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Book Review – “Leadership and the One Minute Manager”

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Today I read a book titled 'Leadership and the One Minute Manager' by Ken Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi and Drea Zigarmi (Harper Collins Publishers). It took four hours for me to read this book. It has valuable takeaways for all and especially for managers and leaders.

The entire book revolves around the first hand experience of an entrepreneur with One Minute Manager (OMM) and his people. The book dwells at length on situational leadership and how to use a specific leadership style as per the situation. OMM dons several hats as per the situation.

The book sets a conversational tone between the entrepreneur and the OMM and OMM's partners. At the end; the entrepreneur takes away the skills and styles essential for becoming a situational leader. The book provides several exhibits which are informative and interesting for the readers.

The book briefly explains four basic leadership styles such as directing, coaching, supporting and delegating.

The directing (Style 1) is for people who lack competence but are enthusiastic and committed (D1). They need direction and feedback to get them started. The coaching (Style 2) is for people who have some competence but lack commitment (D2). They need direction and feedback because they are still relatively inexperienced. They also need support and praised to build their self-esteem, and involvement in decision-making to restore their commitment.

The supporting (Style 3) is for people who have competence but lack confidence or motivation (D3). They do not need much direction because of their skills, but support is necessary to bolster their confidence and motivation. The delegating (Style 4) is for people who have both competence and commitment (D4). They are able and willing to work on a project by themselves with little supervision or support. In all these styles the support of the leader decreases gradually from Style 1 to Style 4. For instance, when a fresher (fresh graduate) joins in an organization the leader has to adopt S1 style. As the fresher learns, the leader has to shift the style of orbit to S2, S3 and finally S4 where the fresher becomes non-fresher, i.e. experienced individual.

Directive vs. Supportive Behaviour:

Directive behaviour contains structure, organize, teach and supervise and it involves: clearly telling people what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and then closely monitoring their performance. On the other hand, the supportive behaviour needs praise, listen, ask, explain and facilitate and it involves: listening to people, providing support and encouragement for their efforts and then facilitating their

involvement in problem solving and decision-making.

The book uncovers that directing style is appropriate during time constraints and for inexperienced people. However, coaching works best when disillusionment sets in the individuals. Participative management style suits best for experienced individuals.

Competence and Commitment:

The person should have both competence and commitment while doing a task. Competence is a function of knowledge and skills, which can be gained from education, training, and /or experience. However, commitment is a combination of confidence and motivation. Confidence is a measure of a person's self-assuredness a feeling of being able to do a task well without much supervision, where as motivation is a person's interest in and enthusiasm for doing a task well.

Sutras for Success:

It unveils several sutras for practicing managers and leaders to execute their tasks effectively such as:

1. Don't work harder – work smarter.
2. Different strokes for different folks.
3. There is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of unequals.
4. When I slow down, I go faster.
5. Everyone has peak performance potential – you just need to know where they are coming from and meet them there.
6. You can expect more if you inspect more.
7. "When the best leader's work is done, the people say, 'we did it ourselves'" - Lao-Tzu.
8. Situational leadership is not something you do to people but something you do with people.
9. Everyone is a potential high performer. So some people just need a little help along the way.

What OMM Says?

- Managers should work for their people.
- Deal people differently. Change style depending on the person working with and on the situation. That is different strokes for different folks and also different strokes for same folks.
- Flexibility, diagnosis and partnering are essential while leading.
- A whole manager is able to use four different leadership styles such as directing, coaching, supporting and delegating.
- Good performers don't grow on trees. You have to diagnose people and train them.

Leadership Lessons:

- When someone does not understand and doesn't do well, you need to say, "I made a mistake. I

must have given you something to do that you did not understand. Let's backtrack and start again."

- Leaders need to do what the people they supervise cannot do for themselves at the present moment.

Conclusion:

The OMM concludes with Buddhist saying, "To know and not to use is not yet to know!" At the end of the book the entrepreneur dons the hat of a situational leader with several valuable takeaways from OMM. So do you?

To sum up, OMM walked the talk with flexibility, diagnosis and partnering with entrepreneur by donning several hats as per the situation. The book is a must read for all. It not only gives you valuable inputs but also makes you don as a smart manager and leader as per the situation.

The End

References:

Author's Blog: <http://profmsr.blogspot.com>

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