

Description

I have been in my role as a Sergeant at Aberystwyth, Ceredigion since December 2019. In October 2020, less than a year after being promoted to my first leadership role, I was tasked by my Inspector to become the new Line Manager for a Probationer Constable who had been experiencing several issues. His work ethic had been questioned, he had taken a prolonged period of sickness and he was on a Development Plan which highlighted certain targets he was required to meet to evidence his improvements. The main objectives were;

- Demonstrate full commitment to the role of a Police Constable and ensure that they demonstrate appropriate respect for, and commitment to, the role and its responsibilities. There is a requirement to accept the support and guidance offered by officers of all ranks.
- Demonstrate the ability to critique own performance and not deflect feedback when constructively provided.
- Ensure that the submission of documentation is undertaken promptly and completed to the highest of standards linking in with all HDPP priorities and policies.
- Carry out instructions promptly and with due diligence and take responsibility for actions undertaken, i.e. providing concise and accurate information to supervisors.

There were also time constraints that needed to be considered too, although this officer was new to my team his probationary period was coming to an end. I was aware that plans had already commenced to serve him with paperwork that would commence dismissal procedures if his performance did not change. I therefore knew

Thoughts
of
Feelings
about this?

Good Start, what were
your thoughts and feelings
about being considered for this position
2) The individual being removed
3) The challenge ahead

that if any improvements could be made, they would need to be evidenced sooner rather than later.

At the time of this decision, I was a Sergeant on a Response Team, however I was also undertaking Tutoring and Assessing responsibilities, working closely with other Student Officers so I felt confident that I would be able to take on this added responsibility and workload. I also felt that the management style I used was effective and had allowed me to show my competence in my current role. As a Sergeant I pride myself on the performance of my team, my style of leadership is to encourage high productivity and to reward hard work. My core skills are the abilities to invoke a strong work ethic and team working mentality into the people I work with, adapting to different people's communication and learning styles when necessary. I love my job and I try to share my enthusiasm with my colleagues and staff whenever appropriate and possible. Despite my confidence, I was somewhat surprised but also felt a sense of pride that I had been chosen to undertake this task due to my relatively short time as a Sergeant.

What
made
you
feel
confident
about
this?

How did
you
learn
these
styles?

Great

My Inspector felt that this officer needed a new style of management in an effort to help him and address the issues that had been raised. It was therefore my responsibility to identify what the root causes of his issues were and try to assist him to rectify them in order to improve his performance and the general standard of his work. In line with force policies, it was also necessary to identify and implement support processes through the Human Resource and Training Departments that could assist him.

Good
you are
looking
at Education
Any Thoughts
Here?

The Authoritarian Leadership style is used quite often within the Police Service because it maintains discipline and an order to the way objectives and tasks are met in an efficient manner with those decisions being made quickly. Girodo (1998) felt that

Thoughts
or feelings
about
this?

the paramilitary structures of the police helped to create an authoritarian leadership style and therefore it can be used to good effect when working with new Student officers or inexperienced members of staff. I have previously drawn on my experiences of working for a Sergeant in the Dyfed-Powys police who is renowned for his authoritarian and directive style of leadership. Whilst there are aspects of his style that I consider too controlling / micromanaging, his invasive nature and dedication to achieve results has inspired me greatly and forms parts of the leader I am today.

Good leadership should motivate staff; however, the prevention of dissatisfaction is just as important as the encouragement of satisfaction itself (Hertzberg, 1987). The English Oxford Dictionary (2021) defines motivation as; "a reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way and a person's desire or willingness to do something". American Psychologist Frederick Hertzberg believed that people are generally motivated by two sets of factors, stating "the job satisfiers deal with the factors involved in doing the job, whereas the job dissatisfiers deal with the factors which define the job context" (BBC Bitesize).

Over time, due to further learning and Continuous Professional Development, I have identified that I also utilise morals and personal ethics to show that I will strive to deliver on any promises I make and always look to lead by example, attending incidents and arresting suspects alongside my team. Hoggett et al. (2019) found that a lot of value is given by frontline officers to leaders having experience of street level police work and they want to be led by someone who understands their views and experiences.

According to Adair's (1973) Functional Leadership, effective leadership relies on three main elements to achieve success. These are the needs of the Task, the Team and the Individuals. Importantly, all three needs have to be met in order to be successful. Although there would clearly be times when priority would have to be given to different

areas to satisfy overall tasks and objectives, finding how this new member of staff would fit into my team and contribute to their work was therefore of high importance to me.

why do they get results? — good but why is it important to you, pull the string for deeper reflection.

where are you going with the introduction of motivation?

where did you learn it?
what is the reason it motivates you to be this way?

Good! Any personal thoughts or reasons why?

Feelings

During the process of working with this member of staff, I have experienced many different feelings such as concern, frustration, pride and even relief. As a First Line Manager, I felt pride at being asked to try and rectify these issues. My motivation to succeed with this task was heavily influenced by thoughts of myself in that position and the fear that would invoke. I was genuinely concerned about his welfare and the effects losing his job could have on him, both professionally and personally and believe that this transferred to how I worked with him. Mullins (2019) considers genuine concern for staff can go a long way to encouraging them to perform well. Suda (2014) also finds that an organisation or project can succeed or fail based partly on how well leaders lead, but also how well followers follow and so I visited the officer before he returned to work from his period of sickness and took the time to get to know him whilst also explaining the vision and goals I have for my team and for individual members of staff. Personnel need clear goals and direction to be communicated to understand what direction the team is going in and why (Suda, 2014). As highlighted by Handy (1992), a leader shapes and shares a vision which gives point to the work of others, I therefore broke down and explained where he would fit into those plans.

I was able to identify during that meeting that the officer had significantly fallen behind in his student coursework which had led to him becoming demotivated and immediate actions would be required to get him back on track to meet his submission deadlines.

I recognised that I would need to find what motivated him and build his confidence and esteem by using verbal persuasions and looking at factors such as his self-respect, status in the organisation and recognition for the good work that he did do. I felt I would need to be more of a directive leader during the early stages of working with him, telling him what to do, when and where and if necessary, how to do it. However,

I was conscious that I needed to manage this style of leadership effectively and monitor how the officer performed to avoid him becoming too reliant on me, hindering his development, or giving him a feeling of less responsibility.

Throughout this process I have considered not only the potential impacts on his career and the organisation but on my own reputation too. I was always conscious that if I got this wrong somehow then I could be viewed negatively and the personal progresses I had made could stall. A manager is likely to be judged by the results achieved by staff on their teams, not just by their own performances (Mullins, 2019).

why did you do this?

How did he take it?

Could you have not been able to change the person, but still be a good leader?

I believe it is possible

Good

Evaluation

The Institute of Quality Assurance (2021) defines continual improvement as "a gradual never-ending change which is focused on increasing the effectiveness and/or efficiency of an organisation". A leader using the Continual Improvement Process seeks to identify opportunities for change and improvement, either immediately or over time.

The officer would require ongoing help and support beyond his probation, learning needs were identified and I ensured that he was given a Supportive Plan for these which were updated weekly to show a history of his support. To some extent this initially had a negative impact on my emotions, I would feel frustrated at a perceived lack of ability to 'fix him' entirely and questioned some of the approaches I had used. However, on a positive note, I have realised that the initial one to one meeting with this officer assisted to highlight core issues and reasons for his poor performance which in turn led to a course of action being identified. As part of the one to one meetings I found areas where I could make suggestions to the way this officer worked in an effort to support him. For example, I identified an issue with the way he presented his Crime Reports and suggested adapting this to develop his skills in this area. Whilst it was clear his motivation and enthusiasm for his role was low, feedback from the officer also revealed that he wanted more freedom to do his job practically, whilst knowing that he had support and clear direction when it came to the clerical aspects.

Emotional Intelligence is a key skill in leadership as it allows the manager to judge the correct approach for individuals in different situations whilst considering impact factors. Having reviewed the effectiveness of the communication methods I was using, I also identified that on some occasions individual emails were better suited to communicate

good

Education and learning Here

Chance for a reward

why?

Good

with the officer than simply face to face contact. As time went on, I was able to discuss situations with him in a Democratic Style, coming to a mutual agreement rather than directing him. This is a style of leadership I learnt from a Sergeant whilst working for the South Yorkshire police, within that force we worked in much larger teams and were given more freedom to make investigative decisions. Despite the smaller teams here within the Dyfed-Powys police I have tried to incorporate this leadership style as I feel it encourages more ownership for my staff and personal responsibility.

I found the Democratic Leadership style encouraged this officer to give his views and opinions about his progress and the incidents he had dealt with on a regular basis and so was appropriate and effective at that new stage. I wanted to empower him to make his own decisions and ensure he recognised his own achievements. The empowering of staff is considered similar to some forms of delegation, however empowerment goes further as it gives more responsibility to staff members and requires trust that they can make decisions and deal with situations when a manager is not present (Mullins, 2019).

good

why did he like it + motivation?

Empowerment relates to the beliefs personnel hold about their role and their organisation, it can therefore be a good motivational tool, however, to be an effective leadership style it should be used sensibly with appropriate delegation and development of team members. To give a member of staff too much responsibility could lead to mistakes and build stress, whereas to give only a little could be patronising or insulting to them. In practical terms, empowerment should be about telling people what to achieve without actually telling them how to achieve it. Lee et al. (2018) found that leaders who empowered were much more effective in relation to personnel creativity and behaviour. Similarly, Armstrong (2012) observes that it supports greater employee engagement and openness in the workplace.

However, the empowerment process often takes time and so I utilised the one to one meetings with him to avoid conflicts at live incidents where decisions had to be made quickly, as a Sergeant I have a responsibility not only to him but to other staff and the public to ensure their safety is not put at risk.

I am aware of the importance of both motivator and hygiene factors when dealing with my staff, although I treat them fairly I do not treat them the same, they all have different needs and it is important to take the time to understand them as individuals and what is important to them. When applying this model during any tasking allocation I consider the circumstances of the specific tasking and the motivating factors it has with it. I then consider external influences such as the hygiene factors listed towards the end of this section before deciding which officer to delegate a certain task to.

Hygiene?

Extrinsic motivators are identified as a person's motivation or willingness to perform either for reward or to avoid being "punished". It is done not necessarily through enjoyment or satisfaction but to either get something or avoid something else (BBC Bitesize).

Intrinsic motivators are a person's motivation to feel their own sense of reward and it is the personal gain that they feel that is sufficient as oppose to being given or avoiding something, Hertzberg (1987) found that if a Supervisor displays Intrinsic motivators and their motivation is to feel their own sense of reward and personal gain, then this could have a positive impact on their team.

I recognise both extrinsic and intrinsic methods to the way I supervise and how staff respond. When I started as a Sergeant my team had a high workload which was taking up a lot of their time, effecting their morale and effectiveness. It was evident with hindsight they had become extrinsic in how they worked, volunteering for some tasks in order to avoid further or more challenging work.

Learning

Motivator factors - job satisfaction that can increase motivation. These can be recognition, challenging work or a sense of achievement.

Hygiene factors - These do not increase motivation, but the motivation of employees may fall if these are not present such as job security, holiday leave and work life balance.

I make it clear to my staff that one of my main priorities is them and so I clear their workloads to give them more time, reduce stress and allow them to enjoy their jobs. Although they are still busy, they know that I will not make them work on tasks for longer than necessary or task them with unnecessary enquiries. As a team they now routinely have the lowest number of crimes yet always attend incidents, taking pride in this. Through identifying an issue and addressing it, my staff now work intrinsically, taking self-pride in achieving results and managing their workloads.

How is their motivation?
How this been effective
as members change

Is this something you
will continue in the
future?

Analysis

It is my opinion that although there were issues with the performance of the officer which were down to his own behaviour and attitude, there was also a clear personality clash with his previous supervisor which had contributed towards his development issues. Linking back to the theory of motivation and hygiene factors, Herzberg (1987) observed that an employee whose relationship with a colleague is difficult may then find it difficult to be motivated about their work while ever that relationship remains challenging. Tannerbaum and Schmidt (1960) felt that to handle disagreements, managers must determine first whether the issue involves goals, methods, or values; whether informational, perceptual, or role factors are underlying; and then whether or not the stage of the disagreement has evolved to where it is one of unexpressed differences, open discussions, or even open conflict. The manager must then identify an appropriate approach to deal with the disagreement, such as avoidance or problem solving. In all cases a manager's ability to control their own feelings is essential.

I recognised that I am somewhat intrusive in the way I manage my team and ensure I have monthly one to one meetings with all members of staff, I review their workloads and general performance regularly, taking the time to value them as individuals. However I also recognised that due to the issues this officer had been having I had to prioritise how much time I spent specifically assisting him and therefore when he had started on my team I ensured we had a one to one meeting each week where we discussed what support was available to him and objectives in his performance. The objectives were assisted by the SMART evaluation technique which breaks down a task to ensure it is specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timely. According to Ogbeiw (2017) when citing The US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2008), the SMART technique is considered the gold standard when setting goals

because it gives an organisation clear direction for action planning and implementation. During those meetings I gave specific and relevant feedback and I maintained them throughout this process in order to monitor his progress.

McGregor's theory of X and Y (1960) suggests that where theory X is a more authoritative style, theory Y leaders can have a more optimistic view of the ability to get good work from employees. This belief makes them more likely to implement empowerment than "Theory X" leaders who are less trusting of worker capabilities. Bruner (1966) highlighted in his theory of cognitive development that anyone could learn something at any age, provided the information required to learn is given to them in terms they can understand. This Cognitive Learning Theory conceptualises confronting learners with their problems and helping them to find solutions. New material is presented in systematic ways that are connected to existing structures in a meaningful format, however, it does not account for a person's individuality.

I included discussions relating to the officers Student Evidence portfolio and Crime Investigations and encouraged him to achieve deadlines and highlight any issues himself that might prevent him from being able to do so. Where appropriate, information and documents were shared with him and he was encouraged to reflect on his performance and identify his own requirements and areas for improvement whilst setting his own priorities and timescales. I also clearly communicated to the officer through these processes what his objectives and priorities would be from my perspective over the following weeks and longer term timescales where necessary, ensuring discipline was maintained and tasks were completed successfully.

Why?
I like you
allowed
him to
find
issues
why
did
you do
this?

How
was it
received?

When and where appropriate I have amended how I have dealt with this officer in line with his changing circumstances. I feel overall I have done this well because I have been consistent and patient with my approach, I have avoided measuring the officers progress with those of his colleagues or even myself at the same stage in our careers and have instead focused on the portfolio criteria that he needed to achieve and his personal welfare. ✓

The Situational Leadership model (Hershey & Blanchard, 1960) uses four leadership styles; delegating, supporting, coaching and directing. The essence of this model is that it is the responsibility of a leader to develop and vary their style, taking account of both the team and the individuals to be effective. The chosen leadership style must consider a whole range of factors, including the situation. At different stages of my interaction with staff, my style works into each of the four categories to some degree as I have to be both directive and supportive within my role as a Police Sergeant.

I have applied similar styles to other members of staff on my team and recognise that one style does not fit all, Mullins (2019) references how management is not homogenous and actually takes place in different ways.

This has had recognisable benefits, for example my team was the only one on Response across Aberystwyth to have had no sickness absences in a twelve-month period, despite a worldwide pandemic taking place. This is now the same for this member of staff, who despite being on an extended period of sickness when he came onto my team has now gone on to not take any sickness absence for over a year. ✓

Within the police, the Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2021) is the driving force of everything officer's do and this is even more important for First Line Managers. The Code of Ethics sets out how a member of police staff is expected to work, displaying behaviours such as but not limited to –

- Honesty and Integrity
- Respect and Courtesy
- Showing respect to Equality and Diversity
- Being fit to work

By operating to the Code of Ethics and challenging unprofessional behaviour, First Line Managers lead by example and set a clear example to their staff of what standard of behaviour is expected in the police.

As he has improved and developed, I have found myself working closer to a Laissez-Faire (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012; Skogstad et al., 2007) style or Tannerbaum and Schmidts Continuum of Leadership Behaviour model (1958) with this officer. ✓

The Laissez-faire leadership style is more of a hands-off approach and as such is better suited to staff who are competent and fully trained in their roles in order to be most effective and avoid creating a situation where goals may not be achieved. The theory of Laissez-Faire leadership suggests that a supervisor provides a member of staff with options but gives them the freedom to do their role their own way and allows them to make the decision themselves (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012). ✓ This style puts trust in the member of staff through the delegation of work, however, there are some academics that consider the Laissez-Faire approach to be an abandonment of staff and a poor form of leadership (Skogstad et al., 2007). In my opinion, if used responsibly and at the right time the Laissez-Faire approach can be empowering and effective. ✓

I can also see these changes in a wider context with my other members of staff, as I have learnt and developed as a Sergeant, my leadership style has relaxed in line with my feelings of growing confidence and competency in my role. My team now know

what was the noticeable difference that led to this change?

great something to continue?

This is good why?

→ Learning

what standards I expect and how matters should be dealt with. How they deal with those situations and the course of action they take is often left for them to decide.

Upon reflection, I recognise that I could have risked losing some of the discipline and authority I had developed with the officer by moving away from the Authoritarian leadership I had initially been using, however I also know that the decision to change my approach was necessary if he was to continue his development.

good, so
you both
were learning
How about
motivation
for you and him?

Conclusion

The organisation has retained a good member of staff, this officer is now able to make his own decisions on a consistent basis and I have been pleased to be able to take a step back and watch him continuing to develop. ✓

I have received mainly positive feedback from both colleagues and supervisors in relation to the way I have managed this Student Officer and developed him from being on the verge of dismissal to a productive member of staff. Notably, a lot of this positive feedback has even come from staff within other departments and stations across the force. His progress was commended during his latest review, with our Inspector commenting:

I am aware that M had a tough start, potentially through his own making but since moving codes he has had a new lease of life. Adam is a more intrusive, hands on supervisor which has really helped M to turn things around.

I have personally witnessed M deal with incidents and noted his proactivity, he has a passion for RPU and wants to progress in that area when the opportunities arise.

I am very pleased with the 'New M'... he is keen, motivated and tries his best at all times, he has had a few jobs where I know that other officers would have given up but M refused to. One such job where he showed great tenacity following a stop/search, he captured a fleeing offender in an extended foot chase, resulting in M commandeering a vehicle from a member of the public and cornering the male using any available option to him including the threat of a taser which he didn't actually have.

I love this sort of resilience, inspiration and the subsequent drug seizure.

On a personal level, these comments from the Inspector have made me feel particularly proud because of the initial objectives set for my member of staff. Within

Good

the space of fifteen months he has developed and progressed significantly. The initial objectives and his final review could not be more different and he now recognises that he has to perform to a certain level if he is to achieve workplace rewards, such as his aspirations to join the Roads Policing Unit (RPU). The way the member of staff embraced my approach and leadership style contributed massively to the overall success, I have no doubt that if he had become angry or obstructive then improvements would have been almost impossible.

So, would you give up?

The Inspector also raised an important point around resilience and the important impact this can have on work ethic, personal development and responsibility. The progress of this officer has also sent a positive message to other members of staff, not only on my team but within others too, particularly Student Officers as it shows what can be achieved when applying the correct level of motivation and commitment.

Personally, I feel this situation has helped me to become a more effective leader. It has made me think about what style of leadership I have and use whilst continuing to try to be a positive and passionate role model, encouraging creativity and development. I also recognise in myself that I have improved and developed as a Sergeant and a Tutor/Assessor too through this experience. I recognise my own use of the Goleman model (1998) within my management of staff. As a supervisor I still get excited by the role of a Police Officer and I openly show this in the working environment as a motivational tool, particularly if there is an interesting incident ongoing or we have achieved success in some form. I engage with my staff as individuals and as a team and speak openly about the positives of the situation. The importance of leadership that this member of staff could relate to and embrace was key, having an awareness of this and an ability to change when appropriate to use a

variety of different leadership skills, techniques and theories is evidenced in this management situation.

So, will you continue these approaches into the future?

Action Plan

I have acknowledged that if I was to be presented with a similar situation in the future, I would make some changes to the way I would deal with it, for example; The Transactional leadership style could have been more appropriate during certain stages of this process, particularly at the start of this journey with this member of staff because it would have allowed me to introduce more opportunities for him to self-reflect and possibly develop quicker and even earlier. ✓

I would also certainly look to implement a transformational style of leadership at an early stage too. This approach seeks to bring staff into the situation and identify opportunities to develop and improve their performance which could suit someone needing to develop over time or who learns better from involvement and being creative (University of San Diego) such was the case with this officer. My awareness of these styles increased due to the Dyfed-Powys police facilitating a "Transformational Leadership" course which has been developed to assist leaders identifying different management styles and techniques. The theory behind the course is to show First Line Managers the impact different leadership techniques can have if used correctly with relevant staff, highlighting that some will need to be dealt with differently to others in order to achieve the best results. With the benefit of hindsight, I can now see how this would have assisted the officer and where it would have fitted into his development well.

However, there are still studies that have highlighted the limitations of transformational leadership. Walsh & Vito (2019, p. 68) for example cite Cockcroft who suggested transformational leadership is incongruent with the culture of policing.

Did you make a transformation of yourself?
2) The Police officer in question
3) The Team
4) Your leader?

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