

Event Management: Servant Leadership Model

Summary of the Case

Tonya, the newly hired arena manager for a student leadership conference is working her first event as manager. Scott Williams, the Event Manager who hired Tonya, has personally trained Tonya for her responsibilities and instructed her on specific details for this event. Tonya fails to communicate with her volunteers and then forgets to check to make sure the volunteers are in position. As a result, the guest speaker's survey cards were not distributed to attendees in several sections, leaving attendees confused and frustrated. Tonya struggled to determine how to repair the damage of her miscommunication. An Event Manager, must respond to the situation in order to appease the disgruntled attendees and continue to educate and train Tonya for future events. To frame this discussion, leadership can be thought of as the critical element that harnesses other resources for organizational and business success (Abomeh, 2013).

Class Goals

- Students will be able to define Servant Leadership, and how to apply it in their own careers.
- Students will also understand and debate the models of leadership and perhaps why a servant leadership model is the optimal model for the hospitality industry.
- Students will understand how important it is for leadership to inspect and assess what they expect from their employees.
- Students will learn how important it is to "over" communicate in order to avoid miscommunication.

Teaching Objectives

- Students should be able to clearly define what it means to be a leader and specifically a servant leader.
- Students should be able to assess and respond to a situation using the servant leadership model.

Teaching Framework and Sequence of Discussion Questions

It is important for leaders to equip employees to handle different types of situations so that they are prepared to handle the stress that comes during an event. However, it is the leader's job to be prepared to step in when needed in order to ensure the success of the event. Servant leaders choose to lay aside their personal agendas to meet the needs of the organization. Some questions to prompt student discussion might include:

- As the Event Manager, how should Scott Williams respond to this situation?

- How should Mr. Williams respond to the new Arena Manager?
Given that:
 - Tonya has been trained for this role
 - She was given specific directions to keep a situation like the one above mentioned from happening.
 - Is there something that Mr. Williams could have done to prevent mistakes like this from happening?
- How should Mr. Williams respond to the attendees that are now frustrated that they do not have survey cards like the rest of the attendees?
- Given this example of servant leadership in the event sector, how can servant leadership be utilized at a hotel? A restaurant?
- How could a supervisor or manager apply servant leadership to their job?
- Do you believe servant leadership is applicable for all leadership positions?

Outcome of Leadership

After quickly assessing the situation, Mr. Williams did not hesitate to pick up the bucket in the front section closest to him and begin to pass out the survey cards himself. He knew that the most important thing in that moment was to take care of the needs of the attendees and honor the wishes of the guest speaker. As Tonya saw Mr. Williams step in to help, she also jumped to help pass out the survey cards in one of the other front sections. The example of servant leadership displayed by Scott Williams prompted Tonya to respond in servant leadership by filling in where there was a need. Instead of shouting at Tonya to fix the problem or even pointing out her mistake, Mr. Williams simply served Tonya by helping where it was most needed, no matter how menial the task. Because of Mr. Williams' example of grace and service to Tonya, she also served her absentee volunteers by reminding them of how important was for them to be in position when needed and thanking them for volunteering. After the event, during Tonya's evaluation, Mr. Williams simply asked Tonya how she could have handled that situation differently and what she learned from that situation. By allowing Tonya the opportunity to reflect and apply what she learned, Mr. Williams was developing Tonya into a better leader. Tonya learned from her mistakes at the first event and applied Mr. Williams' example of servant leadership to her own leadership model as an arena manager.

Framework for Classroom Use

This is a simple case study example based on a student internship. The topic can be used as a catalyst to discuss leadership and planning for events. This case is recommended for a Meetings and

Table 1

Event Objectives and Goals Outline

Spatial and Resource Planning

- Infrastructure: one stop all services
- Transportation
- Food and Beverage
- Other services

Stakeholder Input

- Members
- Clients/ Families
- Event Organization
- Infrastructure Components

Market research

- Segmentation
- SWOT
- Potential customers
- Factors effecting interest in the area
- Needs of guest relative to event

Product Development

- Image
- Organization development
- Packages
- Pricing
- Setting/ site
- Facilities

Promotions

- Impact Evaluation
- Regional Strategy
- Link event to allied services

Image Massaging

- Create a need for additional services
- Push and pull factors
- Authenticity
- Correct Negative Images

Concept Plan

- Infrastructure requirements
- Financial resources needed

- Human resources required
- Likely demand based on historical information

Nature of population

- Level of wealth
- Interests
- Sophistication in organizing events

Impact analysis

- Advantages over competitors
- Geographic distribution
- Center based

Market penetration

- Fair share
- Demand captured

Essential Services

- Safety & health
- Food and beverage
- Communications
- Comfort
- Information
- Accessibility

Pricing

- Determine costs
- Revenue evaluation
- Licensing
- Break even analysis
- Cost recovery

Criteria for a setting

- Site suitability
- Capacity
- Security if necessary

Accessibility

- Traffic Control
- On Site-Flow
- Main location or Staging area
- Theme

Event Management course and could be used at the sophomore level or above. The case can also be used in a course that focuses on leadership. Some learning outcomes for a class could include:

1. Students should be able to produce a short response paper discussing how they would respond as if they were the Event Manager, Scott Williams.
2. Students can make recommendations on how the Event Manager could have prevented this situation.
3. Student should be able to identify what additional training and follow-up with the new Arena Manager could have prevented these errors.
4. Instructors can use this case study to discuss how to train and manage volunteers at large events.
5. Have students create leadership questions and create an assignment for them to identify leaders in the local community and interview a sample of those leaders.

Suggested List of Leadership Interview Questions

- What do you think it takes to become a leader?
- In your business, who would you identify as a leader?
- Have you always considered yourself a leader?
- Did you develop into a leader through your job?
- What type of leader would you consider yourself? Be prepared to give them choices, just in case
- What does the term Servant Leadership mean to you?
- Do you think Servant Leadership is an effective style of leadership in the hospitality industry?
- What motivates your employees?
- For young leaders, what advice would you give? Be sure to..., Be sure NOT to...
- Has there ever been a time when "peer pressure" or other's point of view affected the way you led?
- How should a leader balance work and home life?
- What leadership skills have you learned/developed in the last five years?
- How do you define quality at your company?
- What have you determined to be the most underestimated threat to success?
- How do you deal with complaining/bitter employees?
- Who are some of your leadership role models?
- Are there any trends in the hospitality industry that are changing the way you lead your employees?
- What characteristics make a good leader?
- Who are some of your leadership role models? Why?
- How do you handle conflict between employees/peers?
- What are some qualities for leaders that are specific to the hospitality industry?

- How does your reaction with guests affect the way your employees interact with guests?

These activities and questions will provide students an orientation to leadership styles and functions and assist in the development of their careers as managers and leaders.

Finally, a classroom exercise focused on leadership self-assessment will assist student to better understand the leadership process. There are multiple instruments available for this process. For example, the Leadership Practices Inventory by Kouzes, Posner, and Biech (2010) is a tool used in some hospitality leadership curriculums. In this process students conduct a self-assessment that examines their performance based on: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Utilization of this or some other tool can assist students to understand their leadership styles.

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Additional Readings

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