

WBS 7.4 Chapter Self-Assessment

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### Abstract

Leadership and management are constant developmental processes. Just when you think you know all there is to know, something addresses the subjects from a different direction and enhances your prospective. One would think that after managing people, processes and operations in the US Air Force for nearly 30 years I would have a complete understanding of leadership and motivation. This lesson has reinforced that the task and people needs of an organization must both be met in a balanced approach in order to achieve synergy. Considering why I'm motivated and how those motivators affect those around me has given me greater insight on how and when to choose a motivational style. Motivation is not limited to people who work for me. My supervisors are people who have similar needs. Observing how they react to motivation can help me influence them to be more effective in leading others or obtain the motivations I need to be more effective.

After nearly 30 years in government service I've seen and been actively involved in leadership and management at numerous levels. Many of the topics here I've had training on more than once before in my life. It never ceases to amaze me; no matter how many time I go over the same material I still can have those "ah ha" moments. Each lesson on leadership and motivation I've had has taken a look from different angles and created different prospective and this one did the same. It was more introspective and explained to me why I tend to lead the way I lead.

In the lesson on leadership and motivation we were asked to take two self-assessments. The first assessment was on Behavioral leadership. The Second was on job motivators and maintenance factors.

### **Leadership Behavior Style**

On the behavioral leadership self-assessment I scored 7 or moderately high for task oriented leadership style. This means that I am a little more task oriented than some but it is not the overwhelming concern in my leadership style. For the people leadership scale I scored 10 points, meaning my leadership style is high on the people oriented concerns. Much of this is due to my experience in the military.

The greatest asset and liability in any organization is the people. If the people are properly motivated and understand their responsibilities it's easy to lead them. I've found that tasks will get accomplished in ways initial unimagined and with better efficiency when the people completing the task are able to focus on the work. "The leader is sensitive to subordinates and communicates to develop trust, support and respect while looking out for their welfare." (Lussier & Achua, 2013)

A people oriented leader who doesn't have a higher task orientation will find themselves ineffective at getting things done. When there is little focus on achieving goals or challenging tasks will flounder in modest performance technically. In order achieve organizational self-actualization; there must be success at the professional level. People need to feel they can do things and will have the support of management to make it happen.

A task oriented leadership style is necessary when experience is low or the task has to be done meticulously for whatever reason. "The leader closely directs subordinates with clear roles and goals while the manager tells them what to do and how to do in as they work toward goal achievement."(Lussier & Achua, 2013) Initially a solely task oriented leader will have great success. If the leader continues with this style of leadership, individual expression will be limited and the decision making processes merely emulate leader or manager, thus destroying the synergistic potential of the organization.

When a leader is purely focused on tasks and has lower people concerns. They will get things done effectively at first. But, when people's needs constantly take a backseat to the task moral, motivation and performance will suffer eventually. There needs to be a balance. High task oriented leaders can be successful if they have moderately high sense of people's needs and understand how those impact the mission.

### **Job Motivation and Maintenance**

In the second self-assessment Herzberger's Two-factor Motivation model I scored 25 in the motivators' column and 17 in the maintenance column. This model assesses how I react to motivation and what my needs are. I scored higher in the need for motivators over maintenance because my maintenance needs are taken care of at this point in my career.

Not everyone is at that point. Many young people who are developing and learning where their place is in the work force have a greater need to fulfill those maintenance concerns. They are still working on fulfilling the bottom four levels of Dr. Maslow's pyramid. They are concerned with obtaining an adequate salary to survive, the conditions of work. They need to feel secure at the work place and socially protected from unfairness; some even reach the need to achieve titles and satisfaction in the job. (Lussier & Achua, 2013)

After completing a successful military career and being halfway through my second career in government those basic needs are not a concern for me. At this point my concerns are how I can continue to provide a quality service and do a good job for my superiors. My motivation is the job itself. Having been through the learning curve; I want to be able to make the decision on tasks I'm responsible for without the need for supervision or approval from the boss. This takes me to my final point.

Most of this discussion has been related to top down leadership. As the workforce ages a lot of the same principles apply to bottom up leadership. Maintenance needs and motivators are similar when looking up the chain of command. Often those same factors affect how a leader is performing their tasks within an organization. Most of my supervision has less experience than I do at the job. I've been hired to be a stabilizing force because of the lack of overall experience in the military. I use many of the same techniques, albeit with greater finesse when trying to motivate my supervisor in certain ways.

### **Conclusion**

A leader needs to employ both task and people oriented leadership and understand the motivating factors in order to effectively and efficiently manage or lead people. Without the active input of people the synergy of an organization will breakdown.

References

Lussier, R., & Achua, C. (2013). *Leadership: Theory, application & skill development* (5th ed.).

Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.