Emergent Leadership

A leadership style based on creating a collaborative culture that increases innovation

Definition: *A process by which* group members who exert significant influence over other members of the group emerge as leaders even when no formal authority has been vested in them.

Theorists: Peter Senge specializes in the decentralization of leadership roles. This enables and increases the ability of everyone within the organization to contribute to the overall systems goal. Otto Scharmer links mindfulness with the transformation of business, society, and self.

Senge saw that organizations needed both adaptive and generative learning to develop creative responses to problems at hand. As a result he developed the idea of a learning organization and its 5 key disciplines.

5 Disciplines:

Shared Vision: Building a shared vision requires individuals to share and discuss their personal vision, and in the examination of their personal visions for the future, forge a common identity, work towards common ideals, and create a shared vision.

Personal mastery: A continual process of clarifying what a person wants in life through patience and focus, while developing the skills and insights necessary to achieve those desires, and looking at reality objectively.

Systems thinking: A conceptual framework (a body of knowledge and tools) that helps people to see patterns and how to change them.

Team Learning: Team learning depends on the ability of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into genuine thinking together. It requires they learn how to recognize patterns of team interactions that promote or hinder team learning.

Mental Models: Mental models are the deeply ingrained assumptions we carry, consciously or unconsciously, that influence how we understand the world and determine the actions we take. Successfully working with mental models requires people to identify and scrutinize their mental models.

Key Concepts

- Considers that leadership is a dynamic process performed by a group and not only by an individual.

- Anyone within the organization can emerge as a leader at various times for various purposes.

- Both Senge and Scharmer believe a leader needs to cultivate a more genuine or authentic way of being, to shape the larger social and ecological whole of the future.

Otto Scharmer seeks to link mindfulness and the transformation of business, society and self through the concept he refers to as "presencing."

The Five Movements of the U:

1. Co-initiating: Build common intent. Stop and listen to others and what life calls you to do.
- Each project begins with an intention that evokes involvement. The context that allows such groups to form deep listening.

2. Co-sensing: Observe, observe, observe. Go to the places of the most potential and listen with your mind and heart wide open.
- To produce transformational change, one must have the ability to sense – to see deeply, sharply, and collectively – in order for emerging opportunities to be seen and for key systemic forces at issue to be found.

3. Presencing: Connect to the source of inspiration and common will. Go to the place of silence and allow the inner knowing to emerge.
- Connect to the deepest source of your self and will. While an open heart allows us to see the situation from the whole, the open will enable us to begin to act from the emerging whole.

4. Co-creating: Prototype the new in living examples to explore the future by doing.

- Prototyping demands that you empty out all the stuff ("let go") and then you determine what you really need ("let come") and provide prototype solutions for those real needs in real time. You observe and adapt based on what happens next.

5. Co-evolving: Embody the new in ecosystems that facilitate seeing and acting from the whole.

- Review what's been learned – what's working and what isn't and then decide what prototypes might have the highest impact on the system or situation at hand.
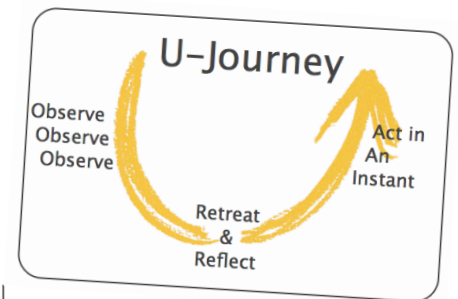
Strengths

- Encourages more organization wide participation.
- Increases innovative ideas from multiple sources.
- Promotes shared vision
- Motivates lower performing members.
- Systems change occurs from the bottom up and not from the result of one person or a dominant group imposing their will on others.

Weaknesses

- Does not factor race and its impact on emergent leadership.
- Gender, attractiveness, status and power can create an emergent leader vs overall skills and abilities.
- Everyone has to buy-in to the group.

References

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