



LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

Welcome to the Winter Edition of PCS E News which aims to provide some interesting short notes on management and leadership issues.

The first note on 'Influencing in a Political Environment' provides five tips on how you can use politics to influence successfully without succumbing to its 'dark side'. The second note looks at the skills involved in improving your ability to manage time and emphasises the most important skill which is the ability to assimilate large amounts of information, edit what is important and extract key headline priorities on which you need to focus your time. By way of contrast, many people think and act sequentially or chronologically and inevitably find themselves in an overload situation. The third note on 'followership' is a short summary of an article that appeared in



the December 2007 Harvard Business Review. It emphasises the fact that very little research has been done to explore the different types of subordinates or followers that exist and how this impacts on the way that leaders need to manage different types of people. Finally, the fourth note revisits some of the work of Edward De Bono. It was De Bono who believed that 90% of errors of thinking are errors of perception, and not logic, and in order to understand another person's point of view, it is important to be aware of what different information they may have, their different perception and their different values.

Finally, I hope you find this edition's notes interesting and thought provoking. As always we welcome your feedback.

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Influencing In a Political Environment

5 TIPS ON HOW TO BE POSITIVELY POLITICAL

The ability to be 'political' by knowing your way around an organisation, its people and what is important to them, is a key factor in your ability to get things done. However, being 'political' has negative connotations, such as being self-interested, being manipulative and being economical with the truth. This note offers some ideas on how to use 'politics' to influence successfully without succumbing to the 'dark side'.

1. Identify Your Stakeholders

Create a map of your stakeholders at work, and analyse how and when you interact. Then assess the degree of influence you have over these stakeholders in terms of your ideas, what you contribute to them, and how you would like to shape their opinions; and then plan how you can better achieve these objectives.

2. Network

You can then plan how to expand your network by making a conscious effort to establish relationships with relevant individuals with whom you are not in regular contact. This could involve volunteering for cross-functional projects. You could also use your stakeholder group to introduce you to other people who can expand your sphere of relationships, and circle of potential influence.

3. Build Trusting Relationships

The foundation for influencing is trusted relationships, and the basis for these is integrity, honesty, transparency and consistent behaviour across a variety of situations. When networking, a useful technique is to collect and record information around specific subjects in a disciplined way, so that you can build 'hard data' about people's views on specific subjects. For example, you might uncover that 80% of people share a particular view on a course of action, and you can then use this data constructively to inform opinion shapers and decision-makers, and consequently you will increase your influence by offering 'hard data' to support a line of action.

4. Manage Your Personal Brand

Make sure that you seek appropriate feedback at regular intervals so that you have a good understanding of the 'sound-bites' people use about you when you are 'not in the room'! If you are seen to be self-aware and motivated to address feedback issues, then your personal credibility will be enhanced, and you will also increase your influence as someone who is seen as having integrity, honesty, and transparency.

5. Communication Style

Effective communicators use language carefully, and supplement 'hard data' with examples and stories to make their positions come alive, and appear more compelling. It is important that you choose the right time to make an argument; mature and successful influencers frequently use a 'light touch' in order to make gradual incremental progression rather than using a 'sledgehammer' approach.

Skill Development to Improve Time Management

THREE TECHNIQUES TO BETTER MANAGE TIME

There are three key techniques to be developed to improve one's ability to manage time:

- The ability to assimilate information and identify the key priorities that need to be addressed.
- The ability to negotiate timescales with senior managers or peers.
- The ability to say 'no' or 'not now' to other peers.

Headlining Priorities

One of the great skills is to be able to assimilate and process a large amount of information, edit what is important from less important tasks, and have the skill to identify task priorities and headline what is required. Many people lose their way by approaching tasks sequentially or thinking chronologically about problems. More skilful operators will think about the end objective, and what is to be achieved, and work backwards to identify the key tasks and priorities involved.

Timescale Negotiation

The skill is to sound as positive as possible but negotiate longer timescales to complete a task. For example 'That's fine. I am interested/happy to do the task but I need to make it my third or fourth priority because of other organisational demands'.

Saying 'No' to Peers

Most people do anything to avoid saying 'no'. They use words like 'It's difficult' or 'I am really busy' but there is often an unspoken message that you will manage. Another problem is that people apologise unnecessarily and give reasons, often multiple ones, which can weaken their argument. When you need to say 'no', give one organisational reason why you cannot help on this occasion or why, in your judgement, it is not a constructive organisational priority.

What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers

THE DIFFERENCES AMONG FOLLOWERS ARE AS CONSEQUENTIAL AS THE DIFFERENCES AMONG LEADERS

In the December 2007 Harvard Business Review, Barbara Kellerman's article points out that very little research is to be found about the differing nature of subordinates, and how these differences impact on the way leaders should lead and manage.

In her article, Kellerman identifies different types of followers, and offers a typology that managers can use to appreciate how their followers are different from one another. Kellerman uses the level of engagement with a leader as the defining factor and she categorizes all followers according to where they fall along a continuum that ranges from 'feeling and doing absolutely nothing' to 'being passionately committed and deeply involved'. Kellerman's view is that it is the follower's degree of involvement that largely determines the nature of the superior-subordinate relationship.

Kellerman's 5 types of follower are based on a single simple metric which offers leaders information as to what degree their followers are 'buying' what they are 'selling'. The 5 types are described as follows:

Isolates are detached and scarcely know what is going on around them. They do not care about their leaders, or know anything about them, or respond to them in any obvious way. However, they passively support the status quo, and so, can strengthen a leader's position. They typically perform jobs to a marginal level with little enthusiasm.

Bystanders observe but do not participate. They may go along passively when it is in their self-interest to do so, but they are not internally motivated to engage in an active way. In large organisations, they choose to 'fly under the radar' and often go unnoticed, but they can be useful to managers who just want people to do as they are told.

Participants are engaged to some extent. They care enough to try to make an impact, and they can be very supportive of leaders, although they don't like to enter into conflict with their leaders. They tend not to be agents of change.

Activists are very much engaged with work, and if they feel strongly one way or another about their leaders, they will act accordingly. These followers are eager, energetic and engaged. Activists can have considerable impact on the group, and they will work long hours to achieve success. They can be powerful agents of change.

Diehards are rare in that they exhibit an all-consuming dedication to someone they deem worthy. They can either be a strong asset or a dangerous liability if they 'blindly follow' the orders of their superiors. Similarly if they feel 'betrayed' by a leader, they are often the 'whistleblowers' who take action even if it means 'dying for the cause'.

JUDGEMENT

HOW TO AVOID ERRORS OF PERCEPTION

For nearly forty years Edward De Bono has been a champion of lateral thinking, and he offers a different option to the adversarial style that has dominated Western thought for more than 2000 years. De Bono argues that our software for thinking is about truth, logic, argument and analysis, but it misses out on creativity, design and perception.

De Bono argues that 90% of errors in thinking are errors of perception, not logic. De Bono's principle is simple in that you have to see things from different perspectives in order to improve your judgement, and that these skills can be learned. In an argument, if you want to see and understand the other person's point of view, you need to take regard of the other person's different information, different perception and different values.

In order to achieve a broader perception as an aid to improving one's judgement, De Bono has created a variety of 'thinking tools', and he famously published his book 'Six Thinking Hats' in 1985. The Six Thinking Hats provides an alternative to argument and allows exploration, instead of adversarial confrontation. The hats themselves are imaginary and the colour of each hat represents a different way of thinking. For example:

- **Red** represents intuition, opinion and emotion (subjective)
- **Yellow** represents praise, positive aspects (subjective)
- **Black** represents criticism and negative aspects (objective)
- **White** represents facts, information and reports (objective)
- **Green** represents alternatives, new approaches and new possibilities (speculative/creative)
- **Blue** represents the big picture (overview)

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