INFLUENCE COACHING

Leadership Development 101 - How to Change from Solo Performer to Team Leader

A Resource for Your Leadership Development

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INTRODUCTION

What the biggest obstacles faced by leaders today? In most cases, it's themselves. Leaders get early promotions because they are exceptional solo performers. The problem is, at some point, being the "smartest person in the room" becomes a liability instead of a strength. These leaders now get in the way of their team's performance, instead of growing their team. Here's a key idea for you - **Leadership is not just about getting stuff done. It's about empowering others so THEY can get stuff done.**

So - what's the solution? In my years of coaching leaders, I've noticed one fundamental shift that starts the change from "solo performers" to "team leaders."

Here is the shift:

1. *Learn to distinguish between technical, relational, and conceptual leadership skills.*

2. *Spend more time on the relational and conceptual skills.*

In the 1950's, leadership researcher R. L. Katz suggested their were three basic skills for leaders. Leaders have to know how to work with stuff, work with people, and work with ideas. Let's take a look at those three skill sets.

1. TECHNICAL SKILLS

Technical skills are anything that helps you move your product out the door. These skills often help us check the boxes on our task lists.

Depending on your role, it could be a variety of things - drafting new plans, giving presentations, writing prescriptions, and completing spreadsheets. Leaders get their first promotions because they are great at these tasks, and they are comfortable doing them. The problem is that "solo performers" get stuck at doing these technical activities because they are comfortable doing them and they know they can get results. Unfortunately, the ultimate result for leaders who spend to much time and energy on technical skills is that these leaders get in their own way. Leaders who over-rely on technical skills become micromanages who can't delegate effectively. That behavior stifles the growth of their team. The result - the organization loses productivity for the long term and experiences more stress in the short term.

2. RELATIONAL SKILLS

To borrow an observation from Barry Posner, "You can make a difference, but you can't do it alone." In order to delegate effectively and develop your team, you've got to improve your ability to communicate and build trust in your team. To do this, you've got to develop relational skills.

In an early leadership study, researchers noticed that some managers were better at tasks and other managers were better at relationships. In order to manage a team, you can manage both tasks and relationships by developing your people skills. Both of these skills are important if you want to delegate effectively.

The biggest relational skill you can develop is learning how to listen. Once you've developed your active listening skills, here are some of the relational leadership skills you need to develop.

▸ Learn how to make conflict productive.

▸ Find out how your work impacts other people.

▸ Find out what your team REALLY needs, not just what you think they need. (And to do all that, you are going to have to ask them questions and really listen to their answers.)

3. CONCEPTUAL SKILLS

Leaders know how to think strategically and they concern themselves with future trends. To do this, leaders have to improve their ability to work with ideas. Simon Sinek has observed that a fundamental conceptual skill for leaders is the ability to understand the WHY behind WHAT you do and HOW you do it.

How you "think about" leadership is important. Don't confuse being a "leader" with being a "fixer."

To improve your ability to work with ideas:

‣ Read blogs, professional journals, and books related to your field.

‣ Spend time reading OUTSIDE of your field. Look for applications to what you currently do. By learning to connect the dots across different industries, you will start developing your strategic thinking skills.

‣ If you are not a reader, try podcasts and audio books.

‣ One conceptual skill is the ability to "Define success" for a project. Spend time doing this before you delegate. Once you are clear on the WHY and the WHAT, the HOW becomes clearer for both you and those you manage.

NEXT STEPS

1. Change your mindset - being the "star performer" will not make you a great leader.

2. Look at how you spend your time. If the majority of your time is on "technical" work, you are in trouble.

3. Find ways to make relational and conceptual work part of your weekly routine.

4. Come up with ways to measure your effectiveness at these new relational and conceptual skills.

5. Push past the initial slump that happens when you try something new.

6. If you want to really grow your leadership skills, try working with a leadership coach.

Recommended Resources

- See the Influence Coaching <u>website</u> for a variety of Leadership Communication tools.

- Barry Posner's TEDx Talk, <u>"You Can Make A Difference, But You Can't Do It Alone."</u>

- Simon Sinek's TEDx talk, <u>"Start With Why."</u>

- This TEDx Talk makes <u>"a case for active listening,"</u> and tells you how to do it.

- See this slideshare on <u>"The Daily Work Journal"</u> for keeping track of technical, relational, and conceptual work.

- Go to the Influence Coaching <u>website</u> and sign up for "30 Days on Intentional Influence."

*Please share on <u>Twitter</u> or <u>Facebook</u> what you've learned and applied from this resource. I'd love to **celebrate** your leadership development as you **expand your influence**!*

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