Leadership Handbook: SAT2 Task 2

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Leaders As Motivators

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One of the most important jobs of a leader is to effectively motivate their employees. "In today's workforce, leaders who can't motivate are as useful as an automobile without an engine". (Wright) This is sometimes a difficult task and there are a few ways to help leaders accomplish this. Before talking about motivation it is important to talk about influence. "To exercise influence, a leader must have power, the potential or ability to influence decisions and control resources." (DuBrin, 2010) Without influence it is impossible to lead or motivate a successful team. Some tactics noted in *Leadership:Research Findings, Practice and Skills* include:

- Leading by example and respect

- Using rational persuasion

- Developing a reputation as a subject matter expert

- Exchanging favors and bargaining

- Legitimating a request

- Making an inspirational appeal, being charming, and emotional display

- Consulting

- Forming coalitions

- Being a team player

- Practicing hands-on leadership

It is important to treat others with respect at all times and communicate effectively to use these tactics. When feasible, empowering an employee to take on responsibility is also a great way to build influence. These tactics help a leader build influence within a team and then may be able

to use it for motivation techniques.

As you would imagine rewards are an excellent motivator for most people. As stated in

this useful theory, "The expectancy theory of motivation is based on the premise that the amount

of effort people expend depends on how much reward they expect to get in return." (DuBrin,

2010) This means there is a direct correlation between reward and effort and as a leader it is

important to show a clear link between the two. In order to determine an effort to be rewarded

for a goal must be set. This goal should be discussed with the employee or team so that they feel

more of a commitment to it. There is another theory, the goal setting theory, theorizes behavior

is deeply affected by values and goals. Each goal should be specific and not overly general or

confusing. Goals are excellent motivators when they are not so difficult to be frustrating but

instead challenging. Achieving these goals should be linked to feedback and rewards. There is a

danger that employees will choose unethical routes to achieve their goal and this should be

watched for. Not all rewards require an expense to the company or the leader. Recognition is a

very powerful motivator that satisfies a basic human need and it is free! "Motivating others by

giving them recognition and praise can be considered a direct application of positive

reinforcement, that is, reinforcing the right behavior by giving a reward." (DuBrin, 2010)

Another motivational benefit of recognition is that it works to satisfy an employee's need for

pride.

Lastly, an effective leadership style to motivate employees is coaching. "Effective

leaders are good coaches, and good coaches are effective motivators." (DuBrin, 2010) As a

leader you must invest time into building relationships with your employees if you expect to

motivate them effectively. Coaching should focus on the growth and development of the

individual's skills. Personalities will determine the effectiveness of this coaching relationship

but a good leader will be able to overcome most conflicts. Praise and recognition comes into

play with this approach and should be used frequently. Also, goal setting and constructive

feedback are useful to a coaching relationship with an employee. The risk with this approach is

giving bad advice which will destroy confidence in the relationship and really backfire as a

motivational technique.

Leaders must motivate effectively to lead successful teams and employees. Gaining

influence, goal setting, reward/recognition and coaching are some of the ways to accomplish this.

Building relationships and trust takes time but is necessary to accomplish this goal. Without

motivated employees a leader will not succeed and it's crucial to learn how to best motivate your

team.

References

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