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From Command to Coaching: Introduction to Leadership and Management The Shift in Leadership Styles as Organizations Grow

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Module code: LCBB4015

Module name: Introduction to Leadership and Management

Component 2: Coursework: Essay

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Programme: BA in Business and Management

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Introduction

The role of leadership is changing radically in today's increasingly complex business environment. The traditional leadership style, based on command and control, is becoming less effective and refined as organisations become larger and more complex. Jamie Dimon, Chairman of the Board and CEO of JPMorgan Chase, emphasises that, especially in large, dynamic companies, leaders should act more as coaches, mentors, and motivators than as controllers. In contrast to strict authoritarianism and micromanagement, this shift demonstrates the growing importance of adaptability, communication, and support in leadership.

This essay examines how and why, as businesses grow, leadership philosophies need to change from an authoritative approach to one that is more coaching- or supportive-oriented. The conversation will assess the causes of this change using pertinent leadership theories and models, and will be backed up by actual business cases. The essay will also list the fundamental abilities that contemporary leaders need in order to function well in expansive and intricate organisational environments.

Defining Leadership and Its Importance

Leadership is a complex and highly valued process that involves influencing others to achieve shared goals (Northouse, 2019). Rather than being a fixed trait or simple behaviour, leadership is dynamic and multidimensional. It can be seen as a way to improve personal, social, and organizational outcomes. Some scholars define leadership based on traits or behaviours, while others emphasize relational and contextual factors. Bryman, 1992; Mumford, (2006).

Leadership is generally defined as directing and persuading people towards a shared vision or objective. It comprises making wise decisions, fostering teamwork, and inspiring and motivating others. Leaders also need to listen carefully to their team members and offer support and direction when required. By assigning tasks to others and valuing their contributions, they must likewise empower others. Bombardier, K. (2022).

Both contemporary corporate leaders and scholarly literature stress the difference between management and leadership. According to Dustin Moskovitz, Asana's CEO and co-founder:

“Management is operational; it’s about setting priorities, evaluating priorities, hiring and firing decisions, compensation decisions, things like that. A leader is more of a coach, or even a spiritual guide. She is responsible for maintaining energy, keeping everyone on the team inspired and helping them grow, and for ensuring everyone is aligned in the same direction. A leader must be a point of strength and stability across changes.” Julia Martins (2022)

Experimental methods in leadership research have made it easier to understand how leadership behaviours affect things like employee motivation, trust, and performance. According to Podsakoff & Podsakoff (2019, p.11–33), experimental approaches are still one of the best ways to determine causal linkages, despite some drawbacks in organisational contexts, such as restricted generalisability. Their results demonstrate that good leadership frequently directly influences results like productivity and satisfaction rather than merely being linked to them. This supports the notion that leadership needs to be deliberate, purposeful, and grounded in facts, particularly in expanding organisations.

Leadership Style Evolution in Growing Organizations

Developing leadership styles in growing companies. Leadership styles that worked well in the beginning often lose their effectiveness as organisations grow. Leaders of small companies typically rely on hierarchical control, quick decisions, and direct supervision. When performing repetitive, urgent tasks under high pressure or in start-ups, this ‘command and control’ method can be effective. But as the business grows, this approach often leads to bottlenecks, reduced autonomy, and a lack of teamwork.

In large organisations, leadership requires expanded authority and communication. JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon emphasises this change, stating that leaders should act more like ‘coaches and conductors’ than controllers. Coaching and transformational leadership, which focus on team alignment, development, and vision.

Similarly, as a group grows, the leader should progressively change from a task-focused, directive style to a supportive, delegating one, according to the Life Cycle Theory of Leadership, which was later expanded into the Situational Leadership Model. Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K.H. (1969, p.26–34).

Lastly, transformational leadership theory, which stresses motivating and empowering followers to go above and beyond expectations, is consistent with coaching leadership. This approach works especially well during periods of transition when workers require direction, support, and a clear goal instead of strict oversight.

This study questions the presumptions of traditional hierarchical leadership and shows how a collaborative or coaching approach can work better in dynamic environments. Instead of depending on strict task management or a single authority, leaders in these kinds of groups respond jointly, provide mutual support, and adapt intuitively. The leadership dynamic changed during the organization's crisis to a more controlled kind of mutual adjustment, exposing covert hierarchies and instances of individual leadership inside a team environment.

During the organization's crisis, the leadership dynamic shifted to a more controlled kind of mutual adjustment, revealing hidden hierarchies and instances of individual leadership inside a team setting. Leaders in these types of groups respond collaboratively, encourage one another, and adjust naturally rather than relying on rigid task management or a single authority. Coaching based on collaboration can work more effectively in dynamic environments.

Adler PS, Kwon SW, Heckscher C (2008, p 359–376).

Likewise, under Satya Nadella, Microsoft had a significant change in leadership. When Nadella took over as CEO in 2014, he transformed the company's competitive, performance-driven culture into one that was based on empathy, teamwork, and learning. Emotional intelligence and coaching form the foundation of his leadership approach, and he is renowned for motivating managers to "listen, learn, and help people grow."

In response to the demands of scale and complexity, these examples demonstrate how multinational corporations are changing their leadership practices to stay flexible, creative, and people-focused.

Key Leadership Skills for Expanding Organizations.

Innovative companies understand that long-term success requires visionary leaders who can create and sustain competitive advantage. Having the skills and a new approach within the team that are necessary for transformation and success.

The most important components of successful leadership are talent development and mentoring. Long-term organisational sustainability and reduced dependence on management control are achieved by building capacity, empowering employees, and training others. The most important components of successful leadership are talent development and mentoring. Long-term organisational sustainability and reduced dependence on managerial control are achieved by building capacity, empowering employees, and training others. Coaching others, empowering employees, and developing capacity.

In growing organizations, leaders must master a range of skills, including relationship building, agility and adaptability, innovation and creativity, and employee motivation to navigate complexity and change. Additionally, strong abilities in decision-making, conflict management, negotiation, and critical thinking enable leaders to align diverse teams, resolve tensions, and make sound strategic choices. IMD (2022).

More long-term developmental ties are involved in mentoring, when more seasoned executives provide career guidance, role modelling, and feedback to less seasoned

colleagues. Both strategies increase worker motivation, boost output, and help retain talent, particularly in knowledge-driven fields that place a high value on independence and education.

By training future leaders from within the company, these procedures help support leadership continuity. A coaching culture in rapidly growing organisations facilitates distributed leadership, eases the burden on top executives, and cultivates a high-performance atmosphere based on accountability and support. Bass, B.M. and Avolio, B.J. (1994).

Conclusion

The transition from an authoritative, command-and-control style to a more coaching-oriented and supportive leadership style has been discussed in this essay. Examples from the real world, such as JPMorgan Chase, show how flexible leadership approaches can improve employee engagement, alignment, and creativity. The essay has also described the essential leadership abilities needed to manage growth, from communication and emotional intelligence to strategic thinking and decision-making. Leaders who can motivate, encourage, and mentor others through ongoing change are essential to the long-term success of contemporary organisations.

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