

Leadership

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal. Leadership stems from social influence, not authority or power. Leadership requires others, and that implies they don't need to be "direct reports".

Importance of Leadership

Leadership is an important function of management which helps to maximize efficiency and to achieve organizational goals. The following points justify the importance of leadership in a concern.

1. **Initiates action-** Leader is a person who starts the work by communicating the policies and plans to the subordinates from where the work actually starts.
2. **Motivation-** A leader proves to be playing an incentive role in the concern's working. He motivates the employees with economic and non-economic rewards and thereby gets the work from the subordinates.
3. **Providing guidance-** A leader has to not only supervise but also play a guiding role for the subordinates. Guidance here means instructing the subordinates the way they have to perform their work effectively and efficiently.
4. **Creating confidence-** Confidence is an important factor which can be achieved through expressing the work efforts to the subordinates, explaining them clearly their role and giving them guidelines to achieve the goals effectively. It is also important to hear the employees with regards to their complaints and problems.
5. **Building morale-** Morale denotes willing co-operation of the employees towards their work and getting them into confidence and winning their trust. A leader can be a morale booster by achieving full co-operation so that they perform with best of their abilities as they work to achieve goals.

6. **Builds work environment-** Management is getting things done from people. An efficient work environment helps in sound and stable growth. Therefore, human relations should be kept into mind by a leader. He should have personal contacts with employees and should listen to their problems and solve them. He should treat employees on humanitarian terms.
7. **Co-ordination-** Co-ordination can be achieved through reconciling personal interests with organizational goals. This synchronization can be achieved through proper and effective co-ordination which should be primary motive of a leader.

Roles of a leader in an organization :

1. **Required at all levels-** Leadership is a function which is important at all levels of management. In the top level, it is important for getting co-operation in formulation of plans and policies. In the middle and lower level, it is required for interpretation and execution of plans and programmes framed by the top management. Leadership can be exercised through guidance and counseling of the subordinates at the time of execution of plans.
2. **Representative of the organization-** A leader, i.e., a manager is said to be the representative of the enterprise. He has to represent the concern at seminars, conferences, general meetings, etc. His role is to communicate the rationale of the enterprise to outside public. He is also representative of the own department which he leads.
3. **Integrates and reconciles the personal goals with organizational goals-** A leader through leadership traits helps in reconciling/ integrating the personal goals of the employees with the organizational goals. He is trying to co-ordinate the efforts of people towards a common purpose and thereby achieves objectives. This can be done only if he can influence and get willing co-operation and urge to accomplish the objectives.

- 4. He solicits support-** A leader is a manager and besides that he is a person who entertains and invites support and co-operation of subordinates. This he can do by his personality, intelligence, maturity and experience which can provide him positive result. In this regard, a leader has to invite suggestions and if possible implement them into plans and programmes of enterprise. This way, he can solicit full support of employees which results in willingness to work and thereby effectiveness in running of a concern.
- 5. As a friend, philosopher and guide-** A leader must possess the three dimensional traits in him. He can be a friend by sharing the feelings, opinions and desires with the employees. He can be a philosopher by utilizing his intelligence and experience and thereby guiding the employees as and when time requires. He can be a guide by supervising and communicating the employees the plans and policies of top management and secure their co-operation to achieve the goals of a concern. At times he can also play the role of a counselor by counseling and a problem-solving approach. He can listen to the problems of the employees and try to solve them.

Important Leadership Styles

All leaders do not possess same attitude or same perspective. As discussed earlier, few leaders adopt the carrot approach and a few adopt the stick approach. Thus, all of the leaders do not get the things done in the same manner. Their style varies. The leadership style varies with the kind of people the leader interacts and deals with. A perfect/standard leadership style is one which assists a leader in getting the best out of the people who follow him.

Some of the important leadership styles are as follows:

Autocratic leadership style: In this style of leadership, a leader has complete command and hold over their employees/team. The team

cannot put forward their views even if they are best for the team's or organizational interests. They cannot criticize or question the leader's way of getting things done. The leader himself gets the things done. The advantage of this style is that it leads to speedy decision-making and greater productivity under leader's supervision. Drawbacks of this leadership style are that it leads to greater employee absenteeism and turnover. This leadership style works only when the leader is the best in performing or when the job is monotonous, unskilled and routine in nature or where the project is short-term and risky.

The Laissez Faire Leadership Style: Here, the leader totally trusts their employees/team to perform the job themselves. He just concentrates on the intellectual/rational aspect of his work and does not focus on the management aspect of his work. The team/employees are welcomed to share their views and provide suggestions which are best for organizational interests. This leadership style works only when the employees are skilled, loyal, experienced and intellectual.

Democratic/Participative leadership style: The leaders invite and encourage the team members to play an important role in decision-making process, though the ultimate decision-making power rests with the leader. The leader guides the employees on what to perform and how to perform, while the employees communicate to the leader their experience and the suggestions if any. The advantages of this leadership style are that it leads to satisfied, motivated and more skilled employees. It leads to an optimistic work environment and also encourages creativity. This leadership style has the only drawback that it is time-consuming.

Bureaucratic leadership: Here the leaders strictly adhere to the organizational rules and policies. Also, they make sure that the employees/team also strictly follows the rules and procedures. Promotions take place on the basis of employees' ability to adhere to organizational rules. This leadership style gradually develops over time. This leadership style is more suitable when safe work conditions

and quality are required. But this leadership style discourages creativity and does not make employees self-contented.