



INFLUENCE AND LEADERSHIP

VĂCAR Anca

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania

Abstract:

Because leadership is known as the process of influencing others and not only that but determining them to act in order to achieve goals, the article above emphasizes the importance of communication in this process. By understanding the essence of leadership, managers will be effective communicators and so more effectively leading their organizations through projects.

Key words: *leadership, manager, communication, project*

1. Introduction

The Project is one of the many instruments that managers use in their activity and is very important for them to understand not only when, but how to use it. The companies encourage their people to come forward with new ideas, offering material or moral-spiritual rewards for it. According to H. Kerzner (2010), one such reward could be the assignation of „project promoters”. Mirrored, the two roles, project manager and project promoter or leader, when they don't overlap, they can be different from one another.

2. Project managers and leadership

The success or failures of a project don't depend only on the performance of project team, but often on the leaders' contributions. „The projects management accepts as a premise the fact that one of the secrets of effective project management is building relationships of cooperation between different groups of people, in order to accomplish the projects” (Bușe, Simionescu and Bud, 2008).

„The persistent exertion of the leader role should characterize every project manager” says F. Bușe, Simionescu and Bud (2008). According to them, project managers and their subordinates should exhibit at the same time an attitude of collaboration in order to fix the problems, this aspect being necessary even from the early stages of the project, moments when mutual trust would be tested in how the

partners would respond to the first disagreements that appear. Thus, project managers should know how to reward the partners from their own organizations, who accede to the partnership principles and to admonish those who, from various reasons, don't cooperate and refer to opposing practices.

According to Chirleşan (2008), project management consists of "facilitating the planning, the scheduling and the control of every activity that has to be done in order to achieve the project's targets". The author thinks is important to explain the term "facilitating the planning", because a common error between inexperienced project managers is to plan the project for the team. Doing so, not only would they obtain little involvement and participation from the rest of the team, but the plan itself would suffer and would be full of deficiencies, as the author points out. The managers could not think of everything, their calculations about the duration of an activity are usually wrong and all others will delay the initiation of the project. For this reason, Chirleşan (2008) consider as necessary to enforce a first norm or rule for project leadership and that is: "those that are to work in the project should help it's planning". He thinks that the role of a leader consists in facilitating and helping the team to accomplish their task, to avoid interferences, to obtain the resources they need and to reduce exterior forces that would disturb the working. Thus, he is not a project boss, but "a leader, in the true meaning of the word". To explain this, he uses a definition given by Vance Packard in 1962, an American journalist, writer and social critic (1914-1996): "Leadership appears to be the art of getting others to want to do something you are convinced should be done" (Chirleşan, 2008). A leader convinces people to want to do the work and doesn't enforce this state of mind. "Planning, scheduling and control is the administrative part of the project, but without leaders, the projects would tend to only fulfill the minimum essential requirements and through leadership they will exceed this minimum" says Chirleşan (2008).

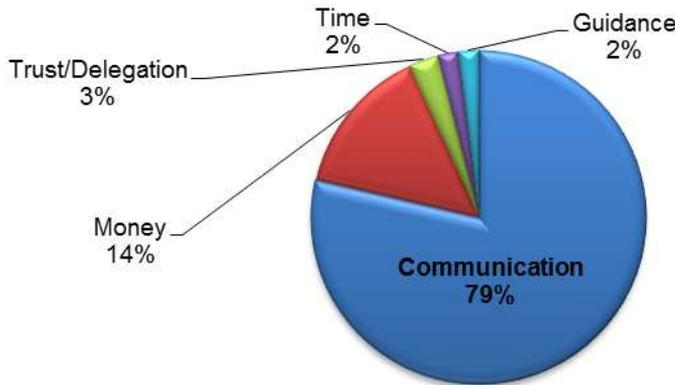
Every employee expects the leader to be trustful about the real facts of the situation, of the problem, to have vision about the way of getting out of the crisis, focusing on the company's strategy and to be skillful in persuading the employees to work together in order to overcome the situation. In difficult times, it is important for the leader to listen to the employees' concerns, to show them empathy and to remind them of the previous successes, as well as to motivate them to obtain a new success in that given issue and the only way they can obtain it, is to work together as a team. The most essential thing is the unity of the team he leads, and above that is to gain their trust. Many studies emphasized the importance of successful leaders in managing various situations.

There was a research conducted by author at national level that had the main objective to determine the identification of the knowledge and use of leadership in project management through its specific methods and instruments among managers and employees from Romanian organizations in order to achieve organizational performance and from this in the article above there were extracted some results about the importance of using leadership for maximizing the performance of project management from the perspective of employees.

Because when we speak about leadership we think automatically of a group of people headed towards a common goal, communication is essential. The vast majority of the employees interviewed see communication as the main factor that generates a positive relationship between the leader and his followers (79%), followed by money (14%), then trust and delegation (3%), time (2%) and guidance (2%) – figure 1. Of course money is important, but if in organization is not a climate of openness, trust and understanding, then they are not sufficient.

Figure 1. The factors that generate a positive relationship between leader and the team, according to employees

What is the main factor that generates a positive relationship between leaders and their followers, resulting in organizational performance?

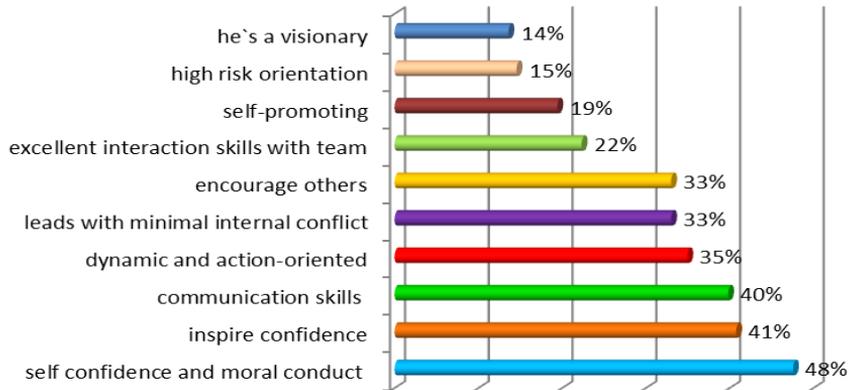


Source: Author's results

In the process of influencing and leading others, the leader has several qualities which entitles him to occupy this position and also helps him in manifesting his role. The most notable leaders' feature, identified by the interviewed employees, was self-confidence and moral conduct (48%), which is very important in the process of influencing that leaders exert in order to reach specific tasks. The next feature found at leaders, highly appreciated by the employees, is the ability to inspire confidence (41%), then their communication skills (40%), having an essential role to define the direction and to pass the tasks that his followers have to accomplish. The ranking of the features, as seen by employees, is highlighted in figure no.2.

Figure 2. The features of leaders, according to employees

Which of the following features can you clearly identify to the leader of the organization you work for?

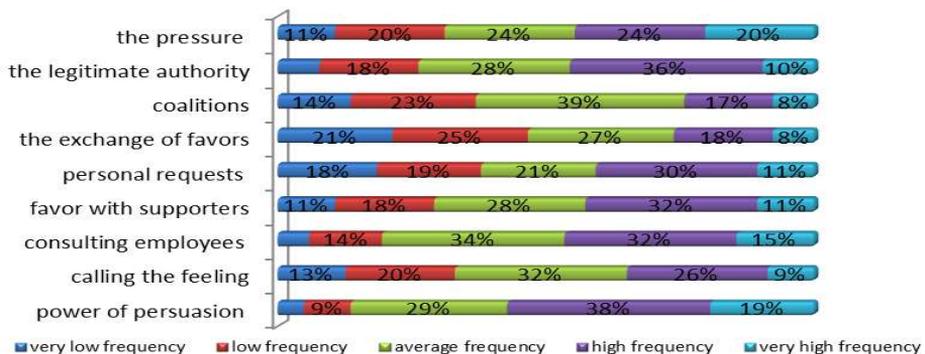


Source: Author's results

In order to achieve organizational goals, managers have to determine their employees to act in a specific way. From the conducted research it was interesting to observe that the most frequent instruments and tactics for influencing the team, that managers use in order to persuade the employees are: pressure (20%), power of persuasion (19%) and consulting employees (15%), with a very high frequency; then it is legitimate authority (36%), favor with supporters (32%), personal requests (30%), with a high frequency (figure no.3).

Figure 3. Influencing tactics used by the managers, according to employees

How often the following tactics for influencing the project team are used in your organization?

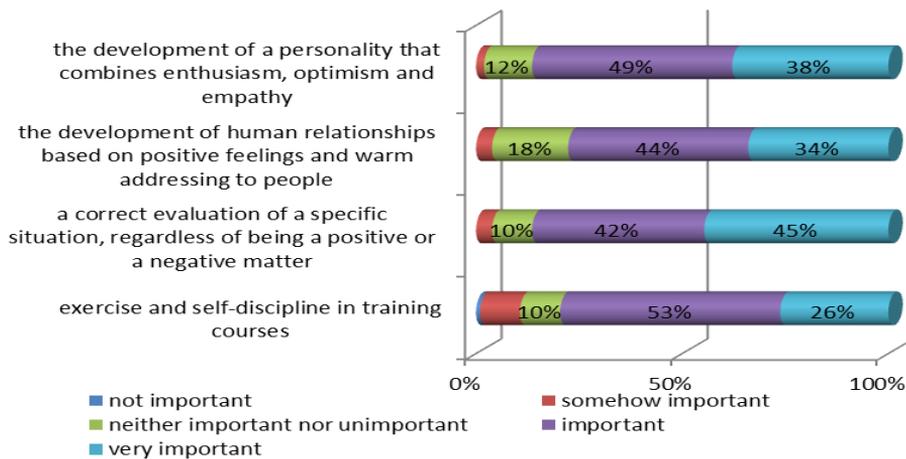


Source: Author's results

In order to improve and develop the features and implicitly, the behavior of the leaders, employees interviewed found important some recommendations for their leaders: a correct evaluation of a specific situation, regardless of being a positive or a negative matter (44%), the development of a personality that combines enthusiasm, optimism and empathy (37%), the development of human relationships based on positive feelings and warm addressing to people (33%), exercise and self-discipline in training courses (26%) (figure no. 4).

Figure 4. Recommendations for the improvement and development of the leaders' behavior, according to employees

How important are the following recommendations, for the improvement and development of the leaders' features and, implicitly, their behavior?



Source: Author's results

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can't speak about leadership if we don't accept that communication is essential to its manifestation. The vast majority of employees included in the research above see communication as the main factor that generates a positive relationship between leaders and followers.

Although, as a leadership characteristic, consulting the team it was found as the third tactic that managers use in order to persuade his employees. The most frequent instruments and tactics used are pressure followed by power of persuasion. Here why managers should change their view with a leadership perspective because of its results reflected on organizational climate and outcomes at last.

The frequently recommendation indicated by employees in order to enhance the behavior of their leaders was a correct evaluation of a specific situation, regardless of being a positive or a negative matter. This is why, employees expect empathetic leaders and communication is essential.

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