teaching note

Trouble in Hotel Paradise Housekeeping Department: A case study

Review of Case

The case focuses on leadership and how leadership can positively or negatively impact an organization's department outcome. Leadership primarily focuses on influencing the organization's employees towards goal attainment. It involves a relationship between leader and followers in which the leader attempts to "convince others to contribute to the processes that turn ideas and visions into reality and that help to bring about change" (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011, p. 2). A major part of a leader's responsibility is to assist the team in determining viable solutions to organizational problems so that employees can work productively in a harmonious work environment in order to attain the organization's goals.

Case Discussion Question:

Prior to answering the case questions, the instructor/facilitator could have the students analyze and constructively criticize the case using a SWOT analysis approach to identify Bradley Spencer's Strengths, Weaknesses, the Opportunities available for him to turn the department around, and the Threats he is likely to face, and why.

Question: (group discussion)

How can effective leadership positively impact an organization's department outcome? Also, what do you believe is Bradley Spencer leadership style?

Answer:

With the guidance, knowledge, and support from the leader, the organization can gain sustainable competitive advantage during turbulent times, especially when organizational change is required. However, Bradley thought he was a democratic leader, but his behavior did not demonstrate it. Department leaders must not exclude the persons who are meeting the guest, preparing and serving guest must be a part of the total planning process.

Question: (class discussion)

What leadership and guidance did Bradley Spencer provide for the employees in Hotel Paradise housekeeping department?

Answer:

Upon accepting the new managerial task of leading the housekeeping department, Bradley Spencer felt that since he was the boss, everyone would follow and do what he said. He made some initial observations and felt that he had the solutions. He met with the supervisors and employees, but did not request, accept and embrace employees' input and suggestions. He refused initially to engage employees, until he attended a workshop that provided the updates and simulations of team development and operation.

Instructor – Have students discuss or write a paper on other ways Bradley Spencer could have gotten to the bottom of the situation, rather than attending a Ritz Carlton workshop.

Answers:

He could have conducted observations; Allowed the supervisors and employees to volunteer information and be a part of the solution. He could have developed problem groups to have employees and supervisors develop solutions. He should have shared guests' comments with all employees, as well as, develop an "up to date training program for new and relevant housekeeping techniques.

Question:

If you were in Bradley Spencer's position, what would you have done differently?
- Do you believe the change process at Hotel Paradise housekeeping department successful, and give reasons for your response?
- How can managers in their respective organizations prevent or circumvent employees' resistance to change?

Answer:

Bradley Spencer seems to be someone who felt that he could handle the challenges alone. He felt that he was qualified to analyze and develop the necessary solutions to the problems. While he had a master's degree, the courses did not involve management of teams. After attending the Ritz Carlton workshop, he realized that he needed more information about team development and inclusion.

Employees tend to emulate their leaders; therefore, leaders of organizations must ensure that the employees are seen, their suggestions acknowledge, and that they are accepted as members of the group. That way, they will be supportive of the change vision and activities. The leader should not consider himself superior to his followers instead be an active member of the team contributing equally. To influence others, the leader has to be accepted by the followers and be seen as part of the team (Haslam et al., 2011). This is referred to as the first rule of leadership, where leaders become in-group prototypes (Haslam et al., 2011). The change process will become more complicated when managers encounter resistance to change by organizational members (Plunkett, Attner, & Allen, 2005).

Leaders should possess qualities, attributes and behaviors which are similar to their constituents (Haslam et al., 2011). Connecting with the employees and making them feel important and valued is critical. In that way, they can see the leader as being supportive and they will

appreciate the fact that their well-being is important and they are not just tools to be used or a means to an end.

Question:

What kind of leader do you think Bradley Spencer was? Explain
- Also, discuss whether or not you believe Bradley Spencer was a charismatic leader.

Answer:

Bradley Spencer was a democratic leader, once he attended the Ritz Carlton workshop. He also thought he was charismatic. Followers of charismatic leaders are usually more motivated and productive as it leads to greater respect for the leader (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Bradley Spencer charismatic personality allowed him to think that he could win the support of employees because he was the superior of all of the team. He had to attend a workshop where he learned all of the aspects of leadership and team development. Once he attended the workshop with the supervisors, he included the employees in the decision-making process. He quickly earns the trust and respect of the team. He was able to encourage, inspire, and motivate the team to achieve the vision and bringing about the desired change required to accomplish positive results. Leaders can be considered effective when they are charismatic. Such characteristic allows them to articulate a vision for their followers and generates enthusiasm to achieve that vision (Haslam et al., 2011).

Question:

Would you consider Bradley a resource allocator based on the situations/challenges he was able to resolve? Discuss your choice of answer.

Answer:

Another key role was that of being a resource allocator. The resources available to an organization are always in limited supply. Hence, resources should be allocated in ways that will allow for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The firm's performance centers on how efficiently and effectively organizational resources are utilized (Huesch, 2013). It was important to Bradley to ensure that the department had adequately and competent staff. It was also critical for the team members to have the resources necessary. Several pieces of large and small equipment were brought in to help with the cleaning of guest rooms as well as the general public areas. Additional quantities of various linen items were bought to ensure the employees had adequate resources to supply the guest rooms. Based on previous experience working in hotels, Bradley realized that a lack of resources could result in a great deal of frustration for employees, especially when it hinders them from performing their duties efficiently and effectively. Also, a lack of resources could also negatively impact guest satisfaction.

Question:

If you were the hotel manager and Bradley approached you to

asked for funds to attend the suggested workshop for the supervisors and for himself at the Ritz Carlton, especially after he admitted the following: While he had implemented some changes and was a democratic manager and an innovative leader, things had not improved as they should have. Also, the employees had requested a meeting with him, but he had not schedule it as yet. He also felt that the employees' performance appraisals, the training of the supervisors and the review of their goals and objectives were all that was needed for improvement. In addition, he had not shared guests' comments with employees, although they had asked to review them.

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