LEADERS' CHARACTERISTICS

ANGHEL - VLAD SILVIA

*ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PhD, WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMISOARA, FACULTY OF
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION 16, J. H. PESTALOZZI STREET*
e-mail: silvia.vlad@e-uvt.ro

Abstract:
Leadership is not perceived only as an individual quality of a certain person but also as a decisive condition of culture; this means that leadership is the result of some specific actions well planned by one or more leaders who want to create a strong managerial culture characterized by intern harmony of a vision, of some values that they have and manage to transfer to their supporters.
Henry Mintzberg said that the leader merges the needs of the company with the needs of the people under his command and the leader position is given to you by the people that you lead, you have to gain their respect.
In this study I showed the characteristics of a leader in a company and how he manages to combine the individual needs of the employees under his command with the needs of the company and how he managed to gain their respect. Following an interview with leader D.I. obtained some conclusions presented in this article.

Keywords: leadership, leader, characteristics, abilities, managerial culture

JEL Classification: M 10, O 15

1. Introduction and context of the study

According to Jacques Clement (Jacques, 1991), "leadership is the process through which a person sets a goal or a direction for one or more persons and makes them act together using their competences and with full dedication in order to get to the goal" [1].

Nicolescu and Verboncu (Nicolescu O, 2000) determine through "leadership" – the ability of a leader, of a managerial board, to make a group of persons to work with them in order to achieve a goal, based on their strong emotional and operational involvement" [6].

The term "leader" came in Romanian as the word "lider". The word "lider" came from English and means a person who is in charge of a country, a company, the leader of an orchestra, the leader of a football team etc.

The "leader" means the person who has the power or a big influence on some social groups of different sizes (societies, nations, communities, organizations etc.).

The term "leader" is explained in the Romanian Dictionary as the manager of a party, of a syndical organization etc and the term "management" is described as the activity and art to lead [12].

R. Koch (2001) explained the term "leadership" in the Management and Finance Dictionary as the managerial ability [9] and some authors such as (Vlasceanu, 2003, p. 286-287; Zlate, 2004, p. 15), in order to simplify this semantic issue suggested to use the term "management" as it is and to add the meaning of "to lead" for the term "leadership" [10],[11].

There is compatibility between the two terms: leadership is an essential ingredient of the management activity as management is the basement and the support of the leadership activity.

The term "leader" was phonetically borrowed in Romanian as "lider", but the term "leadership" was not yet assimilated and is used in the literature and the managerial practice as it is.

In English, the word that defines the one who follows a leader is called "follower" (the plural is "followers") and the process is called followership. To follow means to support someone, especially the one who leads (lead/follow, leader/follower, in English) [13].

According to Ovidiu Nicolescu and I. Verboncu (p. 518), the leader is the person who has the ability to make a group of persons to follow him in achieving a goal, based on his strong emotional and operational involvement [7].

Henry Mintzberg said that the leader merge the needs of the company with the needs of the individual under his command, and the leader position is given by the persons that you lead, you need to gain their respect [4].

Graham Lee said that leadership is the process through which the managers of all the departments of a company exercise their influence and seek to face the personal and organizational challenges [5].

Under these circumstances, what a leader can do is to build, to direct the managerial culture, to set up a coherent and realistic vision for the target of the company and the performances needed from the members.

The leaders need to make sure that they created the proper environment so that the employees of the company can express their abilities and their initiative, to value their knowledge at the highest levels without having an army of supervisors and some rigid or complicated monitoring systems.

The need to decentralize and to delegate the tasks from the highest level to the lowest ones is more obvious. This does not mean that the authority is decreasing but the company becomes more responsible at all the decision and action levels. The managers are reticent to decentralization because they have the feeling that an important part of their power disappears.

In this case we assist to a big resistance from the managers, from the managerial culture towards this kind of initiatives. The managers in the performing companies tend to avoid saying how the things should be done but, on the other hand, they create a competitive environment in the company, they define the expected performance, the evaluation standards and connect the motivation directly to the accomplishment of these tasks.

The performance can be obtained especially in the companies where the managers have leader qualities. So, during the time, the informal leaders will challenge the position of managers, of those who have the power only thanks to their hierarchical position in the company and they will pull them over so that they can exercise their influence. One of the major challenges of the managers/leaders, persons with a key position in a company is to create and maintain a managerial culture that is according to the goals of the company and the nature of its activity.

It is an issue of integrating the expectations and the individual abilities with the organizational ones, so that the company can have success in the business area it operates and all the involved parties to be satisfied with the result. The managerial culture is more important because it reflects the values, the attitudes and the behavior of the managers. The employees permanently follow and evaluate the behavior of the managers to which they give a strong symbolist charge. Moreover, the employees choose their models from the managers of the company and they try to behave using the same elements that define the manager.

Leadership is perceived more and more as an individual characteristic of a person, but also as a defining condition of the culture; this means that leadership is the result of some specific actions, well planned by one or more leaders who want to create a powerful managerial culture defined by internal harmony of a vision, of some values that they have and manage to inspire to their followers.

In some way, the task of the leaders is to create a community, to give a motivation and a direction to more persons in order to achieve some mutual goals.

A company develops when the leaders manage to set their values, and the values are accepted and assumed by the other employees as being the correct way to think and act.

It is important that the leaders and their followers create a sincere and trusted connection between them, based on a series of values accepted by both of them.

The leadership becomes a result of the collaboration between the leader and the stakeholders when he manages to establish a vision that motivates the stakeholders to accept his points of view, to assume and support them. One of the questions that someone may have is related to the cause, the reasons that make one or more persons do something that someone else wants.

The answer may have at least two options:

- Because people have the same needs, they believe or are convinced by a leader that following the suggested way will make them achieve their goals;
- People are constrained in different ways to move in the direction suggested by the leader.

This is a dangerous area because it is based especially on the negative motivation, on punitive aspects; the employees not only do not believe in the actions suggested by the leader, but also can perceive them as a threat to their interests and statuses.

The culture is a strong power and a leader knows this and tries to use this. The managerial culture and the organizational culture act as a paradigm, as intellectual and emotional models. These models lead to creating an identity for an individual or a group of people, which generates the feeling of being part of a group, a member of some society.

The previous elements do not have to lead to the idea that managers will generate a stabilization of the expectations and the behavior of the employees because this would mean a deadlock and even downturn. On contrary, they need to ensure an environment to encourage the acceptance of individual differences, to stimulate creativity and the initiative. All these need to be supported by a continuous communication, at all hierarchical levels, under the form of some explicit messages, and also implicit messages.

Creating and maintaining an organizational and managerial competitive culture is a leadership problem which has its origins in the founders of a company and later on its successors. They need to create the physical, psychological and emotional environment to make the employees wish to follow them, to go to the desired path, using all their resources.

The influence of the founders of "charismatic leaders" is being seen firstly upon the managerial culture which takes, keeps and transmits the values, attitudes and behavior system considered to be correct from the ethical point of view and generating performance, as a legacy. In this sense, it is recommendable that the leaders have a great capacity of empathy with their followers, to be able to understand them and make them understandable. The important source of the persuasion ability of the leader, of his power is his own cultural background, the beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior system that he believes in and decisively influence his actions.

Another source comes from the alliances that he manages to create quickly and use as platforms to promote his vision. Among leadership, managerial culture and organizational culture there is a series of mutual influences, which help to improve each of them.

One of the biggest challenges of this period of time is the one to create and maintain a stimulating work environment which can create the proper conditions for the employees to express themselves. This is why in most of the studies both the theorists and the specialists think that the organizational culture is important in the decision making.

It is also important the way the leader/manager manage to suggest their own vision to their potential followers. They perform the organizational events through a series of individual and group processes and, based on this, they decide which the behavioral models they adopt are.

For a long time it has been discussed the powerful impact that the managerial culture has upon the human resources directing to achieve the goals of the company and to obtain the desired performances.

In elaborating and implementing some competitive strategies, the management of the companies has to consider as an important competence the creation and/or development of a managerial and organizational culture that supports the achievement of the competitive advantage for the company.

Creating an active culture with a high involvement of the employees is an important way to improve the results of the company and in such an environment the employees feel more responsible for their actions and the degree of the emotional attachment to the managers and company is increased.

In Schein's vision, in order to change the managerial and organizational culture all the composing elements need to be changed, and the most difficult part is to be found in the values of the company. The values are the key elements to understand a culture and to come with major changes.

Some specialists consider that the most important element in a community is the involvement and the emotional attachment of the members to a shared vision upon the future. The organizational culture is seen as an element that can be important for the company or, on contrary, a destructive one.

In 1996, Kotter described "the managerial vision as the most important element in the change process of the organizational culture. If you cannot present your vision in 3-5 minutes, then you are lost." This is what the manager of a big company said. The vision expresses the hope, the direction to follow and the remarkable possibilities to survive and develop [2].

According to Nanus (Nanus B, 1997), the strong visions have the following characteristics [8]:

- *Suitability* – they are suitable for the company in the current context. They fit with the culture, history and values of the company, with its performances and provide an evaluation of the desired situations to which they will arrive if some ways are followed;
- *Idealism* – the visions establish some excellence standards and reflect a series of high ideals. Therewith, they develop a continuity and collective responsibility feeling;
- *Clarify* the goal of the company, they give new understandings, new meanings to the existence of the company and the employees, they are convincing and realistic towards the desire of the company to get something, which is an important base for the people to understand that their ambitions will be achieved;
- *Inspire* enthusiasm, the visions inspire enthusiasm and encourage the involvement of the employees at the highest levels. All the interests of the stakeholders who feel rewarded if they support the leaders are included in the vision;
- Easy to *understand* – they are well defined and easy to understand so they can guide the decisions and the actions of those who have to apply them;
- *Uniqueness* – the vision reflects the uniqueness of the company, its distinctive competences and the performance that they want to achieve and that will make it unique;
- *Ambition* – the vision has to be ambitious, to challenge the employees to better themselves, to involve intellectually and emotionally in the development of the company.

The values are elements that last (at the intellectual and emotional level) and define the attitudes and behaviors that are accepted at the personal level, in a group or society. The values are appreciated and supported as an important part of some behavioral models. They are the result of a free choice of the individuals and groups in a certain context. The individual values are part of a system that guide the life of the members of a collectivity and that makes most of their actions to be predictable.

Most of people share a set of values that is similar to the one of people around them; through this system some connections are created among the networks the individuals are part of. The values are an important part of the human experience which can have a different nature: professional, personal, organizational or regarding the society. They define our life and what should be included in our life.

In a company, the values have to be in essence the ones of the top managers. They can be found in the declared vision by the management team and then in a more formal form, in the mission of the company as the first part of the strategy. The strategic management that guides the activity of the company is strongly influenced by the managerial culture.

In the same time, the results the managers will get, as a result of their initiative, will come to confirm, to consolidate some presumptions, values and behaviors and to disapprove some others.

The vision shapes the managers thinking about what the company is at the moment, how it should look after a while and which is the path that needs to be followed from the current status to the desired one. The managers will always check if the values of the managerial culture that are feasible to be adopted and used by a bigger number of employees, no matter of their hierarchical level, leading to small or big changes in the organizational culture.

The organizational values are situated in the middle of the organizational culture and give some different actions while they cancel some others. They need to be set, kept and changed depending on the needs of the company but keeping the identity of the company at the same time. The employees involve themselves when they feel that they are part of the company and when the way the company works will satisfy their personal needs [3].

The life of the company is continuously changed by these values. Many times they are the main cause for the difficulties encountered by some managers, leaders when they try to make changes in the company, changes in the structure of the company, of some systems or working instructions. In order to lead, to change the organizational and managerial culture, the managers need to take a series of symbolic actions. By taking these actions they want to satisfy some material, cognitive or emotional needs of the employees.

2. Results

Following an interview, we have the following results presented below. To be a leader is an art. Every day you learn something new, you discover your qualities and also the weak points, then you need to make some efforts to be able to handle different situations.

The leader that I am talking about knows to lead the company efficiently. It is not easy for him to be a leader because he has under his command a bigger team composed of individuals who have different opinions and not less important, different personalities.

The most important and essential aspects of a leader according to the literature are: the awareness of his own position; understanding other people; power and authority; communication; taking decisions; creating a vision; take the responsibility.

The leader is characterized depending of the previous mentioned aspects. I can say that that leader is aware of his position in the company. He gives attention to the team work and always asks for their advice when taking decisions. He trusts his team, he always knows how far they can go and how to motivate them to perform at the maximum level. He knows the problems of his colleagues and makes efforts to minimize the difficulties that can appear in some situations.

I have noticed that he has a real image upon his own person, a sincere image resulted from the daily self-analyze.

He has some qualities that make him to be respected by the team members. One of his strong points is the integrity which is defined as the quality to make other people trust you. Trust has a real importance in the inter-human relationships. From the very beginning, from the hiring of some people he had a positive word for them every day, which make people be more confident in their own forces.

Another strong point is the enthusiasm and I cannot imagine a leader without enthusiasm. This seems to be a general characteristic of leaders. He feels well every day and makes the others feel the same.

He has a calm and warm personality. Even if the daily tasks are various and sometimes almost impossible, there is a continuous activity which seems to never end, but, in these conditions, he acts calmly. From him, the employees continuously learn to act with the same calm as he acts, without panic when they feel that they are overwhelmed by the problems.

He proves a lot of fairness; in front of him all employees are equal. He is a serious person and involved in his work and this is also transmitted to his colleagues and his team works with a lot of seriousness, the employees obey the rules but at the same time they are opened and friendly. He

fulfills the needs of the employees and creates a relaxing environment, without pressure in order for them to have the best results and all these results to look good for the management.

This leader is a humble leader, who never says that he knows everything in his area. He is aware of his abilities but he is also conscious that there are situations when he needs help. Moreover, he does not hesitate to ask for help. He admits the moments when he feels there is too much. He knows that he has more to learn and this is what he transmits to the employees.

He empathizes with the team, understanding their feelings and handling them differently depending on the situation.

I have noticed that when he has to do a task he focuses on it until it is done. All the decisions are taken together with the employees, the members of his team.

The suggestions of his colleagues are listened to and are taken into account and the best possibility is chosen. If one of the employees cannot do his task or makes a mistake, the leader actions with diplomacy and professionalism, making them to find the best solution to improve the situation. The talks calmly and in these situations he explains the mistakes that have been made and leads the discussion in the direction so that the solutions need to be discovered.

We can say that communication is the key to every area or relationship. The leader is the one that moderates the discussions between the team that he coordinates and the management. He is the one who has the communication and negotiation abilities.

What I like more at this leader is that he is consistent in his attitude and principles. The team always knows that they can rely on him. This is what he teaches to his employees, and develops the sense of responsibility to all of them. He is the one who contributes to the development of consciousness, understanding, abilities of the team members, who has to do their job correctly and in the correct time.

I have noticed that this leader sets a certain direction based on clear goals, products or services such as to corner the market. He is always inspired by his goal or his purpose that needs to be achieved and his words and example increases the motivation to achieve the goal. He was agile when he chose his team. He leads through his own example and he managed to be well known as a leader through the hearts and minds of the team members.

The efficient leadership of the leader has as final result a high performance team. Checking the team led by this leader, we can say that he tried to direct it taking into account more aspects, such as:
- The goals are clear and realistic set;
- There is a common goal;
- Using the resources efficiently;
- Opened atmosphere;
- Analyzed progress;
- Experience gathering.

All these aspects made him build a strong, competent team that can do their tasks.

I admired his quality of being modest. He is open to learn from the ones around him, he is sincerely interested in his people and he is a good listener. He learned to know his team through communication because the secret of coordinating a team is to know the ones you work with.

Even if he is modest this does not mean that he is not aware of his qualities, including the achievements. This way he knows his strong points and also his weak points and I have noticed that he makes efforts to minimize them, where needed. He is a balanced person who has professional concerns, but also personal concerns and he is capable to radiate positive energy which helps them to pass through this kind of situations.

He is a manager who has challenging goals, a well defined strategy regarding what he wants to achieve. He adopts a strategy for each task that he has to do and he has the ability to see the overview, but never to forget the details.

He is the leader that act with consciousness, step by step and is always close to find the better solutions, meaning close to victory. I have noticed that he always did what he promised to do because he cannot lose the trust of the people because this would mean to limit the power of the leader.

3. Conclusions

After the previous analysis I can say that the leader in this company has the following behavior and characteristics:
- He is ambitious and modest;
- He is powerful and has decision power;
- He focuses on the people and tasks;
- He has a general and detailed perspective;
- He is intuitive and logic;
- He focuses on the goals and he gives all his attention to the goals;
- He is strict from the point of view of analyze and he is conscious of his own feelings;
- He is reliable and has the entrepreneurial ability;
- He is fast and organized.

What can be admired on him is the fact that he has the power to be himself in every situation because his personality is defining for a leader and it is a condition for the respect. Maybe the biggest advantage of D.I. leader is that he has always respected the people in his team and they can rely on him and he is a model that someone can follow.

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