

Leadership Begins with a Creative Approach

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the creative side of a leader. This is a competitive world, and creativity and uniqueness has become vital for the survival of any organization. Human capital is considered as a most important competitive advantage for any organization, because employee performance is directly related to the overall organizational performance. Within that cluster of employees, the most important are the *leaders*. There are eleven different dimensions of leadership, which are related to creativity. This paper especially focuses on creative leadership of Pakistan. Creativity has a lot of benefits, but if it is turned towards negativity, it can affect the society adversely.

INTRODUCTION

Creativity has become a sizzling issue these days, especially in the business community. It's been considered as a benchmark for success. In simple words, creativity is *to make or create something*¹. Different authors have different point of view about creativity. Some describe it as a "*mystery*"² others explained it as an "*Intuition*"³ or "*revelation*" which comes from within. This is a misperception that every intelligent person is a creative being as well. It's not true. Although both creativity and intelligence are mental abilities, but every creative being can be with high IQ level and every high IQ person cannot be creative at the same time⁴.

In management sciences, especially in Human resource management, creativity has a special place⁵. Human capital is considered as a most important competitive advantage for any organization, because employee performance is directly related to the overall organizational performance. Within that cluster of employees, the most important are the *leaders*.

It is said that the creative and innovative leader has the ability to transform dreams and ideas into reality⁶. As creativity is considered an inborn quality, similarly, it is said that leaders cannot be made, leadership is also an inbred quality.

Importance of creativity in Leadership

"True Leadership begins with a creative and positive approach within"

Gabrielle Davis

Recent studies proved that creativity and innovation is the key to organizational success. Organizations are becoming dynamic today. The organizations which offer something different to it's customers are progressing. Creativity has become crucial for any organization, and if the leader of the organization will be creative, he will enhance the creativity of his subordinates as well⁷, because, Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and Threats of any organization are mainly based upon the level of creativity of the leadership. A creative leader can come up with creative solutions to the problems faced by the whole organization.

Dimensions of Leadership and the Role of Creativity:

Leadership has eleven different dimensions:

¹ Ezepue, P.O. (n.d). The dimensions of creativity and critical thinking: implications for entrepreneurship-focused pedagogic innovations in (African) Higher Educational Institutions. Cultural, Communications and Computing Research Institute. Pp.4

² Boden, M.A. (1994). What Is Creativity? Dimensions of Creativity. MIT CogNet. Pp.2

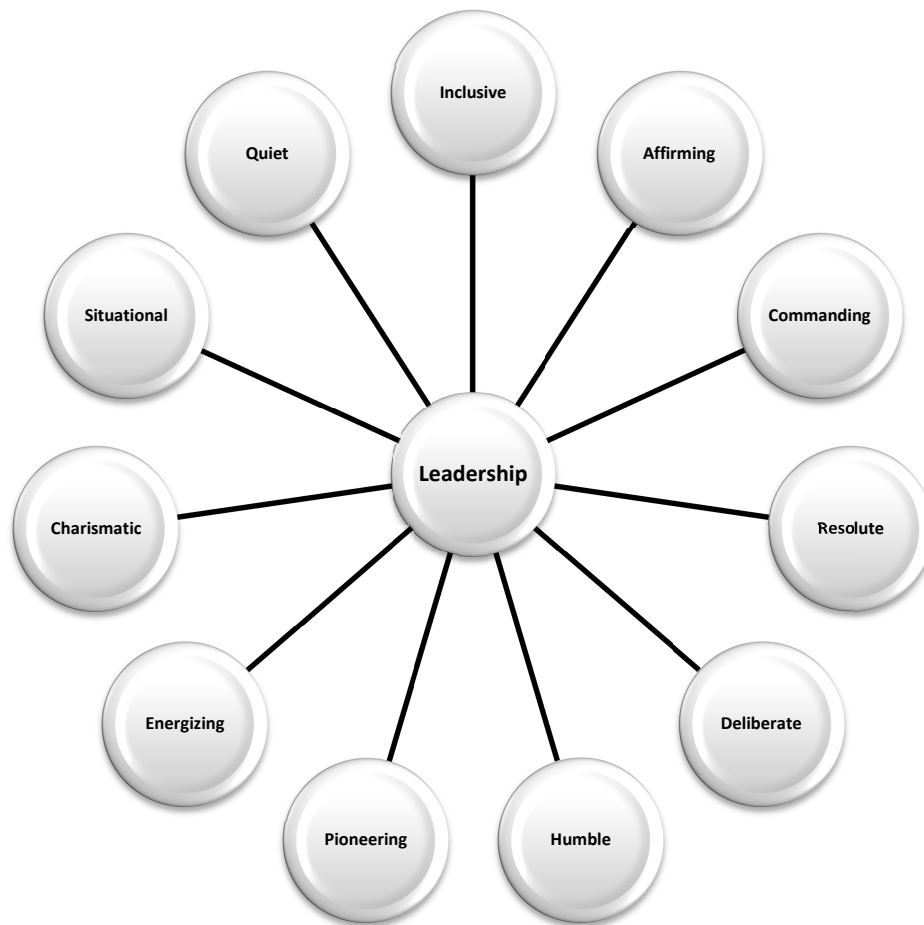
³ Ashram, S.A. (2010). Dimensions of Creativity. Forth dimension Inc. Towards integral management. Vol.2, No.4, pp. 1-4

⁴ Sandeep (2011). Difference between creativity and intelligence. Retrieved from://http://www.youthstop.net/difference-between-creativity-and-intelligence

⁵ Shalley, C.E. & Gilson, L.L. (2004). What leaders need to know: A review of social and contextual factors that can foster or hinder creativity. The Leadership Quarterly. Vol. 15, pp. 33–53

⁶ Nissley, N. (2007). Good Leadership Demands a Combination of the Two. Leadership in Action. Vol. 27, No. 2. Pp. 21-23

⁷ Jaussi, K.S. & Dionne, S.D. (2003). Leading for creativity: The role of unconventional leader behavior. The Leadership Quarterly. Vol. no. 14, pp. 475-498



1. Inclusive Leaders

Inclusive leaders are diplomatic in nature. They believe in solutions which offer win-win situations. They are more comfortable in stable environment. They are orderly and punctual in accomplishing tasks. Inclusive leaders are open to a variety of people having different nature, attitude and background. Therefore they are best suited in flat organizations and organizations with diverse workforce.

This style of leadership supports creativity. They are good listeners and they appreciate new and innovative ideas. They major draw back of this style of leadership is that instead of generating their own ideas, they highly depend upon others. Hakim Muhammad Saeed¹ is the famous example of Inclusive leader.

2. Affirming Leaders

Leaders having Affirming style are friendly, supportive and kind. They encourage the work of their subordinates. They create an employee friendly environment around them. They are not cautious like Inclusive leaders. They cannot make others accountable of their work. They believe others more than themselves.

They support creativity and innovation by bringing forward new voices. Whenever a problem arises, they work hard to find creative and effective solutions to that problem. Mian Muhammad Mansha² has an Affirming Leadership Style.

3. Commanding Leaders

Commanding leaders are powerful and assertive in nature. They drive people towards the set goal. They are decisive and some times demanding as well. They want a quicker and efficient work. They have a natural tendency to take charge. Such type of leaders are mostly seen in military roles.

Creativity has little importance for this type of leaders. Andleeb Abbas³ CEO, FranklinCovey Pakistan is said to have commanding leadership style.

¹ Hakim Mohammed Saeed (2010). Retrieved from: <http://forum.urduworld.com/f3040/hakim-mohammed-saeed-315251//>

² Mehmood, F. (2013). Corporate leader Mian Mohammad Mansha. Retrieved from: <http://transformationofhighschoolstudents.wordpress.com/2013/05/06/corporate-leader-mian-mohammad-mansha/>

³ Andleeb Abbas CEO, FranklinCovey Pakistan. Retrieved from: http://www.managertoday.pk/interviews/entrepreneurs/Andleeb_Abbas.html

4. Resolute Leaders

Leaders with resolute style are blunt, independent and challenging. They want perfection in their work. They are impatient with their staff. They cannot bear any hurdle in their way. They are insensitive. They are not afraid of setting high standards for themselves. They look for creative ways to reach their destination. They want to be seen highly competent, to achieve this status they can even step on someone's toe. Owner of Hashoo Group Sadruddin Hashwani¹ is the best example of Resolute leadership style.

5. Deliberate Leaders

Deliberate leaders are systematic and cautious. Just like resolute leaders, they are perfectionist, but the difference is that unlike resolute leaders, deliberate leader work on moderate pace. They are not team players, rather they enjoy working alone. They are courageous. Deliberate leaders are generally creative. Founder of Bareeze and Care foundation Seema Aziz²'s style of leadership is to some extent related to deliberate leadership.

6. Humble Leaders

As the name suggests, this type of leaders are soft spoken, humble and precise. They are conscientious in dealing with others. They provide reliable and consistent outcomes, because of their cautious nature, but they may hinder creativity.

Farrukh

Saleem

CEO, Hush Puppies³ falls under this category of leadership style, except his risk taking nature.

7. Pioneering Leaders

They are the best example of creative leadership, because pioneering leaders are always ready to take chances and they encourage working on new directions. They are adventurous, passionate and bold. They involve others in their work by using their persuasive and optimistic style. The drawback related to this style of leadership is that the leader having this style may sometimes become impulsive. They jump on new direction whenever they find an opportunity and for this purpose, they may not take consent of others. Salim Ghauri⁴ Chairman and CEO, NetSol Technologies Ltd. (Pakistan) is the best example of pioneering leadership style.

8. Energizing Leaders

As the name implies, this type of leaders are energetic, cheerful and supports colorful new and creative ideas. They are outgoing and enthusiastic. They are fast paced. They enjoy solitary tasks, rather than group activities, but they collaborate with specific people who may help them in clearing their vision. CEO of Manal International Mr. Adnan E. Tabani⁵ is known to be an energetic leader.

9. Charismatic Leaders

Charismatic leadership is commonly known style of leadership. They are sociable and extrovert in nature. They are eloquent. Due to a special charm in their personality people blindly follow them, therefore, there is likelihood of power corruption by such personalities. This type of leadership gives special importance to creative approaches⁶. This type of leadership mostly emerges from revolutionary scenarios. Khadija Mushtaq⁷ director roots school system is known as a Pakistan women charismatic leader.

10. Situational Leaders

Situational leaders take into account three factors, the situation, the ability of followers and the competency of the leader. Leader changes his decision according to the situation. The level of adaptability is very high in this leadership style, because such leader needs to be dynamic. This is said to be most effect leadership style. This type of leader believes that there is no single best leadership style. They encourage creative work of their subordinates. MD PSO & ENGRO Shaukat Raza Mirza⁸ is known to be a situational leader.

11. Quiet Leaders

Such type of leaders believe in doing things rather than telling their subordinates, what to do? They do not use power or force on their followers. They do not give speeches or direct orders, they do whatever needs to be done.

¹ Tarar, K. (2012). Hashwani's 'Five Star Gold Standards' for rebuilding Pakistan. Retrieved From:// <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/05/14/news/profit/hashwani%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%98five-star-gold-standards%E2%80%99-for-rebuilding-pakistan/>

² Bayrasli, E. (2010). Fashioning A New Future For Pakistan. Retrieved from:// http://www.forbes.com/2010/11/23/seema-aziz-bareeze-care-pakistan-forbes-woman-entrepreneurs-education_2.html

³ Farrukh Saleem CEO, Hush Puppies. Retrieved from: http://www.managertoday.pk/interviews/entrepreneurs/Farrukh_Saleem.html

⁴ Salim Ghauri Chairman and CEO, NetSol Technologies Ltd. (Pakistan). Retrieved from:// http://www.managertoday.pk/interviews/salim_ghauri.html

⁵ Manal International. Group history. Retrieved from:// http://manalinternational.com/?page_id=301

⁶ Roberts, C. (2013). Characteristics of a Charismatic Leader. Retrieved from:// <http://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/characteristics-charismatic-leader-7990.html>

⁷ Khadija Mushtaq got best women entrepreneur award 2012. Retrieved from:// <http://sekho.com.pk/education-news/khadija-mushtaq-got-best-woman-entrepreneur-award-2012/>

⁸ Umar, A. (2011). Shaukat Mirza: A man for all seasons. Retrieved From:// <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/jun2011-weekly/busrev-13-06-2011/p13.htm>

They prefer simplicity than creativity. Abdus Starr Edhi¹ is the best example of quiet leadership.

Benefits of Creative Thinking For Leaders

There are a lot of benefits of creative thinking, only a few are mentioned here:

1. Creative Leader may become better problem solver, because, he learns new resourceful ways to deal with the problems.
2. Man is a social animal and creative work cannot be done alone. Therefore, creating new things help leaders to interact with different group of people.
3. Appreciation of Creative work enhances the self esteem of the leader. Maslow has suggested that “*achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, and managerial responsibility*”², are the important determinants of self esteem.
4. Creativity helps leadership in dealing with ambiguous situations easily and differently.
5. For creativity, sky is the limit, therefore, it also gives the sense of freedom to the leader.
6. When leaders innovate a new product or service, it in turn, increases the opportunities for job.

Drawbacks Of Creative Thinking For Leaders:

Nature has defined certain parameters for everything in this world. Similarly, if the focus of creativity will turn towards negativity, then it may affect adversely. For instance, creation of atomic bombing is a work of a genius, but evil genius.

Conclusion

Creativity is burgeoning topic these days, especially in the business world. Special focus is being given to the creativity at leadership level. Creative leader can creatively enhance the performance of the employees. Every single dimension of leadership has special place for creative thinking. It is a common belief that people with creative thinking are more successful in such competitive environment. There are many benefit attach to creativity, but if it goes in the wrong direction, it can affect all stakeholders adversely.

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