They drive it forward or put it into reverse. Dig deeply into organisational problems and you are likely to get to people. Conflict, stress, misunderstanding, poor communication, de-motivation, resistance, low morale, all have their origins in people and relationships. These are leadership issues. Organisations are only as effective as the people in them. People are only as effective as their leaders enable them to be. Organisations fail their people if they fail to provide quality leadership.

### The hot chilli trap!

Effective leaders avoid the hot chilli trap - treating others as you want to be treated. I love hot chilli but

that is no reason to use it as bait when fishing. To be successful I must use what appeals to the fish - maggots, even if it doesn't appeal to me. You will not win the heart of a carer using the doer's leadership criteria. You will not win the thinker's mind using caring criteria.

In the middle of a team building session, the team leader apologised to the rest of the team for constantly giving them challenges.

*"Challenges light my fire, and I thought this worked for everyone".*

He had been fishing with hot chilli!

Some people are motivated by challenges, others can feel 'used' by this same behaviour. Not everyone needs to be overtly appreciated. Not everyone will be happy when you offer your help. The bonus doesn't work for all.

### Ill-informed goodwill hurts business

The vast majority of managers are good people who work hard and have the best interest of the business and its people at heart. While they are likely to treat different people differently, often it is not in the appropriate different way. They fall into the hot chilli trap. By delegating in the way they like to be delegated to, by giving feedback in the way they like feedback given to them, they think they are adding value but in fact, may be eroding value.

This is tragic and comes with a high cost to the business. It is tragic because the goodwill is there. The manager is trying to get it right. Organisations are full of good-willed managers who are getting it wrong, causing stress, de-motivation, low morale, and poor productivity.

Studies show that 80% of people leave jobs because of relationship issues and most of those are with their immediate supervisors. These managers are likely to be good-willed people, doing the best they can with the awareness they have. However goodwill, if it is ill-informed will hurt the business.

Buchinham and Coffman in their book *First Break All The Rules* say "People join companies but they quit managers". People don't quit leaders. Instead they are likely to follow them out of the organisation when they leave.

## Leaders connect with needs

Leaders know their people and know how they need to be treated to add value and create worth. They are approachable. They have open, collaborative lines of communication. They may ask questions like:-

*“What do you need from me as your team leader?”*

*“0-10 score me on how I match against those criteria?”*

*“What do I need to be doing to improve those scores?”*

The leader may not be able to give individuals what they are looking for as she will have restrictions and needs of her own. However, the crucial thing is that people sense a willingness from the leader to understand them and a willingness to meet their needs if it were possible. In this way she gives people what they don't normally get which is why she gets from them what they don't normally give.

Leaders connect with the needs of their people and engage them in problem solving on these needs.

Team leaders never appease the individual at the expense of the business need or indeed of the team leader's need. The business goal always has priority.

## Developing leaders

People are often promoted to managerial positions because they are technically good. This role requires new and complex skills of motivating, influencing and empowering. We don't inherit these skills, we are not taught them at school and many of our work models are inappropriate. Your company may be using state of the art information technology and yet managing its people on outdated principles of leadership psychology, stifling energy and creativity, in effect, wasting the human resource.

Much money and time is invested in headhunting and recruiting senior people who, once appointed are often left to their own devices with limited support from the company. A leadership culture goes beyond any one individual. It is a set of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that somehow 'belong' to the organisation.

People may come or go but the leadership culture remains. It is powered by significant people who model respect, openness, trust and collaboration. These attitudes engage and motivate the staff. For such a culture to work requires the organisation to value such a leadership model and to put time and energy into creating it and maintaining it. It doesn't just happen.

## Traditional leadership

Traditional leadership was often autocratic. The 'my way or the highway' style is still to be found in the workplace. These people engage in one-way communication, seek to control and are prescriptive. This is a disabling and dis-empowering model. They seldom win minds or hearts.

Rather than create an organisation of leaders, they create resentment and resistance, eroding the worth of the business. The true worth of an organisation has to lie not only in profits and fixed assets but also in customer and employee satisfaction and particularly in the quality of its leadership. The leader is at the heart of delivering performance and improving the worth of the business and its people.

## The leader of leaders

This person recognises that leadership is complex and that it is difficult for one person to be 'getting it right' for his colleagues no matter how many leadership courses he has attended. He encourages people to view leadership as a partnership and to take responsibility with him for leading and being led.

- He creates a culture where people are open, welcome feedback and connect with each others' needs. He engages staff in taking ownership for their issues.
- He leads by infection rather than fear. He is able to motivate and move audiences, often in 'quiet' ways. He manages relationships rather than people.
- He will speak the truth skilfully and respectfully He welcomes feedback. He builds bridges not barriers.

You will find that people smile when he walks into the room rather than when he leaves the room.

The leader knows when to be charismatic and when to be quiet. She knows when to be directive and when to be consultative. Through her fluency of styles she will always be growing worth. Growing the worth of the individual makes good human sense and it also makes good business sense.

High self-esteem is the fuel for performance. The leader

provides high-grade fuel, which results in outstanding performance. In these ways, the people and the business become an appreciating asset. This is her measure of success.

### Leader as worth creator

Above all the leader is a worth creator. He ensures people have a worthwhile job to do. He makes it worth their while to do this job properly. He creates

worthwhile relationships with his people. He gives people hope and belief in themselves.

A lot of leaders want people to feel good about them. Great leaders get people feeling good about themselves.

Leadership in this sense is too important to be left in the hands of people in authority!



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This article describes the leadership model embedded into the **An Even Better Place to Work** programme. This is a self service, on-line programme of activities, measures and resources that quickly creates a well led, motivated and highly productive workforce. For information on how to create a culture of openness, trust and collaboration and to track the impact of leadership in your organisation, contact:-

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