 Chapter 7: Power, Politics, and Leadership

Write an analytical paper based on the self-assessments completed in Modules 4 to 7.

A common theme that runs through this collection of leadership traits is the very human quality of genuineness. Rare is the role in which a “fake it ‘til you make it” façade or “Eminence Front” as so aptly coined by The Who in the song by that name, will be seen as a long-term success pattern. While there are many situations that may require one to finesse a situation, regularly having to resort to the put-on mode is an indicator that there are deep flaws in an organization.

In the milieu of power and politics, putting on airs will invariably result in one being rolled up with the carpet to be dusted off over the railing into the street. On a grand scale, Adolf Hitler experienced short-term success bullying the pacifist Neville Chamberlain and willingly-complicit Franklin Delano Roosevelt around Europe in the 1930s. Claiming to be scientific behind the Progressive/Eugenics pseudo-sciences, claiming to be pro-environment to bring along the people who wanted to preserve nature, and pretending to be pro-worker (at least until May Day, 1939) Hitler’s disingenuousness came back to haunt him. The Nazi machine that could not defend itself intellectually through the 1920s and 1930s without brownshirt bullies ensuring favorable crowds as the megalomaniac complained for a little “living room” at the expense of the less-than-human Jews or Vulgars of the east, could not have militarily withstood a modicum of martial resistance in the Sudetenland, and could not sustain itself economically without constant expansion and pillaging of newly-acquired fiefdoms. (Shirer, 2011) The power of the Nazi regime was ruthless and wicked, and took a strong force to put down, but it was put down and the price was seen as worthwhile. The same runs true in business, where abuse of power is a short path to meeting oversight in the way of the government or natural economic law itself. It is incumbent on a leader to understand one’s own assets, represent them honestly, leverage them where ethical and decent, and appreciate the rewards or find a better-suited game to play.

Leaders using influence tactics are likewise advised to remain on top of the table and within their strong suit. Invariably attempting to finesse a situation to one’s own benefit in office politics comes to light, and looks appalling on the perpetrator. It is one thing to state a preference for all to see and let the chips fall where they may, but an entirely different and contemptible thing to use surreptitious means to wheedle toward an end. If one is a good worker, conscientious manager, strong leader, and team player, she may well be chosen for a new product line rollout coming up. However, waiting at the cafeteria to have coffee with the boss to ensure he is thinking of her may well backfire if that boss feels politicked in the process. The difference comes down to genuineness. It is better to be placed where a good fit is acknowledged than in a position gotten by politics, wherein most of the time is spent trying to prove to someone it was a good placement.

 Chapter 11: Creativity, Innovation, and Leadership

Creativity and innovation are necessary in most any professional role, and even more-so in the area of leadership. One quintessential underpinning of these is genuineness. The hits leaders take from disingenuous work are crippling, not only to themselves, but to the organizations they are usually trying a little too hard at trying to improve. In an article in the Christian Science Monitor, plagiarism is cited as a popular trip-wire for leaders in this light. (Demirjian, 2006) Leaders must do their own work, and put in the time to both research and present solutions they wish to offer.

Chapter 12: Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills

Genuineness comes front and center in basic communications, and even more-so under crisis situations where one endeavors to resolve conflict. A message can get fouled by myriad things, but one of the most egregious is when the communicator discounts him or herself by speaking from a position or in a voice they cannot control. An arbitrator who is on middle ground is likely to at least bring parties to a table for meaningful dialogue. An arbitrator who claims to be unbiased in spite of strong evidence to the contrary often only serves to foul the debate. (Limbaugh, 2012) A leader must be able to truly be genuine, or have enough candor to self-assess and realize a surrogate may be needed for a given communication or conflict resolution task.

 Chapter 13: Strategic Leadership and Knowledge Management

A leader who is on the street with the folks who do the work as well as in the boardroom can best manage a strategic vision and keeping his people headed in the right direction. Too much focus on the tactical or strategic side of a business will hamper relationships and the ability to glean knowledge and influence others in the other side. Knowledge Management as well must be performed in a way meaningful to all contributors and consumers. In truth, KM should

 Chapter 14: International and Culturally Diverse Aspects of Management

 Chapter 15: Leadership Development and Succession

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