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Craig Poole

Leadership is an essential trait that allows individuals to guide and influence others to achieve a common goal, especially in an organisation. Stephens (2019) points out that an effective leader knows that it is essential to address the needs of both the people and the goal. The leadership role requires managers to instil a sense of direction and devise the companies strategies in a way that motivates the team. Firstly, Craig Poole, the General Manager of DoubleTree by Hilton in Reading, Pennsylvania, and a prominent figure that has been recognised for his commitment to employee training and development, will explore Craig Poole's background, the impact he has had on the hospitality industry. Secondly, his preferred style of management will be critically evaluated in relation to different leadership models. The two different leadership models that this essay will analyse Craig Poole's preferred leadership style against are the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid and John Adair's Action Centred Leadership Model. For each model of leadership, the theory behind the model will be introduced, Craig Poole's leadership approach using this model will be discussed, and criticisms of this model will also be explored.

Craig Poole is a well-respected figure in the hospitality industry, known for his impressive leadership skills and dedication to providing exceptional service. As the president of Reading Hospitality and general manager of DoubleTree by Hilton, Poole oversees the operations of one of the most popular hotels in the region. With his extensive experience in the field, Poole has implemented innovative strategies that have significantly improved the hotel's performance and customer satisfaction. He takes on an innovative role in his hotel with his vision that creating a positive work culture that encourages employee growth and development is instrumental to the success of his organisation. In 2018, DoubleTree by Hilton Reading was named

“Employer of the Year” by the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance for its dedication to employee training and development programs (Pannozzo, 2017).

The Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid is a well-known management tool that helps identify managers predominant style of leadership (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The grid is made up of two axes, one representing “concern for people” and the other representing “concern for production”. The intersection of these two axes creates a matrix of five different categories for leadership styles, ranging from “Impoverished Management” to “team management” (Ivania, 2017).

In the case of Craig Pool, the general manager of Doubletree by Hilton, it can be deduced that his preferred leadership style is ‘team management’ as this style is characterised by high levels of concern for both people and production. His high concern for people is evident in his documentary “Follow me and I will be behind you”. The first example demonstrates how he views himself in comparison with his employees – as one. He is known for giving second chances to ex-convicts and being totally inclusive with people with autism, and while most of society would disregard them, he saw the potential in being able to exploit that positively to get a very loyal, dedicated and productive team. The first time he met one of his employees, he offered to give him one of his own suits, seeing as the employee was in need of some clothes. In this way, his concern for his people has eliminated all barriers, promoting exceptional collaborative work, teamwork and mutual respect within his organisation, which ultimately leads to higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity.

However, the B&M Grid isn’t free of criticism and one of the biggest criticisms of the Grid is that it makes the complex nature of leadership simpler than it is (Graeff, 1983), and according to Tannenbaum and Weschler (1961), it also does not take into account the situational factors that can sometimes influence the decisions and behaviours of managers. The grid places managers into one of five distinct leadership styles based on their level of concern for people and production and Peters and Waterman Jr. (1982) argue that this categorisation is too focused on achieving production and does not consider the importance of other factors, such as innovation, creativity and the satisfaction of employees. Therefore, it is important that managers take into account the environment that they are fostering with their styles of leadership, and it is

important that it is a healthy one because the environment in which an employee works directly affects their job satisfaction and hence, their production. Furthermore, Schermerhorn Jr. and Hunt (1982) points out that the grid makes the assumption that there is a single best way to lead and manage, while in reality, effective management requires flexibility and adaptation to ever-changing circumstances (Robbins, et al., 2017). Another criticism of the Grid is that it does not take into account the importance of context in which a manager is working in (Lorsch, 1974). Effective leadership styles may vary depending on factors such as the industry, organisational culture, and the specific challenges faced by a manager. Finally, the Grid has been criticised for its lack of practical evidence (Graeff, 1983).

While the Blake and Mouton managerial grid evaluates leadership styles based on two dimensions - concern for people and for production – creating five distinct categories, the McGregor's X and Y model evaluates leadership styles based on two contrasting assumptions of leaders about their employees. Theory X assumes that people are inherently lazy and need to be coerced, controlled and often threatened with punishment to do work as they have little ambitions. McGregor also points out that often where most managers go wrong in developing new strategies is that the way they are implemented are all based on these same assumptions. Furthermore, employees are more motivated only at Maslow's lower physiological and security levels (Maslow, 1943). On the other hand, Theory Y assumes that people are inherently motivated and can be trusted to work towards organisational goals (McGregor & Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 2006).

While both models talk about the importance of leadership in achieving organizational success by considering the needs and motivation of employees, they have their differences as well. While the B&M model provides a more detailed structure for evaluating leadership styles, McGregor's X and Y model provides a more fundamental perspective on the role of leadership in motivating employees. The two models can be used together to provide a more complete understanding of leadership and the role it takes on in organisational success. While the B&M model and McGregor's X and Y differ in their approach to evaluating leadership styles, managers can use a combination of these models to develop a more nuanced and exact understanding of leadership and how to motivate employees.

Adair's action-centered leadership is a leadership approach that focuses on achieving results through effective management of three key elements: the task, the team, and the individual. Developed by John Adair, this leadership model emphasizes the importance of being able to balance these three elements in order to achieve success in all three areas (Adair, 2011). This way, it acts as a valuable framework for leaders that want to achieve results through managing their team and resources more effectively and a tool that leaders can create a culture of success that drives their organization forward (Goleman, et al., 2013).

One of the main benefits of Adair's Action-Centred leadership is its practicality as the model provides a clear structure for leaders to follow, making it easy to understand and apply in real-world situations (Northouse, 2019). By focusing on the task, the team, and the individual, leaders can ensure that their efforts are directed toward achieving the desired outcomes in a way that is both efficient and effective.

Additionally, Adair's Action-Centred leadership model encourages leaders to develop their leadership skills through practice and experience (Adair, 2011). By constantly refining and perfecting their approach and adapting to changing circumstances, leaders can be better equipped to handle the challenges that they might face in their work and become more effective in their roles.

Craig Poole is an excellent example of a leader who has successfully applied Adair's Action Centred Leadership model. Poole has been able to balance the three components of the model effectively, resulting in successful outcomes for his team. He demonstrates the task function through his focus on clear goals, effective communication, and delegation. For example, he set a goal of increasing DoubleTree's revenue within the first year. By focusing on this goal and developing a clear plan of action, Poole was able to achieve this target and exceed expectations. Furthermore, in order to monitor the progress towards achieving these goals, he implemented customer satisfaction surveys to measure the quality of service provided by the hotel. The team function of the model is about ensuring that the team is working together effectively to achieve the goals of the organisation. Poole has demonstrated his ability to manage the team by fostering a collaborative and supportive culture at his hotel. He has implemented various initiatives to promote teamwork, such as team

building activities and regular team meetings. Furthermore, he has invested in technology to improve communication and collaboration between team members. Lastly, the individual function of the model is about developing the skills and abilities of each team member to enable them to contribute effectively to the team's goals. Poole has demonstrated his ability to do this as he has collaborated with external training providers to deliver workshops on leadership, communication, and customer service. He also created a mentoring program to provide support and guidance to employees who want to develop their careers.

However, Adair's Action Centred leadership model has not been without criticism. One of the criticisms of the model is that it can be too simplistic and does not take into account the complexities of modern organizational structures. The model may not be suitable for companies with a more complex hierarchical structure, where a more rigid leadership approach may be required. Additionally, the model may not recognize the importance of emotional intelligence and empathy in leadership, which are crucial traits for effective leadership.

Transformational leadership involves a leader who inspires and motivates subordinates to achieve organisational goals. The leader creates a vision for the organisation and communicates it effectively to team members (Mullins & McLean, 2019). Transformational leadership is similar to Adair's model in that it emphasizes inspiring and motivating team members, communicating a vision, and creating a positive team dynamic. Both models recognize the importance of meeting the needs of the team and individual.

Transactional leadership is a style of leadership that involves a leader who focuses on achieving specific goals and objectives (Mullins & McLean, 2019). While transactional leadership is focused on the exchange of rewards and punishments to motivate followers, Adair's model emphasises the importance of balancing task achievement, team management, and individual development. This model is more traditional to leadership. The emphasis is on achieving specific outcomes and meeting targets, with the leader providing guidance and structure to ensure that these outcomes are met.

In conclusion, Craig Poole's abilities as a leader would suggest that he displays many of the skills and qualities which distinguish him as an especially effective manager. He

has demonstrated a tendency towards theory Y attitudes to motivation and is evident in his high concern for his employees and his want to provide them with all the psychological needs so that they are more satisfied. This high concern for individuals His ability to inspire and motivate is effectively balanced by his organisational skills and his ability to make the best use of the extensive resource at his disposal to achieve results. In the Blake and Mouton managerial grid, he fits into the referred leadership style falls into the 'Team Management' category. He is concerned about both people and production and has implemented several initiatives to improve the hotel's performance while empowering his team members. He is also effective in all three key functions of managerial leadership according to Adair's model of Action-centred leadership by balancing achieving the task, building and maintaining the team, and developing the individual, he is likely to be successful in achieving the overall goals of the organisation.

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