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Utilizing Relationship Marketing and Partnership Development as Critical Elements for Developing and Transforming Leadership Programs and Courses: Best Practice

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ABSTRACT

This paper utilizes some of the same literature of relationship marketing and partnership building as previous AMTP papers but applies these variables within the context of developing and transforming leadership programs and courses offered to undergraduate students. More specifically, the focus of this paper is on required and elective courses that are components of a leadership program including leadership and management development and human resource management. In addition, a most innovative non-curricular or extra-mural model program for leadership development that has already been replicated within another discipline on campus will also be examined as to its value added. Their use can be readily viewed as Best Practice based on both the theory of leadership, the authors' 75 + years of teaching/training and mentoring of business, academic, and government leaders, and the insight of CEOs, colleagues, donors, and alumni partners involved with these courses and/or programs.

INTRODUCTION

“Partners” and related relationships are critical to the implementation of the teaching /learning tools utilized in transforming leadership courses and programs. These will be identified along with their perceived effectiveness relative to teaching leadership and transforming potential leader behavior of undergraduate students. These “partner” relationships will range from the use of team teachers to colleagues within the college to alums and/or active and retired leaders in the community, profession, and world to donors who have established innovative programs for enhancing leadership development. Some provide more technical content or “Essentials of Leadership” while others are more focused on “Lessons of Leadership” while also presenting topics that are related to course objectives. Others provide site visits to suppliers or customers that are model businesses for other kinds of value added activities. Examples range from the Chairwoman/ CEO of a global company who has won numerous awards for her community service or to a

college trustee and CEO of a family company that went through a SWOT process that reenergized and refocused his company strategically. Both involve long-term relationships with leaders who exemplify “integrity” and can be viewed without any hesitation as Best Practice.

THE CONCEPT OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

“ The concept of a relationship approach to studies of interactions among customers and product or service providers is comparatively recent, considering that the phenomenon itself is as old as trade itself (Gronroos, 2004). Gummesson argued that relationships are “contacts between two or more people, but they also exist between people and objects, symbols and organizations,” (p. 33) and that interactions were the activities performed within relationships (Gummesson, 1996). This relationship view of marketing encompasses aspects of control, trust, and *risks* that are not always apparent in studies focused exclusively on transactions and exchange among the parties. As opposed to a simple, dyadic relationship between supplier and consumer (Dwyer, Schurr et al., 1987), the concept of relationship marketing may be expanded to include all stakeholders involved in the activities, or “neo-relationship marketing,” (p. 185) acknowledging that more than one dyad may be involved in any given exchange situation (Healy, Hastings et al., 1999). In sum, relationship marketing is a perspective based on the premise that additional value for both customer and provider is created by the relationship, one that exceeds the value of the products exchanged (Gronroos, 2000). In this paper, we are focused on the professor/instructor and his/her “colleague.”

Despite finding more than 26 definitions of relationship marketing in his content analysis study, Harker found that seven conceptual categories for the constructs emerged (Harker, 1999). The first two of the seven categories, creation and development, are the focus of this paper’ as it was the previous AMTP papers. ‘Using the frameworks developed for studies of relationship marketing, we analyzed best practice or success factors that either were or should be in place in order to design, develop, and implement a transformational leadership course that enhances all five factors of the LBI while also appealing to traditional students with a variety of learning styles.’ (Author, 2005)

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT REQUIRED COURSE IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:

Macro of Relationship Marketing and Partnership Development – Best Practice

There have been three Volunteer Team Teachers for almost 25 years for our Leadership and Management Development course. These were/are leaders in business and industry who were also involved with executive searches or placements as well as consulting practice including some entrepreneurial ventures.

Once proven as team teachers, some are appointed as Executives-in-Residence or Entrepreneurs-in-Residence. I suppose given the right background, a future individual might be appointed as a Leader-in-Residence. The latest one being utilized is actually a

life coach and volunteers numerous hours both in class as well as with individual students as they develop their personal mission statement, accomplish their SWOT, and work on their 3-5 year career plan.

The integrated use of alumni in what is called “Essentials of Leadership” or CEOs (including some alumni that are CEOs) that are called “Lessons of Leadership”, and colleagues with real world leadership and management development experience in the course mosaic has turned out to be wonderful value added bringing real world stories or live cases to the classroom that are great examples of selected topic areas and help expand the students’ understanding of course material.

The use of colleagues’ speakers (for their students) that are brought to the campus and also integrated into the Best Practice leadership elements and/or textbooks topics that in turn create a full auditorium of students who are able to take advantage of the tremendous wisdom and experience of people like the creative director of TBS, the President of Nissan, USA, the Past CEO and Chairwoman of Ogilvy & Mather, etc. In addition, an existing Distinguished Executive Speaker Series is also utilized to honor either an international leader or a local leader who has distinguished herself or himself with their role in the industry or business or are extraordinary examples of civic and social responsibility in the region, nation, or even in K-12 or in higher education. Many of these individuals in either category already have relationships or partnerships with members of the various advisory boards of the school and college. This is also a way of honoring their leadership record, best practices, contributions to our country or world, and as role models for our students.

Finally, the use of colleagues with real world experience and/or relevant research or consulting to the topic area(s) of the course is very useful. There is nothing like showing an appreciation for your colleague’s work and worth by showcasing him or her in a leadership course. This is not only a Relationship Marketing or RM as colleagues but sometimes even as co-authors or sometimes as individuals with real world leadership experience and yes even in the business school. These uses would to some seem obvious but by doing such, it creates enormous credibility for the school (even using members of the board of trustees or academic administration or b-school advisory board) and has been most fruitful as it creates advocates for the course as well as for the leadership program.

Micro of Relationship Marketing and Partnership Development – Best Practice

More specifically, the Leadership and Management Development course integrates into a mosaic the following topics with the related Best Practice stories that are both compelling and of considerable value added to our students:

- Vision/Mission/Values and Work/Life Balance – Mike Bosch, college alum (Covey)
- Career Development/Mentoring/Coaching – Erik Silden, life coach/industry leader (DuBrin, Chapter 10 and Covey)

- Servant Leadership (used to honor an exemplary leader from the community by dedicating the course to him or her) – John Hassell, economic development leader/turnaround CEO (DuBrin, Chapter 4 among others)
- From Leadership and Management Development course, Student Athlete via Brazil to Leadership Success – Gabi Moreira Dalnekoff/marketing guru for major investment firm/college alum
- Transformational Leadership – Dr. Tom Kent, co-author, faculty colleague/industry exec (DuBrin, Chapter 3 and Author’s Scale/”Leader Behavior Inventory” related material)
- From Leadership and Management Development course and small town in rural America to Leadership Success – Justin McLain, CEO/Owner/Investor of global technology firm/college alum (DuBrin, Chapters 1 and 10 among others)
- Entrepreneurial vs. Corporate Leadership – Bob Brinson, Executive-in-Residence/global industry exec/successful entrepreneur (prior AMTP paper and DuBrin Chapter 4)
- Cover Letter/Resumes/Job Search – Marty Markowitz, EIR/industry exec
- Leadership involved in unexpected Succession Planning and Strategizing a Global/Family Firm while integrating Civic/Social Responsibility – Dr. (honorary) Anita Zucker, Chairwoman/CEO (DuBrin, Chapters 6, 13, and 14)
- Leadership in a Global Advertising Agency – Charlotte Beers, former Chairwoman/CEO of Ogilvy and Mather Worldwide in partnership with faculty colleague (DuBrin, Chapter 14)
- Modern Management and Machiavelli – Dr. Howard Rudd, co-author, team teacher/professor (DuBrin, Chapters 7 and 8)
- Teamwork/Motivation/Coaching – Erik Silden, life coach/industry leader (DuBrin, Chapters 9 and 10)
- Innovation/Strategy/Global Future Outlook – Rick Throckmorton, EIR/retired lead partner in major consulting firm (DuBrin, Chapters 11, 13, and 14)
- Leadership Development/Transcendent Leadership – Dr. Garth Cook, adjunct faculty/Boeing, SC exec in leadership and management development (DuBrin, Chapter 15 and Boeing teachings)
- Strategic Leadership – Bill Scarborough, CEO/past college trustee/past foundation board member(DuBrin, Chapter 13)
- Global Leadership in a UK based firm – Mark Morse, President of Selee (DuBrin, Chapter 14).

Based on the above there are hundreds of examples that indicate of using live cases based on well established relationships or partnerships that provide application/extension/modification of textbook materials that have clear superiority to normal leadership coursework. This comes from students taking the course, graduates giving testimony to the students in the current class and/or through the team teachers or partners above, and CEO types who have employed or help network our students. The fact that alumni of the course feel obligated to return to provide testimonials with appropriate “Leadership: Lessons Learned” or “Essentials of Leadership” is for the authors so important and corroborated in class by anecdotes or relevant stories. In addition, these course graduates provide role models that traditional students can more easily relate to (than their professors) and network with and the latter happens frequently.

A few selected specific examples of indicators of success include the following while these can readily apply to the other two examples that follow in this paper:

1. One course graduate from Brazil, Gabi Dalnekoff, who comes back almost every semester continues to share how she uses her portfolio to update her professional growth & development or career plan annually while also sharing how Mike Bosch (with the use of Covey material) helped her develop then revise her vision/mission statement. This plus the use of model portfolios helps assist students in this development process and feedback as well as the high quality of student vision/mission statements attest to just that;
2. Recently one of our student athletes who was just named an All American wants to become an officer in the Marine Corps. One of our speakers, Dr. Garth Cook, who is an exec with Boeing, SC recently discussed his journey as well as some leadership development programming he is involved in. It just so happened that this clarified the career path perfectly for one of our student athletes. In addition, our student also shared his career plan with our speaker who kindly provided some helpful suggestions in return; and
3. Based on a number of resource people especially Marty Markowitz as well as self-analyses and the personal SWOT assignment, one of our current students provided feedback that he nailed the interview and was hired for in an HR role for a Hospitality Management firm.

A couple selected general or should we say indirect examples of indicators of success include the following:

1. Many of these CEO or HR or Owner/operators that have been utilized fairly extensively in this live case type of presentations or should we say conversations with our students have resulted in hiring of students as interns or as employees of their organizations. One case in particular, Bill Finn of AstenJohnson has employed 15-20 of our graduates with nearly \$1.5M in payroll annually. That also holds true for many of the other HR and CEO types who are heavily vested in their partnership with our b-school for many years.
2. Feedback from speakers as to how much they enjoy sharing with our students speakers for itself as they volunteer to come back semester after semester while always asking how they can improve their conversations and positively impact the lives of our students. They actually thank us for allowing them to share their journeys. This clearly provides for maintaining and nurturing this relationship while in many cases significant donations of both additional time and money result from the recognition that is incorporated in the course and program design.

SCHOTTLAND SCHOLARS PROGRAM:

Macro of Relationship Marketing and Partnership Development – Best Practice

The Schottland Scholars program is another model that exemplifies relationship marketing and how it can be used to foster the education of undergraduate students. From the program's mission statement:

“Schottland Scholars is a leader development program for exceptional School of Business undergraduate seniors. The Schottland Scholars program develops leadership skills through exposure to a broad range of successful business executives representing diverse industries, organizational cultures, leadership styles, and measures of personal and organizational success. The Schottland Scholars strive to be ambassadors by developing strategic relationships for the Scholars, the School of Business, and the College. We are committed individually and collectively to high professional and ethical standards.”
(Schottland Scholars, n.d.)

There are several components of this description that are worth noting. First, the goal of the program is to develop leadership skills through exposure to a broad range of successful business executives. We take a multi-prong approach to establish such exposure. More specifically, at the outset of the program, students engage in a multi-night tour and related briefings of organizations. This year, the tour focused on companies in Atlanta, and included Acuity Brands, Spanx, CNN, and Coca-Cola. Through use of contacts or relationships and especially those of our advisory board members, we were able to gain access to top leadership at each of these organizations. For example, two relationships should be highlighted as important in gaining access to leadership at various organizations. Two members of the College's School of Business Board of Governors have been especially key in helping the students gain access to organizations: Peter Schottland and Bill Finn. Peter Schottland is the President and CEO of American Packaging Company or APC, which provides packaging for significant brands such as Pringles, Wrigley's, and Cheerios. As the program benefactor, Peter serves as an important figurehead to legitimize the program even helping to select student scholars. Moreover, Bill Finn is Chairman of the Board for AstenJohnson. Locally, Bill Finn's involvement with the program provides an important spoke in the “network” of relationships that generate potential speakers, mentors, and site visits. That is, Bill Finn often serves as the catalyst to connect the program director with regional leaders. Through Bill Finn's reputation (regionally and internationally), the program director gains an important “foot-in-the-door” with potential speakers and mentors. Second, even in the mission of the program we talk about relationship management. That is, the students are to serve as ambassadors for the College and especially the School of Business. From the beginning of the program, we discuss the longitudinal responsibility to bolster the program through their relationships.

Micro of Relationship Marketing and Partnership Development – Best Practice

The Schottland Scholars program, directed by Dr. Carrie Blair Messal, engages in different programs each year; the following list is an example of the relationships and partnerships accessed in the 2011-2012 academic year. Importantly, each of these meetings was made possible via leveraging the partnerships between professors at the College and members of the School of Business Board of Governors:

- American Packaging Company – Peter Schottland, President & CEO
- M&T Bank – Dan Burns, Regional President
- Constellation Enterprises – Rob Sands, President & CEO & Richard Sands, Chairman
- Wegmans – Danny Wegman, CEO
- Dixon Schwabl – Lauren Dixon, CEO
- Cerion Energy – Mick Sadler, Founder & CEO
- Paychex – Neil Rohrer, Vice President for Sales and Marketing
- Milliken – Joe Salley, President & CEO
- Michelin – Richard (Dick) Wilkerson, Chairman Emeritus
- Deloitte – Chris Cotton, Partner
- Wells Fargo – Russell Haislip, Vice President, Foreign Exchange Senior Specialist
- Converse College – Betsy Fleming, President
- Bill Barnet, III – former Mayor of Spartanburg, SC and owner of Barnet & Sons
- Billy Webster, III – Advance America
- The InterTech Group – Anita Zucker, Chairman & CEO
- Blackbaud – Marc Chardon, President
- ATD – Jeff Martin, President
- BP Plastics, Cooper River Facility – Mark Fitts, Plant Manager
- Channel 5 News – Rita Scott, News Director
- The Noisette Company – John Knott, President & CEO
- South Carolina State Ports Authority – Jim Newsome, President & CEO
- Santee-Cooper – Lonnie Carter, President & CEO

Finally, indicators of effectiveness are incorporated in the paragraphs following the macro and micro of the Leadership and Management Development required course.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COURSE REQUIRED IN LEADERSHIP PRORAM:

Macro of Relationship Marketing and Partnership Development – Best Practice

In another course – Human Resource Management – Dr. Tom Kent, the faculty member responsible for this course, has introduced an innovative example of partnering with community members. The students in the course are assigned to teams and told that they are the HR staff of a mid-sized firm that is undertaking the task of revising its HR policies. The new policies must be (1) integrated, (2) in keeping with the corporations’ values and beliefs, (3) world class, and (4) state of the art.

The teams are instructed that they must make presentations to the “Board of Directors” of the corporation. The Board members to whom the students give their presentations are all HR professionals, and, in some cases, retired HR executives from the local community.

The Board hears the students' ideas, discusses and critiques the students' HR proposals, and grades the presentations. The presentations are actually graded by the external Board members while the teams' written policies are graded by the faculty member.

Micro of Relationship Marketing and Partnership Development – Best Practice

Both students and Board members take something away from this partnership. The very presence of the Board members at the students' presentations lends a sense of importance and urgency for the students. They dress for the presentations as if they are presenting to a real Board of Directors, and they practice and rehearse as if their future careers depended on their performance. Comments by the Board members during the presentations help the students gain some practical insights into their ideas as well. The Board Members gain from the experience as well. One testament to this is the length of time most of the Board Members have served in this capacity. Most attend the sessions twice a semester, twice a year; and they have been doing this for years in most cases. Occasionally, the Board members hear about new ideas and new technology that is being used in an HR application by some organization somewhere in the world. And, on a number of occasions, Board members have been so impressed with some students they have offered those students internships or jobs. Here is a list of some of the longer standing members and their tenure on the Author's Board of Directors (The Board has only existed for 13 years):

- Wallace Bonaparte – Director of Minority Relations, Medical University of S.C., 12 years.
- Robbie Marion – HR VP, Wm. M. Bird Co. Volunteers to meet with teams prior to presentations to help them fine tune their presentations. Has hired students based on the presentations.
- Meghan Kelly – Director of HR, City of Mount Pleasant, 13 years.
- Marty Markowitz – Retired VP, HR, Time Warner corporation. 10 years.
- Nicole Carfagno – former student in the course, now HR Director, Nucor Steel
- Jolie Logan – Director, Darkness to Light, 10 years.
- Pam Kelly – HR Manager, Comcast
- Alexandra Zacepilo – former student in the course, now HR Manager, AI Solutions

Finally, indicators of effectiveness are incorporated in the paragraphs following the macro and micro of the Leadership and Management Development required course.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the importance of partnership and relationship marketing was expressed clearly in the Upton report. In her interview at Baylor University, center director Donald Sexton offered the following suggestion (from authors):

...work hard to make everyone understand what you are doing and how it benefits not only the institution as a whole but how it can benefit the various stakeholders. It makes a lot more work but it is important in the long run. The worst thing to become is either prima donna or an island of your own” (p. 76) (Upton, 1997).”

The authors of this paper have attempted to utilize this framework to share some of the relationship marketing (and partnership development) elements that are critical success factors in the design, development and implementation of leadership courses in a program that also utilizes the Leadership Behavior Inventory (LBI) that is introduced throughout many of the leadership courses.

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