

“Business Leadership” Interaction

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Business Leadership Interaction

Point #1. Management Versus Leadership

In chapter 1, Kotter (1990) illustrates the difference between management and leadership with a military analogy. He claims a peacetime army can survive with good managers in the chain of command if good leaders populate the top roles. “A wartime army, however, needs competent leadership at all levels. No one yet has figured out how to manage people effectively into battle; they must be led” (p. 7). War requires leaders: Peace can survive with managers.

Interaction with Point #1

I fully agree with Kotter’s (1990) assessment. A U.S. Army veteran, I served under both managers and leaders, good and bad. The strong correlation between military service and service for Jesus fascinates me. Paul the Apostle compares following Jesus with soldiering at least five times (1 Corinthians 9:7, Philippians 2:25, 2 Timothy 2:3, 2 Timothy 2:4, and Philemon 1:2). Extrapolating Kotter’s idea to the realm of the Gospel indicates the church needs leaders rather than managers. Taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth requires inspiring leaders rather than competent managers.

Point #2. Exemplary Leaders Model

In chapter three Kouzes and Posner (2002) state “Leadership is not about personality; it’s about practice” (p. 26). They go on to proclaim, “‘You must lead from what you believe.’ Leaders must find their own voice, and then they must clearly and distinctively give voice to their values” (p. 27). Good leaders are good models. The practices a leader models reveals their true values to their followers. “People first follow the person, then the plan” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Interaction with Point #2

I completely agree with the authors on the importance of modeling values. In campus ministry students learn as much from observing actions as they do from teaching. They become what their mentors are. This both encourages and daunts. I must watch my life and doctrine closely because my students are scrutinizing my speech and actions. If I want exemplary leaders, I must model exemplary behaviors.

Point #3. Leaders Influence

Bolman and Deal (2007) report in chapter four that “one can be a leader without a position of formal authority” (p. 37). They expand the thought saying, “good organizations encourage leadership from many quarters.”

Interaction with Point #3

I have experienced the influence of leaders with no formal authority. Students in our ministry who are popular but have not taken responsibility to lead small groups sometimes exercise undue influence. Recently we discovered the source of pervasive gossip in our ministry was an influential student who had declined a position as a small group leader. She had no title but leveraged considerable influence. We took drastic measures, following the template of Matthew 18:15-17 to address the gossip that infected the group. Her graduation ultimately solved our dilemma when she removed herself from the community.

Point #4. Leaders Communicate

In chapter five, O’Toole (2001) stresses the centrality of communications in organizations with systems that generate leaders. He says, “There is a striking consensus among scholars...about the centrality of communications to the role of the leader. Significantly, we found examples of companies where this important task was viewed as the responsibility of every leader at every level” (p. 58).

Interaction with Point #4

I am working to improve communications in our ministry. We have discovered that overcommunication is not possible. When we believe we have reached the saturation point with our information, our students are just beginning to grasp the details. We improved our communication with our small group leaders through a brief weekly email highlighting coming events with links for applicable forms to collect small group stats and event registrations. We are noticing a gradual improvement in the level of retention of information by our leaders evidenced by fewer requests for the information we provided.

Point #5. Authentic Leadership

In chapter eight, George (2003) posits that “leadership begins and ends with authenticity. It’s being yourself; being the person you were created to be” (p. 87). He goes on to say that outstanding authentic leaders are not born but are created through developing their leadership gifts” (p. 88). He says, “To become authentic, each of us has to develop our own leadership style, consistent with our personality and character” (p. 89).

Interaction with Point #5

I strongly agree with George’s assessment that the best leaders are authentic to themselves. When I first stepped into campus ministry, I tried to mimic great Chi Alpha leaders I knew. I tried speaking boldly and in absolutes like my early mentor E. Scott Martin, now our Chi Alpha national director. Then I tried to be a comedic genius like Eric Treuil of Lafayette, Louisiana, now Assistant Superintendent for Louisiana Ministry Network. Later I attempted to speak at the level of Curt Harlow, now a pastor at Bayside Church in California. When I discovered and developed my own style, I began to feel comfortable as a leader and a minister. Once I defined my values, I grew as a leader. George (2003) said, “The values of the authentic

leader are shaped by personal beliefs, developed through study, introspection, and consultation with others—a lifetime of experience” (p. 94). I am solidly in the process of developing my authentic leadership style.

Point #6. Racial Diversity

In chapter nineteen, Livers and Caver (2002) stress the importance of understanding the racial divide. They emphasize the difference in experience of black and white workers: “By assuming that the playing field is level, non-black colleagues are able to dismiss charges of subtle discriminations” (p. 257). They state boldly, “Imagine going to work each day with the anticipation of running up against misperceptions, distortions, and sometimes completely fictional accounts of your behaviors from colleagues” (p. 257).

Interaction with Point #6

I appreciate Livers and Caver’s (2002) assessment of the racial divide. As a 55-year-old white male, I have no experience of living as a young black man in America. I struggle to identify with the authors’ statement, “The lesson that many blacks learn from work and other social experiences is that race always matters and it always matters all of the time” (p. 259). I need to grow in understanding of what it means to be black in America. Inspired by this chapter, I started a dialogue this week with a black student in our ministry to help me grow in understanding and appreciation of racial diversity, and to help him grow as a man of God.

Personal Interaction with the Video on Business Leadership

Point #1. We Lead People, Not Robots

Dr. Blakney stated that business leaders hire people, not robots. People come with needs that must be considered. They have needs when they come onboard as employees, and similar needs when they transition out.

Interaction with point #1

I agree with Dr Blakney that we must treat our charges as people, not machines. One of our truisms illustrates this: “It’s a garden, not a factory.” People have individual needs, and we must make allowances for those needs if we want to retain them in our ministry. Each of us has a unique set of baggage we bring to any organization. I must facilitate growth by making allowances for people’s needs and providing them a welcoming and flexible community to plant themselves in.

Point #2. Trustworthy Leaders

Dr. Blakney stressed the need for being a leader of your word. You must be trusted. If you mention holiday hours or raises or even new office furniture, you must honor your word. By virtue of position, leaders’ words carry weight.

Interaction with Point #2

I agree with Dr. Blakney’s encouragement to be a man of my word. I am working to always honor what I say to my staff and students. When I talk about giving them a block of family time over the Christmas holiday, I must honor that promise. I scheduled our end of year ministry analysis early in the Christmas break so my staff would have maximum time to travel and see family.

Point #3. People are not Interruptions

Dr. Blakney emphasized for a second time that people are not interruptions. He stressed the importance of scheduling flex time in the workday to prioritize people’s needs.

Interaction with Point #3

Since hearing Dr. Blakney’s first challenge weeks ago, I began paying close attention to the amount of time spent on interruptions. To my amazement I found that often half of my day

was occupied with unscheduled people issues. Since then, I have built in much more flex time, so I am available for people without always feeling rushed.

I, Ryan A. Ribelin, have read 100% of the required pages of the book.