

How does transformational leadership manifest itself?

It is all well and good talking about being a 'transformational leader' and how this appears to improve employee output, but how does one carry it out? A PhD thesis has broken the concept down into four elements as observed in two managers at two small factories in North Carolina. These four are vision, self-efficacy, self-determination and needs fulfilment.

Vision

The company will have a vision and this needs to be shown by the manager to their employees. The manager needs to be a role model, inspire and motivate their employees, and provide each with individual attention.

Through effectively implementing so the leader allows the employee to be productive in the workplace. There are two elements to showing that vision – anticipation and shared goals.

- Anticipation is about encouraging others to follow that vision and to ignore outside distractions.
- Shared goals is about motivating followers while achieving the organisation's goals. It is also about working at a high level to set the bar by which they expect others to work. It is about instilling the organisation's goals and adopting the organisation's philosophy.

Self-efficacy

This is about inspiration and selflessness.

- Inspiration is about motivating employees to perform. It is about leading by example. It is also about getting them to form an idealised image of the leader and for them to emulate those behaviours. One should be a paragon of virtue in public. Interaction with them must be positive.
- Selflessness is about looking beyond self-interest. They aren't just doing the job for their pay packets. Transformational leaders form relationships with their followers and put the goals of others before their own. It is also about creating value by influencing one's followers to be leaders.

Self-determination

Self-determination is about instilling a sense of purpose, increasing self-awareness, and increasing confidence.

- Sense of purpose is about the employee's need to feel appreciated and that they are part of something bigger.

- Increasing self-awareness is about instilling job satisfaction. Where they do this, so performance improves, and individual performances aggregate to improve the output of the organisation as a whole.
- Increasing confidence is where the transformational leader motivates individuals to learn. This is based on the concept that after they have learned those skills they can meet organisational goals.

Self-fulfilment

This is about abilities, commitment and job satisfaction.

- Abilities: The author states, "A transformational leader seeks to develop individuals' abilities, attitudes, and values; hence, transformational leaders can influence or change the thinking of followers".
- Commitment to the organisation is a key theme. The managers that the author observed didn't just talk with their followers about work but family and other interests. This improved their relationships with their followers, but also helped the employees bond with the organisation.
- Job satisfaction is tied to commitment above but is also about performance. Instilling job satisfaction is to help improve the output of the organisation as a whole.

Reference

Sellers, LC, "Leadership Strategies and Employee Performance Within Small Business" (2017)
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