

Leadership: A Call for Acknowledgement and Uniqueness

Thank goodness for uniqueness! Some of us tend to think that there is only one kind of leader. And, if we could define each of the qualities or competencies of a good leader, we could locate these leaders with these particular competencies, and place them where they are needed throughout the organization. Great...job done! Leadership established.

Oops! You forgot one thing...the way leaders lead may not be in sync with every employee. That's okay, and actually quite normal. What isn't okay is to ignore that fact. By being aware of the differences in how employees prefer to and need to be led, can have a huge impact on those employees who are out of sync with their leader's way of leading.

You can evaluate all the qualities and competencies of what it takes to be an effective leader and, regardless of the results, three underlying concepts keep floating to the top.

First, leaders must understand how they lead and then identify their competencies. Acknowledgement is power.

But acknowledgement isn't enough. Once leaders identify and acknowledge their competencies, they need to determine how those competencies "match up" with their individual employees. Not all employees are the same and therefore they have different needs at different times. Leaders cannot be all things to all employees, but they can be aware of their employees' needs and acknowledge the disconnects. Just recognizing and acknowledging the disconnects can be a huge leap toward trust and respect.

The last concept is that leaders should do their best to support all employees, even those who need different competencies than those that they possess. This is not about pawning off employees with whom you don't see eye-to-eye. What it means is that you provide the resources or tweak your style enough to connect with these employees.

Remember, acknowledge your leadership competencies, recognize and acknowledge that your leadership competencies may not meet the needs of every one of your employees, and choose to support those who don't connect with your competencies so that their needs can be met.

No, there is no cookie cutter approach to good leadership. In other words, you can't really define the competencies of a good leader and then find these leaders and place them throughout your organization and just assume that you now have good leadership. That being said, you can define the competencies you believe your organization needs. You can provide development opportunities for leaders who need those competencies.

Honor the uniqueness in every individual within the organization. And don't forget to have your leaders use these three concepts to ensure that they stay afloat.

Susan Otto, the president of Training-Modules.com, LLC, is committed to effectively partner with organizations and their employees to achieve strategic initiatives necessary for organizational success. Susan designs customized facilitator and participant guides for companies that want to do their own internal training. Contact her at 859.292.0095 or susan@training-modules.com. For information about Susan's training modules, visit her website at www.training-modules.com.

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