

My Leadership Strategy

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802 Strategic Planning
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My Leadership Strategy

For the past few years, I have had the opportunity to study several leadership theorists, as well as a variety of leadership styles, characteristics, and strategies. During my career as an educator, I served in leadership positions in local public school settings. Presently, I work in a leadership position in my church. I also work in a leadership position in a historical, philanthropic organization. My goal is to continue to serve effectively in leadership roles. After much study about leadership and as I reflect on my leadership style, I classify my leader style as a combination of emergent, incubator, and servant.

There are overlaying characteristics of an emergent, incubator, and servant leader. Emergent leadership occurs when others perceive someone as the most influential among the group. Group members recognize and accept the leader's direction as desirable and appropriate. (Northouse 2013) The value of identifying and endorsing the individual becomes essential in emergent leadership. Moss states that, more importantly, in the context of organizational success, the emergent leader exhibits the norms of the organization. The attitudes, beliefs, goals, and behaviors typify the organization and what it stands for. (Moss, 2011) Emergent strategy is the strategy that emerges over time as intentions collide with, and accommodate, a changing reality. According to Henry Mintzberg, the emergent strategy is a set of actions or behaviors, consistent over time, "a realized pattern that was not expressly intended" in the original planning of strategy. The term "emergent strategy" implies that an organization is learning what works in practice. Burnes (2009) points out that there are two common beliefs as the emergent strategy. First, change is an ongoing emergent process with no finite endpoint. Second, change emerges from the actions and decisions of people in an organization. (Hodges & Gill 2015) Moore (2011) asserts that, given today's world, the emergent strategy is on the upswing. (Moore, 2011)

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An incubator leader, according to Olson et al. (2015), is a leader who is wise and encouraging. These leaders see the potential in others and nurture it. Incubating leaders are very focused on the success of others, and they play an active role in helping other leaders succeed. Their keen perception tends to show up as an ability to assess both situations and talent. They are students of the environment, with a good sense of trends and opportunities. This keen judgment informs how they allocate resources. In addition to these commonly cited characteristics, incubating leaders have experience in their respective fields. They have insight and credibility, in part, because of their prior accomplishments. Consequently, incubating leaders combine this experience with a high degree of intellectual curiosity. This combination of expertise and interest seems to be central to the unique DNA that makes up the incubating mindset. (Olson et al. 2015)

The servant-leader shares the ability to put the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. (Olson et al. 2015) The highest priority of a servant leader is to encourage, support, and enable subordinates to unfold their full potential and abilities. Greenleaf (1977) stated that "the servant-leader is servant first." It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is a leader first. The leader first and the servant first are two extremes types. The differences manifest itself in the care taken by the servant. First, to make sure that other people's needs are the highest priority. Greenleaf recognized that organizations, as well as individuals, could be servant leaders. He had faith that a servant leader organization could change the world. A servant-leader shares power and puts the needs of others first and helps people to develop and perform as highly as possible. Authors Snipe and Frick (2015) state that "servant-leaders are individuals of character, put people first,

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are skilled communicators, are compassionate collaborators, use foresight, are systems thinkers, and exercise moral authority." (Snipe & Frick 2015) Author Kent Keith (2008) asserts that "servant leadership is ethical, practical, and meaningful. He identifies seven essential practices of servant leaders: self-awareness, listening, changing the pyramid, developing your colleagues, coaching not controlling, unleashing the energy and intelligence of others, and foresight." (Keith, 2008)

Servant leaders listen in as many ways as possible. They observe what people are doing. They conduct informal interviews, formal interviews, surveys, discussion groups, and focus groups. They use suggestions boxes. They do marketing studies and needs assessments. They are asking, listening, watching, and thinking about what they learn. By listening, servant leaders identify the needs of their colleagues and customers. That puts them in an excellent position to meet those needs. When they do, their organizations are successful, their colleagues perform at a high level, and they have happy customers, clients, patients, members, students, or citizens. Servant leaders utilize strategies where everyone in the organization focuses on the people the organization serves.

I value my membership in a historical philanthropic organization. I was nominated, ran for, and elected by a majority vote to a leadership position. I campaigned on my leadership skills and ability that would benefit the mission and goal of the organization. As a leader and individual, I believe that honesty and integrity are two vital ingredients that make a successful leader. (Kotter, 2012) I adhere to my values and core beliefs. Also, having confidence in my abilities has encouraged me to be an effective leader. Having self-confidence does not mean that I should be overconfident, but I should at least reflect the degree of confidence required to ensure that my followers trust me as a leader.

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Additionally, I am a very active member of the leadership team, chair a committee, and a member on many other committees. I believe in utilizing my voice for the voiceless. These roles have allowed me to exude my confidence and show some assertiveness to gain the respect of members of the organization. As an emergent leader, my leadership approach is flexible and adapts to the situation, needs, and vision of the organization. I utilize technology and communication skills, knowledge, and resources to achieve the goal of the position and organization. An excellent communicator is a requirement of a good leader. I assure the line of communication is open and transparent to all members. Words have the power to motivate people and make them do the unthinkable. I intentionally use words effectively to achieve positive results. For example, during this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic, I must disseminate prompt, accurate information to avoid confusion and panic from members of the organization. I am the chairperson of the Communication Committee and work very closely with the Technology Committee. I am a member of the By-Laws Committee to help ensure the operation of the organization is following proper guidelines and procedures. I work with undergraduate students. I serve in the capacity as a mentor and leader. I guide and assist young women in developing leadership skills. As an emergent leader, I believe that there is power in supporting and empowering others to reach their highest potential.

As an Instructional Coach in a metropolitan public school system, I was an incubator leader. I tried to inspire others by setting an example of how to lead and follow. My leadership approach adapted to the situation, needs, and vision of the school. I utilized skills, knowledge, and resources to ensure maximum success. I agree with Yukl (2013) that leadership is "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it." As an Instructional Coach, my instructional focus was Reading, Language Arts, and

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Social **S**tudies. One of my duties was to observe classes during instruction, look for best practices, and give feedback to the teachers. Whenever there were below expectations in performance and instruction, I provided teachers with immediate feedback and support. Sometimes the classroom environment was not conducive for instructional delivery for students. I took pride in my job in offering guidance and assistance to ensure an environment conducive to learning. I was consistently evaluated as a teacher leader by my immediate supervisors. I was consistent in receiving and evaluation that exceeded expectations in my job performance. John Quincy Adams puts it, "if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." (Kotter, 2012) As an incubator leader, I had many roles at the school level. For instance, one school is located on two different campuses, which are 3.5 miles apart. I traveled each day to both campuses to fulfill my duties as an **I**nstructional **C**oach. I served in additional positions such as the **P**arent **L**iasion and **S**ubstitute **T**eacher coordinator. I served in those positions so that the school day would flow seamlessly. I had to make a judgment about the degree to which I intervene in each vacant position. As a leader, I had to balance my attention, involvement in providing the appropriate level of guidance, and resources to improve the success at both school sites. (Olson et al., 2015) I know the importance of devoting time to strengthening others and building teams. (Kouzer & Posner 2010) I empowered grade level chairs to determine the best way to implement a new strategy or to support a new program in all content areas. I gave much attention to all shareholders. I discovered that by empowering others reduces constraints that would impede their efforts. I provided resources to implement change. My thinking as an Incubator leader lead me to prepare grade level chairs for change. During grade level weekly meetings, I provided them a realistic view of problems and difficulties of issues and how to solve them. My goal was to develop their understanding of

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needs and values by interacting with them in ways that make them feel more confident and capable. As an incubating leader, I networked with other departments such as the Art and Music departments in the school as well as community agencies such as Hands-on Atlanta, Georgia Power, Clark Atlanta University Education Department. Those network opportunities provided the schools with resources to enhance student learning and provided teachers with various options for growth. I agree with the notion that "work should provide people with opportunities to learn and grow and fulfill their potential. When your colleagues grow, the capacity of your organization grows. (Greenleaf 1977) As a leader, I realized that I could not do everything. My focus was on critical responsibilities and reducing the chance for the teachers to encounter barriers. I empowered teachers by being transparent, open, and encouraged them to support each other. I created an environment of trust so that teachers would remain focus on attaining a positive and productive outcome. I delegated a task to each team of teachers and allowed them to be creative and innovative. I ensured that they had the necessary resources and support needed to achieve the objective. To get ahead in today's fast-paced world, a leader must be creative and innovative at the same time. Creative thinking and constant innovation are what make you and your team stand out from the crowd. Think out of the box to come up with unique ideas and turn those ideas and goals into reality. It is these types of qualities that I believe others will respect and follow.

At my church, I am a servant leader. My Pastor saw me as a servant leader. Leadership, for me, is an affair of the heart. (Kouzes et al., 2010) He saw that I could lead in helping to carry out the mission and vision of the church. I consistently interact with the congregation to ensure the integrity of the worship service. As a leader at my church, one of my responsibilities as the worship leader is to nurture, sponsor, develop projects, and leaders. I

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focus on the success of others. (Olson et al., 2015) During monthly meetings, I encourage all ministry chairs to be creative, think out the box to inspire a congregation of all ages. Yukl 2013 has led me to believe that "an essential role of the leader is to persuade other key people in the organization of the need for significant changes." "It is crucial to mobilize support for proposed changes." (Yukl 2013) "Leaders explain why change is necessary and create a sense of urgency about the change process." (Yukl 2013) I am a forward thinker who realizes that change is inevitable. I am a student in the environment. I know the importance of stay abreast of community, state, national, and international issues and concerns that affect the church. I willingly share information with the leaders about trends and opportunities to stimulate creative thinking and keep the focus on the vision. I am very serious about creating networks of people to work in the church. I develop relationships with members to include their talents and experiences to expand the leadership team. Members who are committed to the vision and can communicate it are directly responsible for implementing change. Empathy is one of my characteristics as a leader in my church. It involves my ability to understand the problems of others and feeling their pain. To me, this is one of the first steps to become an effective leader. Research indicates that the highest performing leaders are the most open and caring. In my role as a worshipchair, once I am fully aware I embrace and share other emotions, I am then able to form a group to accomplish the task at hand. As I work to inspire the chairs and co-chairs of the church ministries, we easily overcome any current and future challenges through commitment and passion for the work. As I reflect on my past leadership role in my church, they are many. I planned and taught financial workshop classes, coordinated vacation Bible school, and facilitated women's class during vacation Bible school. I coordinate spiritual retreats for my weekly Bible Study class to enhance Christian education. I display daily commitment and passion in carrying

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out my duties and responsibilities as a leader. For example, every Sunday, I arrive early at the church to make sure the worship service is orderly, musically uplifting, and spiritually filled. As [a](#)Acolyte coordinator and [a](#)Altar [g](#)Guild chair, I ensure that related duties are carried out. The worship committee team and the congregation have high expectations for my leadership, and I give them my commitment to quality service. When members see my strong commitment to quality performance and service, they buy into complying with new procedures and processes that enhance the quality of service. This is the strategy that I use to infuse new energy in my team members, which enables them to perform better

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From the brief interaction that I have had with my colleagues, I value their assessment of my leadership style. These are their responses below:

Harriet, I have always enjoyed reading your insightful contribution to your class weekly Harriet, I have always enjoyed reading your insightful contribution to our class weekly discussion. I so much believe with your strategic leadership style being emergent-incubating and also agree that your strategic leadership style is flexible. It is a fact the manner at which you have shown your leadership approach and also adapts to the situation, needs, and vision of the organization.

Considering your strategic ability to be flexible, which must have emanated as a result of your understanding of what Hersey (1960) described Situational Leadership being a leadership model that stresses flexibility and simplicity in execution, prepares leaders to address the most pressing challenges pervasive in today's work environment. His emphasis on flexibility must have enabled you to adapt to the situation and addressing needs and the vision as a worship leader in the church.

It can be noted that it was your strength in incubating leadership that helped you in utilizing your skills, knowledge, and resources as a worship leader in the nurturing, sponsoring, developing projects, and leaders who remain your primary focus while driving it with a passion for achieving its success and by also empowering others in the course of your journey(Olson et al., 2015).

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It can be observed that the reason why you created time during monthly meetings was to encourage all ministry chairs to be creative, to think out of the box, and inspire a congregation of all ages because of your strength as an incubating leader.

By: Obiora Ezendiokwere - 2019

Another response to my leadership style from a classmate:

I enjoyed your reading your discussion board. Congratulations on your role as the worship chair position, I am sure you will be successful in whatever God leads you to do. I can see you have a passion for leading others. I believe it was a great idea to invite the Pastor to the meetings because it gave him/her a chance to get involved and provide feedback. Individuals must understand what the mission and vision are their respective organizations. As a Pastor, he realized how important it was to interact with the group because if they do not cooperate, it will cause a disconnect with his church members. When enlisting others, it is essential because it can break barriers of communication and allow others to engage in more effective productivity. If there is no strategy, individuals can not successfully convey their ideas and drive change. According to Olson & Simerson (2015), relationships, listening, shared interests, and sharing power all contribute to mutual trust. To build trust, leaders must integrate their values into their businesses' practice, and people will not follow a leader who does not stand by their values.

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By: Telecia Stanton - 2019

Conclusion

I know leadership is a choice, and I have made the choice to lead. I have the desire to be a role model and help to create an environment for personal and professional growth. I believe that love is the soul of leadership. Love is what sustains people along the arduous journey to the summit of any mountain. Love is the source of the leader's courage. Leaders are in love: in love with leading, in love with their organizations' products and services, and love with people. I love leading, and it shows when I am working with people because they follow my lead. (Kouzes et al. 2010)

As an effective leader, I have a vision, and I have been quite successful at turning ideas into real-world success stories. There are many definitions for a leader; however, John C. Maxwell defines it best when he says that "a leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way." (Kouzes et al. 2010) It is about being a champion for the cause. As an incubating leader, I lead with love. I Love to lead. Love enlarges lives. Love creates the desire to serve others and to see them grow and become their best. (Kouzer & Posner 2010) I am successful in creating an environment that promotes positive behavior and minimizes barriers for followers. I am a servant leader. I am aware of who I am and how I impact others. What we learn about ourselves depends on feedback from others and our reflection. I take the time to think about how others behave, and why, and when, and consider whether there are other, better, more appropriate, more productive, and more thoughtful ways to behave. My leadership

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strategy as a servant leader emphasizes collaboration, trust, empathy, and the ethical use of power. At heart, I am a servant first, making conscious decisions to lead to serve others better, not increase my strength. My objective is to enhance the growth of individuals in an organization and increase teamwork and personal involvement. Servant leadership works for me because of the specific practices of servant-leaders, exercises that help me to be an effective leader, and get positive results for an organization. I coach and motivate to develop people I help my colleagues to understand the organization's mission, goals, and their role in fulfilling them. I provide training opportunities and tools they need to achieve those goals. After developing and coaching my colleagues, I unleash the energy and potential of my followers. I encourage them to make the maximum contribution they can make to the organization and the people they serve. Finally, Greenleaf (2012) has led my thinking about foresight as a leader. He states that "foresight is a better than average guess about what is going to happen in the future." Foresight is the lead that the leader has. If you are not out front, you aren't leading, just reacting.

The 44th President of the United States of America epitomizes leadership and is a real role model as a leader. This statement guides me:

"Change will not come if we wait for some other people or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." Barack Obama

He also stated that "being a leader is not a matter of having your name up in lights, making speeches, or corraling power at the top. It's identifying the potential in other people and unleashing it." (Obama, 2008)

I will continue to reflect on my leadership style as I move into leadership roles and be guided by best practices and leadership theory.

References

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Overall I thought your paper was really good but it's short. I asked for no less than 15 to 20 pages (originally I asked for 20, but I allowed students to submit 15 to 20); this paper is only 12 pages of content.

