

Developing Leadership Capability

Leadership is a much-used word in today's business world. Ask a dozen individuals their definition of a leader and you will receive a dozen different answers'. Many of us feel that leadership is something that some people "just have"; however leadership is not something that you have to be born to. While most of us have inherent leadership capabilities, executive leadership has very different demands. Transitioning to an executive role is a major leap.

Many of us were promoted to management posts because we were good at what we did. However being a great accountant, marketer or salesman does not automatically make us a good leader. Large numbers of people fail to make the transition from do-er to leader. Sir John Harvey-Jones (Past Chairman of ICI and renowned business troubleshooter) suggested that too many people continue to do the old job because they are comfortable with that role. They become super-doers of tasks not strategic leader of others. Managers like this can be seen in organisations everywhere.

Taking time to find out what the new job requires and how we will do it is only the first step to getting it right. The tasks are easy (budgets, reports, information) and we often fill our time quickly with that. And there lies the difference between management and executive leadership. Management skills such as planning, analysis, organising, problem solving will help us deal with the here and now, but will they galvanise the organisation, the way that a strategically minded leader should? The answer is a well proven no.

So how do we steer the organisation our way? Many managers think that's easy; "We tell them what to do", or we "let them get on with it (they know what they are doing)" or we "organise meetings to talk about it". Which of these options we take will depend on our nature, our inbuilt style, and we will not always know why we would choose that route.

We then get some feedback or fail to do something right, so we go on a course (a little late perhaps because we have started to be the leader we are and changing old habits is hard). The course teaches us some tools. Some we will get the hang of and use, and some we won't, but all of them we will use based on our inbuilt style.



Over time our leadership style grows based on this training (things we should do) and our experiences (things that happened) and is delivered through our behaviours.

Does this work when it comes to developing good leaders? Or is there a better way?

All of us lead from our "leadership centre". To others it is demonstrated as our leadership style.

This has nothing to do with our original skills (engineering, accounting, marketing etc), but has everything to do with our values, beliefs, behaviours and attitudes. Our leadership style reflects our emotional intelligence and our ability to walk in the shoes of others for example. To use experience and training to best affect we need to develop this centre of leadership through self-awareness. Good leaders are self-aware. They know their values, they know their natural style, they know alternative styles and they know their weaknesses in leading others. They use this self-awareness to deliver tools and training properly in the right situations and in the right way. They use this self-awareness to build and learn from experience positively.

So how does this help a leader? Someone new to executive roles may not have looked at themselves in the guise of a strategic leader yet (after all they may have spent their career to date looking at being the best doer, so that they can be promoted to being a leader). Those that have been managing for a while may have become used to their approach and their teams will have adapted to their style, so that they think that they are "doing all right". Developing self-awareness & enhancing our

leadership skills comes from a desire to be as good as we can be, wherever we are in our career.

So how do we do that?

THECHANGEFACTOR® recognises that training alone will not help. Training courses teach tools and skills, but you can't teach self-awareness. Trainers will also teach you how to use the tool the way that they use it (how else would they explain it), but leave it to you to translate that tool in to your way of working.

THECHANGEFACTOR® believes that the clues to using the tools that we learn to then deliver leadership success are all around us. For example, top sportsmen and women work with a coach to help them hone their already considerable skills. The coach helps them to see the gaps in their performance and helps them absorb new techniques. In the business world, top executives are recognising the benefit of working with a mentor or coach to help them hone their leadership skills, explore their approach to their business and to seek out the values, beliefs and strengths that will help them, and their organisation, be successful.

THECHANGEFACTOR® team builds on our own experience of leadership in industry to provide coaching and mentoring support to leaders at all levels from new first line managers to experienced executives and leadership team. We use a range of profiling tools to give a rapid start in this understanding of a leader's behaviour, values & beliefs. We support this with tailored training in specific skills for individuals and teams. This philosophy of combining coaching, training and profiling helps the individual and the team to rapidly adapt and deliver new learning.



Your Leadership is your business. Our business is your Leadership