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Handbook for Success in Leadership

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Critical Thinking for Decision Making

Introduction

Andrew Carnegie reportedly once said that he wanted to put on his gravestone, "Here lies a man who knew how to put into his service more able men than he was himself" (Carnegie & Covey, 2017). If we think of these words as how Andrew Carnegie feels about what made him a success and an effective leader, we must recognize that leadership characteristics are multi-faceted and require more than just one component. Nahavandi (2015) shared that the definition of leadership effectiveness should consider all the roles and functions a leader performs and the way that should be measured is on the outcomes they achieve.
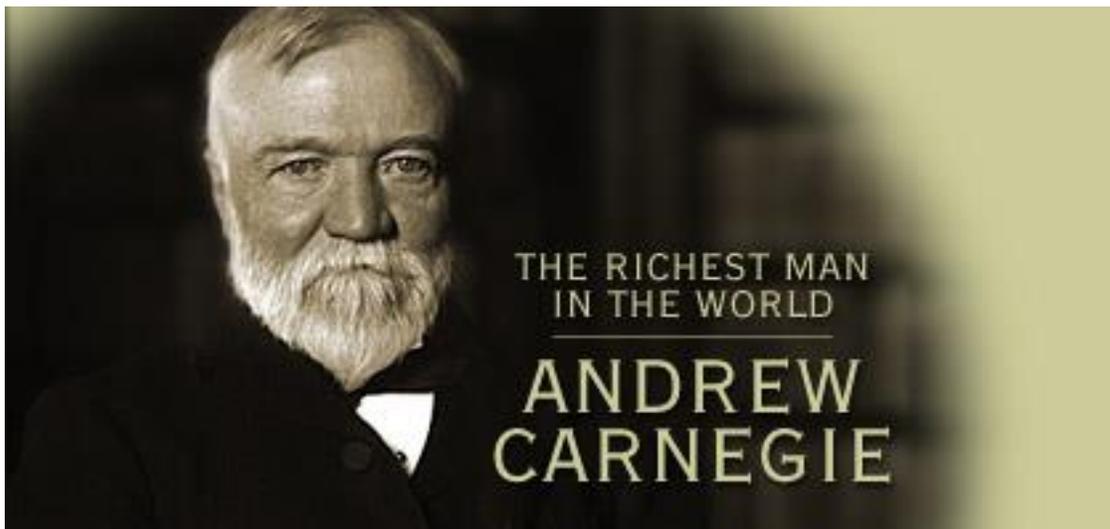
The reason we as leaders are successful, is not through just sheer hard work, fancy degrees or strategies on leadership. Instead it is something that renowned leadership scholar Peter Drucker characterized as a focus on understanding what needs to be done, what they as leaders are good at and what difference can be made by executing on those things (Karlgaard, 2004). In order to be the best leader, you can be, you must understand yourself, and be surrounded by good and competent people, they will help you be successful. With his statement, Andrew Carnegie was showed us what he valued in his own leadership, and it was not only his

shrewd mind or business savvy, it was his ability to build a coalition of people that were talented in ways he was not, that allowed the sum to be more than the parts of the team and the success to be greater, measured by the outcomes he achieved. Success is not a solo sport, and neither is leadership.

In the coming chapters, we will focus on the strategies and advice that will help any leader become more effective. The focus of these chapters will approach best practices of leadership components such as building self-awareness, taking accountability, leading in an ethical way and decision-making. The components of leadership that we will focus on are all practical applications of scholarly and real-world experience that should allow for others to gather a simple picture of places to review in order to build your leadership brand.

Self-Awareness in Leadership

Leaders are not developed in a standard way, and a leader identity is not formulated by a certain approach or set of traits alone. Leader identity is self-defined and consists of leadership behaviors that are specific to "who you are" and the behaviors and expectations that drive you as not only a leader but as a person (Chin & Trimble, 2015). Leader Identity includes the self-awareness of the leader as well as and developmental experiences or bias that exist within them. According to Social Identity Theory, people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, and age cohort (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Social Identity has an impact on how you see yourself as a leader and the experiences that may drive your version of how you see yourself as a person and how you are perceived as a leader. Social identities such as being a female, minorities, LGBT and racial profiles have been marginalized by society and have an effect on the leader identity through the experiences and bias that exist within the self-construct.

The importance of self-awareness is evident in your decisions and delivery. In fact, Gino (2015) told us that knowing about our bias can also help managers enhance organizational effectiveness which can be seen as realizing outcomes. This makes it important to understand not only your bias but also know yourself and your natural reactions and strengths in a way to drive outcomes without hurting relationships, your career or your team. As a leader, you have to decide how much of yourself you bring to every interaction and experience you have as a leader. There are positive and negative aspects to any person, and the things that make you up as a person are important to recognize and apply within the leadership context in a positive way.

Looking through a lens of influencing your team or others to achieve outcomes, there are specific checklist questions, you should reflect on to ensure that you are self-aware in critical times. Cohen (2017) shared a very effective checklist for self-awareness that can be a great thought provoker in leadership situations.

Checklist for Self-Awareness

1. **What exactly are your project goals?**

2. **Which goals are of primary importance, and which could be set aside if necessary?**

3. **What are your personal and career goals, and do they help or hinder task success?**

4. **Are you using all available resources?**

5. **Do you see the many potential currencies you can earn and have available to trade?**

6. **Can you be collaborative or confrontational as needed?**

7. **Are you willing to assert your legitimate claims for collection?**

8. **Are you reluctant to use some currencies, even when they would work? Do you know what is stopping you?**

Influencing Others

As leaders, we spend a great deal of time influencing others through exchanging what the other person values in return for what you want and although the concept of the give and take of influencing is simple, the process of exchange is complicated (Cohen, 2017). There are very real barriers that keep people in competitive mode through process structures such as performance metrics, or even differentiating priorities. Cohen (2017) told us that it is important to understand the common self-created barriers to influencing others in order to maximize the likelihood you will be able to find a mutual understanding to drive your initiatives forward.

Common Self-Created Barriers to Influencing

Not assuming the other person is at least a potential ally

Not clarifying your goals and priorities

Not diagnosing the ally's world: organizational forces likely to shape goals, concerns, needs

Not determining the ally's currencies

Knowing but not accepting the ally's currencies

Not assessing your resources relative to the ally's wants

Not diagnosing your relationship with the potential ally (and fixing if necessary)

Not figuring out how you want to make trades – and making them

According to Bellis (2015), three Influential leadership strategies can help leaders be more effective.

1. "Persuading up" by establishing a shared vision and values

2. Inspiring commitment by engaging every team member

3. Strategically steering initiatives by collaborating to achieve that shared vision

The idea behind these three strategies is to use empathy and reciprocity to stay emotionally grounded while also making a compelling case that allows for more collaboration. The impression of transparency and building trust are the strongholds of the inspiration of commitment strategy. It is important to build pathways to create trust and collaboration in order to be able to lead strongly and effectively without "carrying a big stick" through strategically controlling outcomes and leveraging the right talent across the organization. This is exactly what Andrew Carnegie was speaking of when he talked about his accomplishment being leveraging smarter people than him. In order to do that effectively, leadership skills focused internally and externally build on each other.

Conflict Competence

Self-awareness and strategies to influence others will get you far, but conflict competence will be necessary in the real world of business outcome delivery. Conflict competence is the ability to develop and use cognitive emotional and behavioral skills that enhance productive outcomes of conflict while reducing the likelihood of escalation or harm (Runde & Flanagan, 2013). This is truly leveraging all of the skills we have talked about so far, to adapt strategies that will leverage conflict wisely to drive outcomes. It requires understanding the motivation to harness the power in being conflict competent, as well as the use of a competence model such as

the Cool Down, Slow Down and Reflect model (Runde & Flanagan, 2013) that outlines a path to manage conflict effectively. This requires a great deal of self-awareness to be able to recognize your hot buttons, and control your response to slow down and think through pathways of forward action without harmful outcomes.

The leader that takes the time to understand the nature of conflict as well as their approaches, views, and responses to conflict will encourage conflict competence in those they lead as well. A great tool that can be leveraged to assess what triggers conflict for you as a leader is either the conflict dynamics profile instrument or the hot buttons test assessable at www.josseybass.com/go/craigrunde (Runde & Flanagan, 2013). The recommendations for conflict competence and the self-awareness it takes to truly manage yourself and others with also help you take accountability when things go wrong. We are not designed as perfect leaders, and we learn from our mistakes. A challenge you can put to yourself is to take a moment and think about how you can manage conflict better and what the benefits would be to you both at home and work.

In the next chapter we will talk of accountability and the start of that leadership process is routed in understanding ourselves, the conflict surrounding us, and the opportunity for results. Recommendations from this chapter will be a foundation for those capabilities. This will be the next step of focusing on your team, your accountability as a leader and your ethical imperatives that you owe to yourself and your company.

Accountability

Great leaders exhibit effective listening skills as well. Leaders need to hear what their followers are saying in order to be effective in their role of decision making. Great leaders will also empower, motivate and inspire their followers. Having a great leader can be priceless and

great leaders are well respected. Inspiring to be a great leader can be and has been a challenge.
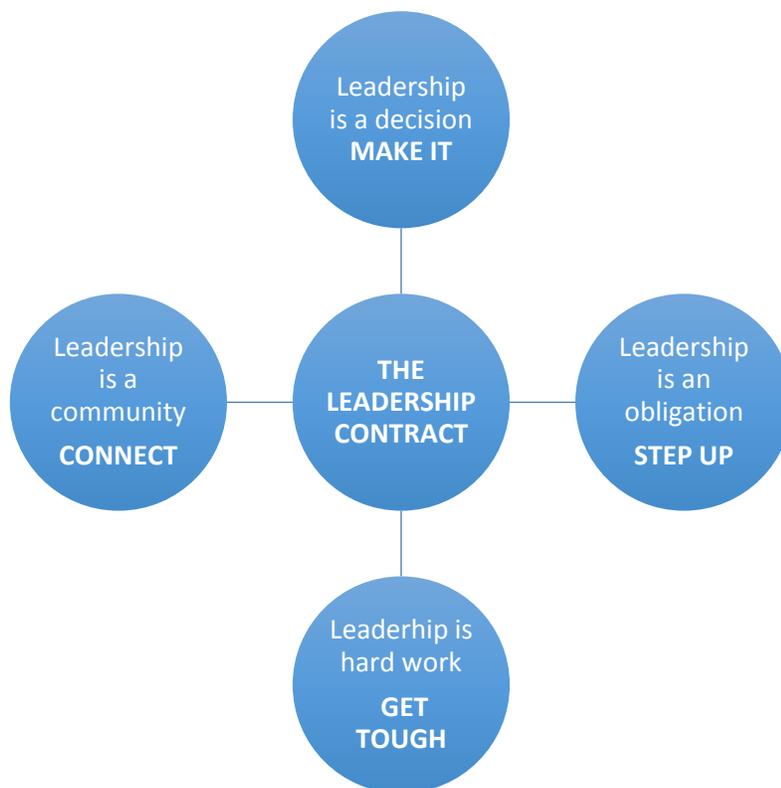

Table 1 (Molinaro, 2015)

There was a CEO (Frank) of a trade company who was feeling down about himself and how he had been leading his team. The CEO was experiencing high stress levels, feeling guilt and pointing fingers over what had gone wrong. The CEO had no idea how to turn his company around and was feeling as if it was the end. The CEO meets a man named Shirzad Chamine, who talked to Frank about raising the levels of Positive Intelligence for himself and his team. Chamine (2016) suggested posing this questions to his team; "What do we need to do so that within three years we can say this current crisis was the best thing that could have happened to our company?" (p. 5). From that point on, Frank would pose this questions at the beginning of every meeting he had with his team. Frank's team did not buy into his tactics at first, however as

time went by and Frank was being consistent in his discussions, the team began to listen to Frank and began to focus on the question he had been asking at every meeting. The team began to shift their minds from the anxiety, disappointment, blame, and guilt to curiosity, creativity, excitement and resolute action (Charmine, 2016). In less than six months, this leader and his team had turned the company around and was on the upswing.

Positive Intelligence measures the strength of high and low positive intelligence thoughts of your mind (Charmine, 2016). High positive Intelligence refers to your mind acting as your friend and low positive intelligence is your mind acting as the enemy (Charmine, 2016). For example, you have a meeting to lead on tomorrow and you have a restless night worrying about your presentation. This is an example of low positive intelligence acting as the enemy. On the other hand, if your mind tells you, you should be fine during your meeting and all will go well, this is high positive intelligence acting as your friend.

Michael Hyatt defined accountability as accepting the responsibility for the outcomes expected of you – both good and bad (Patterson, 2015). Great leaders typically are looking for ways to improve, what could be done, what could be done better, what can we do to change (Patterson, 2015). Leaders should look at failures as learning opportunities to improve; these are simply called life lessons. It is important to learn from failures as this creates a process of continuous improvement (Patterson, 2015). Continuous process is ongoing and team effort that allows a team to improve services and performances (Patterson, 2015).

One of the greatest issues in accountability is the control people possesses (Folkman, 2014). When people voices are heard, their work increases and their performance sky rockets (Folkman, 2014). Chamine (2016) stated our minds are our worst enemy; it tends to make us think we cannot be successful or take on challenging task without failing. Secondly, Chamine

(2016) discussed the "muscles" of the brain and how it tends to be weak from year of not being used or stretched to its limits. Over time the brain can build itself up and provide one with great power.

It is important to define roles, goals and expectations of any leadership team. When the roles, goals and expectations are clear, everyone is accountable for the organization. It is important a leader is not "dumping" rather than delegating (Nahavandi, 2015, p. 252). Being clear also will help with effective delegating. It is more apparent that leaders need to be well rounded. When delegating, it is important for the leader to be task oriented. A task oriented leader is more than likely to have positive outcomes and more goal oriented. The task oriented leader usually provides their team or followers with to do list or tasks that need to be completed (Northouse, 2015).

Leadership Accountability Is a Critical Business Issue

Table 2 Molinaro (2015)

It is important to understand where your team/organization is and how they feel about accountability. Molinaro (2015) conducted a survey to measure the importance of accountability;

72% said accountability is important and critical to a business. Some leaders may lead out of self-interest and not for the best interest of the organization. Therefore, this could compromise the ability to lead.

Also, it is important to hand out task in a combination of difficult and easy task (Navandi, 2015). Leaders also must have great communication skills which will help with effectiveness. There are eight accountability skills that businesses should practice. Leaders must be careful when thinking of accountability. Demanding accountability and allowing others to make decisions or providing pep talks does not hold others accountability. These particular tactics did not work for the 40,000 leaders who were studied (Folkman, 2014). The eight great accountability skills leaders should possess:

1. Drive for Results - define the results you want to deliver and allow a fair amount of control.

2. Honesty and Integrity – Being open and truthful about progress. Leaders bust have a positive attitude as this is essential for a leader (Maurice, 2017)

3. Trust – After conducting research on a set of leaders, employees had the issues;

   a. I am not confident that my efforts will be rewarded

   b. I suspect the leader may take advantage of me

   c. I constantly question the leader's motives

   d. I am sure they will take credit for my accomplishments

4. Clear Vision and Direction – The hunter that chases two rabbits catches neither one. (Folkman, 2014). Achieving goals is quite important for a leader. In order to achieve goals, the leader should exemplify confidence (Maurice, 2017). Followers have to be clear on the directions and feel their participation has a purpose (Maurice, 2017).

5. Problem Solving and Technical Expertise – Ensure team knows and understands their role and what skills are needed to be successful; expectations. True leaders carry responsibility and do not blame others when things go wrong (Maurice, 2017)

6. Communication – Effective communication is key, this allows and provides understanding of what the responsibilities are (Maurice, 2017). Having communication activities is ideal especially for large changes. Effective communication from a leader looks like: being able to communication to their team about the changes, more than once using different techniques. The team needs to be able to talk about the changes and this allows them to understand the change (Bryson, 2011).

7. Ability to Change – leaders who are high leveling functioning are good at implementing changed behaviors; such as: accepting feedback, talking on challenges, innovating, spreading optimism, showing concern and setting clear goals (Folkman, 2014).

8. Collaboration and Resolving Conflict – Collaboration is not easy to achieve however once it is achieved and everyone can come together to work as a team, will create more success than a team who does not understand what it means to be a team. Listening is always a quality trait for a leaner to be effective (Maurice, 2017).

Bryson (2011) suggested creating an accountability system to ensure the best leadership is taking place. Having an accountability system in place also addresses performance measures, management system that measures goals, strategic guidance, balances top-down direction ad bottom-up efforts and learning, decision making and creates strong leadership and commitment (Bryson, 2011). Leaders should lead by example and one way to ensure this concept is to be a

motivator. When a leader empowers their team, they are helping guide the team and help them to be successful (Patterson, 2015).

Leadership and Ethics

Ethics has been defined by Northouse (2016) as values and morals an individual or a society finds desirable or appropriate (p. 330). As a leader, ethics is about what a leader does and who leaders are (Northouse, 2016). Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development is still effective in helping to understand ethics. Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development. There are 3 levels and within the three levels, 6 stages. Level 1 include stages 1 and 2; stage 1 is obedience and punishment and stage 2 is individual exchange (Northouse, 2016). Level 2 is conventional morality; stage 3 interpersonal accord and conformity along with stage4 maintaining the social order. Level 3 is postconventional morality; stages 5 and 6, social contract an individual rights and universal principles (Northouse, 2016).
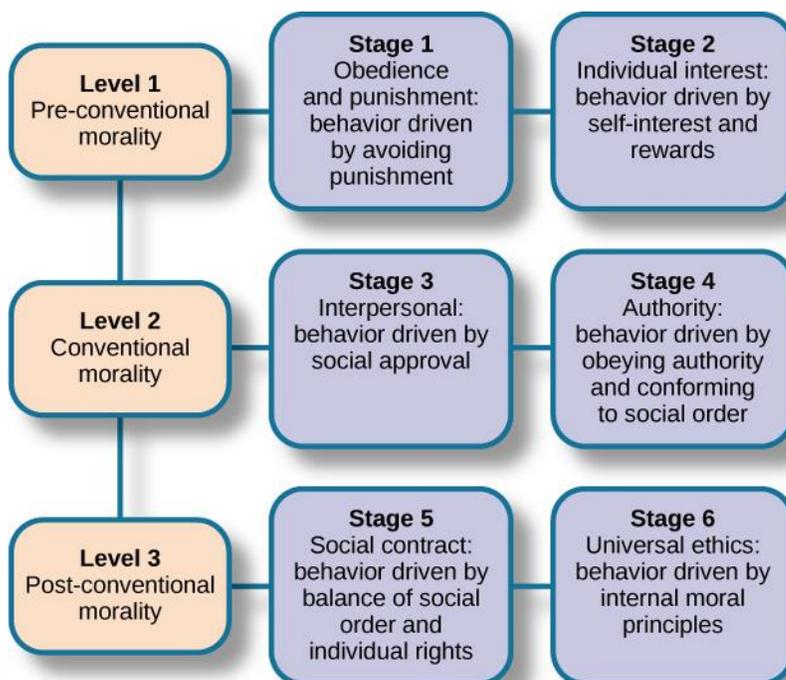
Northouse, 2016

Every organization can benefit from constantly monitoring its systems and procedures and its culture or its hardware and software (Carucci, 2016). Being a successful leader requires many traits; one being trust. When a leader shows trust, performances are typical higher within the team (Carucci, 2016). When a team feels unimportant or their voice does not matter, the environment is not as pleasant, morale is down, and trust is withdrawn (Carucci, 2016).

Creating a cultural requires it to start from the top (Fernandes, 2017). Ferandes (2017) also stated "ethical leaders have a tremendous impact on how people I their organization behave and what they achieve" (p. 1). A great leader will focus on what is being done correctly and they are always willing to lend a helping hand. There are six steps for ethical leaders to follow:

1. Model ethical behavior- leaders should be open and honest when addressing his or her group.

2. Adopt transparency in decision-making and communications – Leaders should have an open-door policy and host regular meetings.

3. Establish a formal ethics or values statement – This could be a vision statement, goals set that each associate has to adhere to.

4. Insist everyone meets ethical expectations – Leaders should ensure that all team members are present for every meeting.

5. Recognize and reward examples for ethical behavior – Leaders should go over what ethical behaviors looks like and reward those who are able to admit their short comings and can admit they used their mistake a learning experience.

6. Talk about ethics as an ongoing learning journey, not a once a year training program-
   Leaders needs to constantly monitor new changes in the world and be ready to make
   changes as needed (Fernandes, 2017, p. 3)

Being a successful leader requires a leader to have several traits; being open minded and
transparent to name a couple. In Northouse (2016) Leadership Theory and Practice he discusses
Mann's six traits: Intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion and
conservatism. It is believed that people can be born with these traits or they can be
learned. Many leaders fail because they do not have the traits that it takes to be a successful
leader.

Decision Making Guidance

According to Hartley and Phelps (2012), leaders are placed in a precarious position to
make key decisions that has a tremendous impact, not only on their organization, but ultimately
in the lives of others as well. Decision making comes with an incredible amount of responsibility
that requires those in leadership to be mentally and emotionally capable of dealing with the
results and consequences of their decisions. Furthermore, decision making has a level of
accountability that most individuals not in a leadership position have to deal and contend with as
well. Most individuals cannot relate to and cope with the enormous amount of stress leader's
face when making vital decisions. Therefore, guidance in making effective decisions is essential
for leaders to become sound and successful decision makers (Lunenburg, 2011).

In its simplest terms, decision making is the act of choosing between two or more courses
of action, which can be made through either an intuitive or analytic process, or a combination of
the two (Lunenburg, 2011). The intuitive approach to decision making is that gut feeling based

on a combination of one's personal values and past experience. Intuition could possibly be the best approach in making decisions if the information regarding the solution to the problem is vague. However, intuition could lead to bias and a subjective approach to decisions that requires more objectivity (Starcke & Brand, 2012). The analytic approach is based primarily on information, ignoring the emotional and historical aspects of making a decision and finding the ideal solution to a problem. An analytic approach provides objectivity to decision making, but removes that personal feeling and connection that could be beneficial to the overall decision. The more complex decisions require a combination of analytical and intuitive approach. With guidance and structure leaders can be provided with a framework to make the most viable decision based on circumstance and situation.

In order for leaders to make the most effective decisions they must first understand what prevents and negatively impacts effective decision making. There are a plethora of issues that can prevent effective decision making, including:

1. Too much information – Having too much information can lead to analysis paralysis, which is when there is so much information in that it prevents a final decision from being made. Leaders must have a skill set of discernment in order to decipher pertinent information that would lead to best possible decision (Guttman, 2012).

2. Not enough information – Not having the appropriate amount of information can lead to decisions being made without any root source. Leaders must ensure proper information gathering techniques are being effectively used and implemented to properly address the problem (Guttman, 2012).

3. Emotional attachment – Leaders must be mindful not to make the basis of their decision from an emotional perspective. Decisions based solely on emotion tend to

omit the obvious facts and objectivity needed in making an effective decision (Guttman, 2012).

4. No emotional attachment – It is challenging for leaders to make an effective decision when one does not care one way or the other about the outcome. Leaders must have a level of subjectivity to understand and feel the impact in their decisions (Guttman, 2012).

5. Too many involved – A decision by committee can be challenging as everyone has their own opinion and ideas of how to approach solving a problem. One person should be designated to make a final decision after considering the input from the committee (Guttman, 2012).

6. Vested interests – Decisions can often struggle under the weight of vested interests. These interests can become a major hurdle and blockage to the decision-making process and must be identified by leaders to remove them from impacting decisions (Guttman, 2012).

7. Lack of experience – Lack of experience of making decisions can negatively impact the decision-making process. Leaders must gain experience of making decisions at various levels in order to shape their approach to the more senior levels. Also, the engaging of mentors for guidance can also aid in the decision-making process (Guttman, 2012).

The effective decision-making process is one that can be developed through the training and application of an effective leadership decision making model. The rational decision-making model is a fundamental framework that if used pragmatically would help leaders develop a strong foundation for understanding how to make good, sound and logical decisions (Woiceshyn,

2011). Furthermore, a rational decision-making model provides a sequenced approach to decision making, and help ensures consistency and discipline is built into the overall decision-making process. In essence, the rational approach provides order and logic to the decision-making process for leaders (Woiceshyn, 2011).

The rational approach to decision making consists of series of steps beginning with identifying the problem and opportunity, and ending with final actions in making the decision. The first and perhaps most important step of this rational approach is to recognize a problem or identify meaningful opportunities (Starcke & Brand, 2012). It is imperative that leaders are able to correctly identify the right problem that needs solving, which can be done by proactively asking pertinent questions about the current situation and follow up with questions about the foreseeable future. Within any organization there are constant issues and problems that require attention. However, leaders must develop a keen discernment to identify the problem correctly in order to implement a more rational approach to make the best decision possible based on the situation (Woiceshyn, 2011). The next step is to gather relevant and vital information that will be essential to making the decision. Having the most relevant information is key in determining what leaders need to know before a decision can be made, and if that information will ultimately help you make the right choice (Starcke & Brand, 2012). From there a leader can began to analyze the situation to determine alternative courses of action and determine the best interpretation as use of gathered information. The next step is for leaders to develop best possible options based on the gathered information and analysis of the situation. This stage requires for innovation to ensure all possible options in determining the best approach for making the decision (Hopen & Rooney, 2017). Then leaders must evaluate all alternatives based on the several options that were generated. This is the step where leaders evaluate for feasibility,

flexibility, desirability and determine which alternative will best achieve the objectives (Lunenburg, 2011). The next step is selecting the most ideal alternative in which leaders must forecast the consequences, potential problems and risks of making the decision. The final step of the rational approach is acting on the decision and developing a comprehensive plan to implement it.

Leaders must ensure the decision is communicated, supported and have the organization's commitment to making the decision work (Hartley & Phelps, 2012). The rational decision-making approach provides structure and discipline to the complexities of the decision-making process. The framework ensures that all full range of factors are considered in the decision-making process in a comprehensive and rational manner (Hopen & Rooney, 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, leadership is the ability to impact social influence that capitalizes on the efforts of others towards the achievement of a desirable goal (Guttman, 2012). In order for one to become successful in leadership, they must first become self-aware in order to understand how personal bias and experience can shape their leadership tendencies and style. There are strategies and developmental practices used in training better leaders, but one must be able to identify internal traits to highlight the positive ones and correct those traits that could negatively impact leadership. Influencing others towards a common goal is the ultimate task of leaders, in which there are several strategies that can be utilized, such as effective persuading up and engaging others through inspiration. Ideally, effective leadership stems from high emotional intelligence in which leaders can use emotional and behavior skills that enhance productive outcomes. Great leadership deals with being engaged with their people and surroundings, and possess high positive intelligence with increased accountability and ethical behavior. An

effective leader has several characteristics and traits such as transparency, great communication skills and open mindedness. Leaders must be open to guidance, having the willingness to understand the process of making decisions and be aware of the roadblocks that can prevent decisions from being made. The decisions of leaders ultimately determine how successful their leadership with be. Utilizing the information presented will provide a framework for developing and implementing success in leadership.

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