

Emergent Leadership Skills for the Workplace

BMSW6101

Student name: Alexandru Cosmin Stefan (2008651)

Table of contents

Task 1 Introduction	3
Leadership concept	3
Leadership styles	4
Emergent leadership styles	5
Application of the leadership theories in Google	6
Different approaches	7
Existing leadership	8
Recommendations	10
Conclusion	10
Task 2 Reflection	11
References	13

Task 1 Introduction

The selected organisation for this report is Google. Google has been founded in 1998 by Brin and Page and is a subsidiary of the Alphabet Inc. Group. It has now been transformed and operates as Google LLC. It is an American organisation which focuses on technology development and digitalisation and has registered major growth being one of the most prominent brand of the modern business environment. According to Google (2023) their mission is to improve the lives of as many people as possible in a very significant way. At a global level more than 70% of online search requests are handled by Google. Currently Google has developed “more than 50 Internet services and products, from e-mail and online document creation to software for mobile phones and tablet computers” (Britannica, 2023).

Leadership concept

Leadership is defined as “the process in which an individual influences other group members towards the attainment of group or organisational goals” (Yukl, 2013). Northouse (2006) proposes similar definition “the process which occurs in the context of a group of people with setting of a goal and it requires that the leader to be able to influence the group”.

Being a good leader can be in correlation to the type of organisation, but there are different traits that are characteristic to an effective leadership such as achievement drive, self-confidence and business knowledge (Kilpatrick and Locke, 1991). Handy (1993) highlights that besides self-confidence an effective leader should have a high intelligence level, but also to be able to have a complex perception of the internal and external environment of the organisation and incurring facts and situations related to the business activity. It is acknowledged that successful leaders might not have all the attributes, but still register results. Skills and attributes are organised in three main types of leadership skills which are considered to be the core of Model such as administrative under managing people, managing resources, showing technical competences; interpersonal such as being socially perceptive, showing emotional intelligence, managing interpersonal conflict and conceptual under problem solving, strategic planning and creating visions. Effective leaders will need to have a combination of these in correlation with the organisation’s needs. Leadership can involve various skills and traits that come from experience and knowledge whilst some authors suggest that leaders are born (Torrington et al , 2008).

Leadership styles

The concept of leadership has been developed since 1940's and along with the development of the modern society different models have been deepened. Theories such as behavioural theories, situational theories, transactional theories, transformational theories and charismatic theories have been explored. Leadership styles such as Autocratic as opposed to Democratic or participative, Bureaucratic, Charismatic, People-oriented or relations-oriented, Servant leadership, Situational/contingency, Task oriented, Laissez-faire, Transactional and Transformational leadership are all mirroring the ability to increase performance and have an effective decision making process (Hersey, Blanchard, 1980). Besides a specific leadership style the leaders should be able to communicate effectively with the employees, but also with all the stakeholder involved. Maintaining transparency should be a shared goal as well as enhancing the workforce capabilities in order to achieve the established goals. Further research has proposed other leadership theories such as Contingency Theories, Trait Theory, Great Man Theory.

The autocratic leadership style is very rarely used in the modern society and it is known as an extreme transactional, the leadership exercises high level of control which can impact negatively the creativity and innovation as well as the interactive team development. The bureaucratic leadership style as the name suggests is based on following established procedures and rules which are very important for some organisations where the business activity imposes a strict framework for minimising safety risks. According to Bass (1985) there are three main classes of leadership laissez-faire, transactional and transformational. The laissez-faire is not considered to be pure leadership, a non-leadership style which is characterised by a lack of involvement, this leadership will not seek to impose themselves nor have any arguments or strong opinions. In contrast the transactional leadership is characterised by being very active, achieving results, setting and fulfilling goals and working towards the aim of the organisation. Burns (1978) considers this leadership style as the "management by exception (MBE), where action is taken only if it deviates from the plan; only intervenes if something goes wrong, the feedback that directs in a sense further actions, conditional reward when is incurred a reward for fulfilling goals; reward versus effort; it also offers additional awards for excellence". The transformational leadership style involves a more complex approach and have a visionary perspective. It refers to "management by objective (MBO) which provides a clear picture of the goals and adopt a plan for their fulfilment; encourages the use of human abilities, intellectual stimulation, when the leadership style influences people's ideas, for new approaches to problems; focus on solving problems with elegance, the intelligence and logic"

(Burns, 1978). The leadership has to inspire and motivate the employees, to empower them to better themselves and have positive results. Mentoring and coaching can be part of the leadership. The charismatic leadership style is similar to the transformational leadership style, but is specific to leaders that benefit of personal charisma.

Emergent leadership skills

According to Yulk (2013) effective leadership will ensure that the right things are being done as it is their responsibility to achieve results and have success. Pandemic has affected the business activity of many organisations worldwide and has determined changes in many sectors. The ongoing economic uncertainty has contributed to prioritisation of resources and organisational structures. Leadership was forced to adapt to new situations, to follow Governmental regulations and to develop strategies to continue under the risen challenges. Many business did not survive during pandemic, but others have strengthened their resilience. In such times leadership needs to come up with strategies to digitalise the business for example or reorient to market demand and so on. An effective leadership should have a unique set of functions which will benefit the organisation. Leadership and employees should work together to achieve goals and therefore it should enhance motivation. Communication skills are very important for an effective leader and one of the emerging leadership skills is the emotional intelligence. The increased level of interest towards the concept of the Emotional Intelligence argues even that the emotion quotient (EQ) has more weight than the intelligence quotient (IQ). Statistics show that employees with high levels of Emotional Intelligence (EI) can express and regulate emotions towards stronger and more positive relationships towards achievement of common goals such as organisational goals. The post Covid-19 pandemic work climate the importance of Emotional Intelligence has grown and demand for soft skills has increased. It has been recognised that employees with high Emotional Intelligence can be more fit for business survival and can be more agile in demanding working environments (Research Gate, 2023).

Application of the leadership theories in Google

A leadership style which would contribute to the business performance of Google is the transformational leadership. By adopting this leadership style, Google will feel inspired and will determine positive changes. This will help the workforce to maintain focus and have an enthusiastic participation. This type of leadership will transmit a clear vision of the goals and will create an energised Transformational leaders take control of situations by conveying a clear vision of the group's goals. These leaders have a marked passion for the work and an ability to make the rest of the group feel recharged and energised attitude. The transformational leaders will seek to empower the work force, will enable them to support themselves and create to group loyalty. A transformational leader will inspire the group member to be confident and to pursue growth. The transformational leadership has 4 elements: Intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation and idealised influence. The first element refers to creativity stimulation, acquiring knowledge. The second element refers to the continuous support and encouragement of the employees at individual level in order to ignite communication and collaboration and ideas sharing. The inspirational motivation refers to sharing the same passion and motivation to the group towards the common goals. The last element the idealised influence refers to trust and respect for the leadership and further that internalisation of the ideals and emulation (Allen et al, 2016). Skills and traits of this leadership style include ability to encourage others to communicate and participate, creativity, emotional intelligence and being self-aware, active listening, being open-minded, problem solver, being genuine and authentic, being able to inspire others, proactive, supportive, being able to adapt to new and challenging situations, willing to take responsibility and to take well-informed risks (Very Well Mind, 2023).

Different approaches

The leadership has constituted the driven force within the organisation, the main source of motivation for the workforce. A different approach to the existing leadership in Google could be the transactional leadership. This leadership style is also known as the managerial leadership and has different considerations to the proposed transformational leadership style. The leaders will pursue performance achievement through rewarding systems but will create penalties for not meeting deadlines and established targets. This theoretical model is based on an exchange or transaction and specific standards needs to be achieved. This could be applied to specific operations from Google and not for the Innovation department as it could limit the creativity. This could be efficient for achieving results when the workforce lacks motivation to accomplish their job. As part of the theoretical model there are three approaches that needs to be considered: contingency, active management by exception and passive management by exception. The contingency refers to the usage of reinforcement theory and extrinsic motivations. Active management by exception refers ti the strict monitoring to identify and rectify issues. Passive management by exception when interference is kept at minimal levels and only for the cases where performance expectations are not met. A transactional leader will aim to obtain specific results and will put measures in place for the employees to deliver that. By using framework such as SMART goals , which is an acronym for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. A transactional leader evaluates subordinates on whether they meet defined requirements and expected results. Transactional leaders appeal to the self-interest of their subordinates to keep them on track (Tech Target, 2023).

Existing leadership

Google practices a democratic leadership, in 2014 it has received the rewards for the “Best Company to Work For” awarded by the Great Place to Work Institute and Fortune Magazine after a period of 5 years being on the top of the list. Google has a very modern way of operation, with a organisational culture that supports innovation. Google is preoccupied with the well being of its employees and they feel looked after. This mirrors in the positive results for the organisation and high levels of performance. The leadership in Google focuses on the people as an important resource and has implemented various methods of motivation intrinsic and extrinsic in order to create a positive and creative environment. Embracing innovation is part of the organisational culture and contributes to the maintaining of a performance achievement orientation. The leadership aims to have a happy working and environment to stimulate productivity. The benefits of working in Google vary and the leadership takes great interest in identifying the most effective methods to keep their workforce motivates. Benefits such as insurance, dental, flex spending accounts, holiday packages, financial support for tuition fees, reimbursement of legal expenses, cash incentives for new families, fully paid maternity leave for 18 weeks. Google has also put great efforts in offering a welcoming working environment with on-site benefits such as dry cleaning, laundry, hair saloon, gym, free meals cooked by gourmet chefs, car wash, medical services. These benefits reduce the stress of the employees to sort out personal errands and help with the time management. Also Google values the individuals, the leadership is open minded and the employees are encouraged to share ideas and pass on feedback. The existing democratic leadership style is beneficial for Google and the voice of the employees is valued. The high levels of communication help with the achievement of performance as they can collaborate effectively. There are used vary channels of communication such as emails, boards, TGIF- time allocation to fix the issue. When there are problems to solve there are designated group members. There are different rewards systems put in place for task achievement and continuous praise and support. The leadership acts as a coach and as a mentor, it assesses their needs and attempts to fill. The method of feedback keeps the leadership informed on the potential issues and helps with minimising conflicts and tension. Leadership ensures that employees feel trusted and appreciated in a very transparent way and high exchange of information and knowledge transfer. The trust in the leadership and the organisation can be emphasised through the flux of sharing information, member of different groups can participate to different project if they consider they can contribute to the positive outcome of the situation either, product development, planning and creating strategies. The flat structures ensures the participation

of the employees to the business activity, but it considers the privacy of each member. The leadership wants to be a visible force and the Co-founders are participating at weekly meetings with the employees where different topics are debated, questions are being clarified and goals are explained. The work schedule in Google is unique, is based on performance achievement and does not impose place or other restrictions. The employees are given high levels of freedom to organise their work and are allowed to use more than a quarter of their time on any projects they want within the company with the condition to be ethical and lawful. Therefore if they want to test ideas, promoting creativity and innovation. The flat and organic hierarchy contributes to the high levels of communication within the company, but also is very flexible and does not create restraints in the creativity stimuli. Google wants to be identified as a fun and enjoyable working environment, encouraging social interaction, with many breaks, facilities for practising sports or to develop personal creativity. The dress up code is not taken too seriously with dress up days, wearing pyjamas days, different parties such as Halloween. The access to the free food for the employees offers healthy and various choices, highlighting the organisation's respect and care for their employees. The open kitchen is also stocked up with beverages and snacks. The layout of the offices is unique to encourage people's creativity and happiness. The design of the offices is not standardised at all, for example some rooms resemble pubs or to coffee shops from touristic destinations. Elements of design include slides, labyrinths, treadmills etc. (Emex Magazine, 2022). These unique characteristics are part of the organisational culture, structure and defining for the leadership style. It has received criticism as being too permissive and giving too much power to the employees, but it has been observed that it works for them and have great outputs for the business performance. Google's way of leadership and motivate is standing out in comparison with other organisations. Their working environment is motivating people and it is triggering maximum creativity and exceptional results with great innovative products. The created culture, the flat structure, the leadership style and way of motivation, make Google a successful business. The organisation succeeded to create an entrepreneurial working environment which benefits of qualitative and increased productivity.

During pandemic many of these efforts and benefits have disappeared as under the Governmental measures for Covid-19 pandemic, employees had to shift activity to working from home. This has saved the organisation a certain cost for covering all the benefits and has reduced the number of expenses. According to Forbes (2021) Google has stated in the financial statements the cost of employees returning to working from the office. "As we prepare to return our workforce in more locations back to the office in 2021, we may experience increased costs as we prepare our facilities

for a safe return to work environment and experiment with hybrid work models, in addition to potential effects on our ability to compete effectively and maintain our corporate culture” (Google, 2021). Working remotely has helped reducing the costs for both sides, but has impacted other aspects such as mental health. The leadership has tried to maintain high levels of communication and avoid cases of isolation. The strong leadership in Google has managed as best as possible the challenges and groups have tried to find interactive ways to stay in touch such as music, virtual gatherings, all-hands meetings. The leadership has acknowledged that “A one-size-fits-all approach wasn’t going to work, because each market was in a different stage of dealing with the pandemic. Regional flexibility allowed them to customise their tone and respond to local needs” (Think with Google, 2021).

Recommendations

The recommendations for Google is to adopt elements of the transformational leadership style in order to generate self-awareness and be inspirational for the workforce. The high levels of emotional intelligence have gained more importance and is a valued soft skill. The existing model of leadership based on the democratic leadership style is successful for the organisation but it involves high costs for the company which can create pressure considering the economic uncertainty generated by the Covid-9 pandemic.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the success of Google is a direct indicator of the success of their leadership style. The changes determined by the pandemic can be an indication that other elements of leadership style can be applied such as the transformational leadership style. This would keep the workforce on board, without the high cost of the extrinsic motivation or at least to a more reduced cost. Employees have been able to work remotely and have been able to reunite and collaborate under the new scenario.

Task 2 Reflection

For my reflective essay will make use of Gibbs reflective cycle, which has been developed in 1988 in order to create a structure for assessing situations and experiences and learn effectively from them. The model is constructed as a cycle with six stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan. Once the reflection is finished, the learning can be used to other experiences and the reflective cycle can be applied (Gibbs, 1988).

The reflection is realised on my learning experience during the module Emergent Leadership Skills for the Workplace. The description stage of the reflective model includes elements related to the place, participants, desired outcome and real outcome. The learning experience is in regards to my learning and acquired of leadership skills. The lecturer has delivered different presentations and have explained us different theoretical models and leadership styles. In the first week we have been introduced to the concept of leadership, in the second week we have been learning about leadership traits and have looked at representatives leaders and we had practical exercises available. In week three we have studied the leadership philosophy and leadership styles and we had extra learning materials which have been very useful as it presented a critical review of the leadership styles. In the next week we had looked at the Tasks and Relationships Behaviour of Leadership and following week we had looked at developing leadership skills. This has been a learning point for me personally as it has made me clear through the Model of Primary Leadership Skills the classification of the core leadership skills. This had made me understand how to be an effective leader, what skills do I need to improve and what are my strengths. Through the Leadership questionnaire I was able to look into different skills such as problem solving, emotional intelligence, adaptability, managing people and resources, working effectively, managing conflicts and to check the score on the Administrative, Interpersonal and Conceptual skills. The outcome of the learning through this module was to gain the knowledge about theoretical models on leadership and to gain leadership skills. The real outcome will be comprehended once the grading for my assignments will be provided.

The second stage of the reflection the feelings looks into identifying the feelings during the experience and post experience. It has been an ongoing learning experience and I had an open mind for assessing the leadership styles, I was confused at times, but the lecturer has provided continuous support and that has benefited my learning.

The third stage of the reflection is the evaluation. I can assess that the experience had been beneficial for my development as a student, as an individual. I will be able to identify the leadership

styles in the working environment and I will be able to apply the skills learned in order to be an effective leader. I am still in need of building on my confidence and self-awareness, but exercises such as reflection and learning from experience can contribute positively. I think it would have been more beneficial to have a group task to underpin the knowledge gained through the module.

The analysis stage evaluates the outcome of the experience, the “why” element of the experience, and the meaning of the situation. This learning experience has given me the required knowledge, has given me the tools to assess my leadership skills, the lecturer has been able to explain clearly the difference between concepts and how to look at information from different perspectives in order to have a critical point of view.

The conclusion stage is a sum of the learning, the outcome and what else could have been improved. I considered that it is a positive outcome, but I should have been more involved during the lectures and have a more active role. This would have helped me be more assertive and take on board the leadership skills. Also I could have done more independent research and debated with the lecturer to ensure full comprehension of the concept and would have helped me develop more independent thinking.

The action plan is the final stage of the reflective cycle and refers to the identification of a plan for future situations. This is my last year at the University and will complete my experience as a student. For future academic learning I would make sure I am applying the learning gained from this experience. For my professional and career development I plan to improve my gap skills, I aim to use the knowledge from this module. I will be able to distinguish between the leadership styles and in the leadership role to ensure effectiveness of the operations by making sure the needs of the staff are fulfilled and the organisational objectives are met. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted business, has impacted individuals and I have been part of changes undertaken by my workplace. I consider that this module has helped me be more resilient and has helped me want to become a better leader.

References

- Allen GP, Moore WM, Moser LR, Neill KK, Sambamoorthi U, Bell HS. (2016) “The role of servant leadership and transformational leadership in academic pharmacy”. *Am J Pharm Educ.* ;80(7):113.
- Bass, B. M. (1985) “Leadership and performance beyond expectations”. New York: Free Press.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). “Leadership”. New York: Harper & Row
- Gibbs G (1988) “Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods|. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.
- Handy C. (1993) “Understanding organizations” 4th ed. London, Penguin Group
- Kirkpatrick, S.A., Locke, E.A. (1991) “Leadership: Do Traits Matter?” *Academy of Management Executive*, 5.
- Northouse, P.G., (2018) “Leadership: Theory and practice”. Sage publications
- Torrington et al (2008) “Human Resource Management”, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited
- Yulk G. (2013) “Leadership in Organisations” 8th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Britannica (2023) “Google” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Google-Inc> Accessed 15.08.2023
- Emex Magazine (2023) “Google” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.emexmag.com/company-culture-at-google/> Accessed 15.08.2023
- Forbes (2021) “Google” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2021/04/30/an-unintended-consequence-of-the-pandemic-led-to-google-saving-over-one-billion-dollars/?sh=7504f78f7e5b> Accessed 15.08.2023
- Google (2021) “financial reports” [Online]. Available at: <https://about.google/commitments/reports/> Accessed 15.08.2023
- Google (2023) “corporation” [Online]. Available at: <https://about.google> Accessed 15.08.2023
- Research Gate (2023) “Emotional Intelligence” [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6509274_The_Bar-On_Model_of_Emotional-Social_Intelligence/link/0a85e539bcf6d4110000000/download Accessed 15.08.2023
- Tech Target (2023) “Transactional Leadership” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/transactional-leadership> Accessed 15.08.2023
- Think with Google (2021) “Pandemic impact” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/future-of-marketing/digital-transformation/google-navigating-pandemic/> Accessed 15.08.2023

Very Well Mind (2023) “Transformational leadership” [Online]. Available at: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-transformational-leadership-2795313> Accessed 15.08.2023