

Developing Enlightened Leaders in an Organization

Kishlaya Misra

Abstract

Organizations are daily facing new challenges on keeping their employees positively engaged and have their productive outcomes to realize the organizational growth. Some employees in the organization are self-motivated and have the passion and the zeal to achieve the organizational goals and objectives. Their passion and zeal towards the work, their value addition in their work and to organization is very perceptible. The organization must be able to identify such talented individual employee and give them a platform which makes them realize their full potential and hence contribute to organizational growth. This paper aims at developing an organizational approach for developing such individual employee as enlightened leader of the organization. The organizational approach takes a process based approach for leadership development culminating into self-motivated employees being developed as Enlightened leaders of the organization.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Development, Enlightened Leadership, Organizational Approach

INTRODUCTION

Each organization is facing challenge in keeping its employee engaged in a productive way. Majority of the employees have to be monitored for their activities which incurs a substantial cost and time for the organization. Finding self-motivated and self-driven employees have been a challenge, as such resources are scarcely available in the human resources job market. It is also because of the existing gap between an employee and their organization. The Human resources departments of the organization continuously work to keep their employees engaged to have productive outcomes and a befitting organizational culture.

The aim of the paper is to understand what organizational approach can be adopted for the employees who are self-motivated and self-driven and are looking for more than mere engagement. These employees associate more of them with

their work and with their organization. What should be the approach of organization in dealing with such motivated employees, should they be treated as equal to a non-motivated employee. This paper aims at identifying the process of developing such self-motivated and self-driven employee into an enlightened leader for the organization.

The paper will look into the Literature of what enlightened leader is by definition and its different forms. Then the paper proposes the steps for transforming a self-motivated and self-driven employee into an enlightened leader for the organization. The context associated with the organization is a general mid-size organization, which has clearly identified its goals and objectives and aspires to reach them.

The objective of the paper is understand the organizational approach which can be undertaken to identify the potential of an self-motivated and self-driven individual working in your organization, harness that potential through systematic processes and make an individual fully utilize his / her potential for the organization and

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in the process transforming a high potential employee into an Enlightened leader.

LITERATURE VIEW

It might not be about the individual leader. You may have the capacity for great leadership yourself, but if you don't create a culture in your organization that allows people to thrive, that allows people to lead at all levels of your organization, chances are you're not going to get results (McKee, 2006). One of the mistakes that a lot of our organizations make is to assume that it's all about the individual. It's all about the person. It's not. Great leadership matters and great leaders create cultures that are ripe with emotional intelligence, that are ripe with opportunity, and that allow people to take calculated risks, see the future, and move toward it. So it's inherent in our leaders' responsibilities these days to recognize the fact that this stress will be part of our lives, it will be a part of our people's lives. It's not going to go away. But on the other hand, we've got to do something about it. So what we need to do is to provide people opportunities for developing themselves, for taking care of themselves— fully, holistically— so that they can perform.

Enlightened leadership is a kind of leadership that unlocks the potential for greatness in the leader and those that follow the leader (Chopra, 2011). Enlightened leadership is spiritual if we understand spirituality not as some kind of religious dogma or ideology but as the domain of awareness where we experience values like truth, goodness, beauty, love and compassion, and also intuition, creativity, insight and focussed attention. The author further mentions that Enlightened Leaders can be defined as following:

- L = Look and Listen
- E = Emotional Bonding
- A = Awareness
- D = Doing
- E = Empowerment
- R = Responsibility
- S = Synchronicity

Enlightenment broadly means the acquisition of new wisdom or understanding, enabling clarity of

perception. It encloses a threefold process of understanding the truth of the situation, being centred into the truth of the situation, and then acting based on the truth in the larger world (Basher et al, 2008). Enlightened employee is one who has clarity of perception, provides utmost care and importance to the value system, willing to go the 'extra distance' and considers 'work as worship'. He is one who is well aware of the reason, purpose and need of, and for all that he performs in his work place. He thinks it is his duty to contribute his mite towards his organisation which provides him with, and caters to all that he needs in the society. His clarity of perception enables him to derive pleasure from what he does in his workplace.

Enlightened employee has the wisdom and is focused on everything he does and sees his work and work place in a different perspective. He understands his position in the work place, his relationship with his work as well as the general environment; and his inner self. He is clear as to the reason and purpose of his efforts and his relationships.

Enlightened Leadership can further be defined by 4Cs

- Character: Who you are
- Competence: What you know
- Collaboration: What you bring on board
- Courage: How far you are willing to take your vision

Enlightened Leadership is also defined as a function of Integrating Character, Adapting Competence, Inspiring Communication. The traits of Integrating Character are Honesty, Discipline, Vulnerability; the traits of Adapting Competence are Self, social and situational awareness and management, knowledge management and continuous learning; the traits of inspiring communication includes vision, strategy and interdependent (Walter, 2014).

In enlightened leadership the leading other people requires giving up personal goals in exchange for group decisions. It also includes seeing the brilliance and uniqueness in each individual. The

level reached in enlightened leadership is determined by the commitment and willingness of the leader to give up the ego's needs (Beal, 2015). It is easier in theory than in practice because the ego mind is so obstinate. Challenging the artificial image means you must:

- Give up the need to know all the answers
- Give up an attachment to the outcome
- Give up the need to the outcome
- Be able to say you are wrong
- Listen instead of talk

Leaders bring out the best in others, but successful visionaries go even further: they form lasting emotional bonds (Olariu, 2010). To create such bonds, we must be willing to build real relationships, getting to know our employees, take a personal interest in others and fill the most critical void in contemporary life, the void of enlightened leaders. Being in touch with the soul is the secret of great leadership.

Three major classifications for Enlightened Leadership are Inspire, Innovate and Imagine (Luvogt, 2014). The sub categories in Inspiration is Mastery, Respect, Passion; Innovate is Strengths vs Limitations, Challenge self and others; Imagination includes Listening, Challenging Assumptions, Ideate. Although the three stages and their individual steps roughly follow each other sequentially, it should be clear that some or all of the activities in each stage or step will overlap with those in other stages and steps.

Enlightened leader will encourage the members of her group to use their own minds (Peltoniemi, 2015). The leader should support the members' autonomy – the perception of being in charge of one's own decision – and competence – the perception of the ability to master the environment. The enlightened leader acts like an educator. The leader should get and keep informed on the skills, capabilities and developmental capabilities of the members and help them to endeavour their personal growth. The enlightened leader should motivate the immature members to grow up from their professional non-age and encourage the

professionally adult members to take responsibility on achieving the common goal. This requires honest feedback and inspiring recognition of each member's skills and development. To sum up, the enlightened leader will promote the members of her group as her co-leaders by supporting their freedom, courage and personal growth and letting them to integrate with the group and its mission.

Enlightened leaders require a thick skin and a desire to learn from mistakes (Walters, 2013). They require an understanding of motivation and mission and how that translates to their employees and customers. They need to look at the entire experience as a journey of “we” instead of us v. them.

- Enlightened leaders see the future
- Enlightened leaders communicate early and often
- Enlightened leaders invite the truth
- Enlightened leaders recognize greatness

Four takeaways to help your organization embark on enlightened leadership (Manson, 2016):

- People. Put them at the top of your annual planning process. Make people your number one priority in your company's vision and you'll see a tremendous return on investment
- Core Values. Develop and concisely define what your core values are and then live them from the top down. People will quickly start to notice the change and want to be part of it. Print them, communicate them, make them part of your organization's branding.
- Share. Share information, feedback and your time to communicate and live the values you have invested in creating. Feedback is really important in the new model of transparency. That sends a strong message about the importance of every employee and the company's recognition of their investment and hard work.
- Egos. Check them at the door, as personal agendas and personal hang-ups deflect

the vision, the mission and the values you are trying to instil. Peer pressure in this “hurt but not harm” model is a beautiful thing to witness. They can do this because strong trust has been established in building this together, actively improving personal relationships in an authentic way which required everyone to first become open to ensure everybody from the CEO down starts from the same baseline.

A case study by Public Agenda with support from Lumina Foundation in 2013 on Seven Practices of Enlightened Leadership in Higher Education, A Case Study of Austin Peay State University identified seven practices were frequently mentioned, all of which bolstered trust: leading by listening; demonstrating respect for the members of the campus community; creating a healthy culture of evidence and transparency; rallying support for shared goals through explicit, consistent focus on student success; incentivizing innovation and collaboration; building on early successes; and supporting risk-taking and allowing flops.

Analysis: Developing an Enlightened Leader

Gail Cohen has compiled a list of attributes that typify self-motivated individuals.

Self-motivated employee:

- Understand their purpose in life and live it.
- Live outside their area of comfort (do something every day that is a little bit risky).
- Get involved with every facet of life (leave no stone unturned).
- Energize (jump in with both feet).
- Exemplify humility. They are able to laugh at themselves, admit vulnerabilities, and take criticism.
- Learn something new every day (not by accident, but by design).
- Believe in themselves and others.

- Are persistent – able to explore options (never give up – never say die).
- Strive for health in all aspects of their lives (physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, and socially).
- Rise above problems, adversity, loss, and momentary failure.

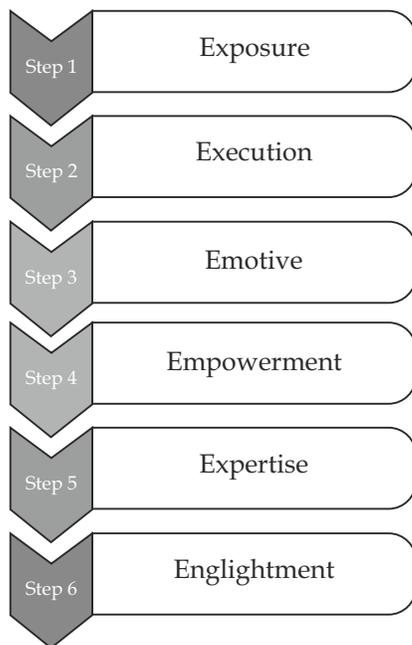
Self-motivated recruiting prospect, candidate, or employee is an individual with a track record of having the internal drive and motivation to begin and continue tasks without external prodding or extra rewards (Sullivan, 2014). You don't have to identify why they are so driven. Just be satisfied with the fact that it is something in their character, upbringing, training, or attitude that drives them to work without any external stimulus or threat.

In an organization it is not merely about preparing a job description for an employee and expecting him / her to undertake the tasks mentioned in job description. It is about understanding the inter dependencies, the overlapping areas, the impacts, the assumptions, the constraints associated while performing a task and contributing towards the organizational objective. An enlightened employee will not wait for someone to tell him / her that this is what is extra which also needs to be done to ensure the perfect execution of the task at hand. He/ She shall take interest to understand the larger job landscape. While understanding the framework and landscape, the key stakeholder in his / her mind is the organization itself.

With an understanding of what is the job (defined and non-defined) which will be needed to ensure that not only he / she completes the task in time within the resources allocated, the enlightened employee is looking to generate value for the organization. This is the main motto of self-driven employee. With a larger objective of Value Generation for the organization, he/she knows that it will be little more cumbersome / more demanding on personal front and at the team level. On a personal front, seeing the job not only at a transactional level but seeing himself / herself as a transformative agent is the start of making of an enlightened employee. This transformative spirit is also transpired to the other team members

who are working along with him / her. This process of involvement and engagement of other team members will also happen when you trust and believe in them and make them as co-partners for the work being undertaken.

Figure: Organizational Approach for creating Enlightened Leaders



EXPOSURE

For an employee to master any job, he/she must be first exposed to all facets of the job. This is the starting when an organization invests in its employee for understanding what is it like doing, how are various department working together for achieving the desired vision and mission, what are the challenges that the organization faces, what opportunities the organization is looking to capitalize, what the organizational processes the organization is following, what is the organizational system in place to ensure that the organization works smoothly, give an understanding of organizational culture, facilitate interaction with senior and middle level colleagues to know more about the team and also get confidence that the people with whom an individual is working is competent to achieve organizational objectives and if any help /

guidance is required then they can be contacted.

As much internal organizational exposure is essential, similarly the external exposure is also essential. This orients an individual to understand the business / industry in which the organization is, get an insight about how external stakeholders rate the organizations, what are their opinions on strengths and weakness of the organization, meeting with the clients to whom the service is being delivered, understanding the value chain process for the client, understanding the key external dependencies the organization has in delivering its service, identifying the key external champions who had believed in the organization in the past and who are ready to guide and mentor in times of challenges.

The organizational approach in developing this exposure must be that at appropriate levels the exposure must be planned, for new joinees it must form part of organizational Induction plan; for people with some experience in the organization they must be allowed to participate in organizational meetings to observe the discussions, nominating them to attend the conferences, meetings, seminars, including them in the delegation visits; for middle management people they can be allowed to propose agenda for the meeting and make their presentations about the proposed agenda, involving them in middle management decision making process, nominating them to present the organization in meetings, seminars, conferences, making them the group and delegation leaders.

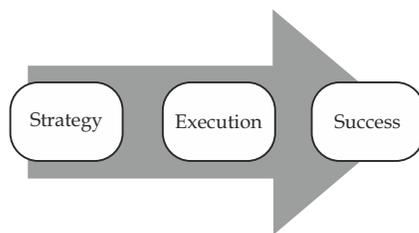
EXECUTION

The execution of the task by an individual or team is a real test of their contribution in achieving the organizational goal. Execution is the core at which all the organization revolves. Execution tests the assumptions and constraints taken into consideration while planning for a task. An organization must make it clear to an employee of the expectations from the execution. Based on these defined targets the execution has to be undertaken by each individual of an organization. An organization expects that the execution is undertaken as per the proper planning and

discussion with senior and peers, the execution is undertaken within the limits set for time, cost and monetary provisions. Execution must also help an employee identify the internal and external dependencies, the opportunities which can be capitalized, and the constraints which will have to be overcome. An organization must provide guidance for the new resources to execute; latitude for experienced resources to execute and to achieve the desired objectives.

Execution must be an exercise where everyone collaborates with each other to ensure that every one work with same spirit and ensures that the outcomes are as desired. Execution also involves complex problems, stressful situations, and unplanned risks. The complex problem must be encouraged to be jointly discussed and addressed. The stressful situations require that team members show empathy and try to pull each other to ensure less stressful situations. The unplanned risks involves that every team member is attentive and is more forthcoming to the challenges.

The organizational approach must be that execution must be made a team affair with a team responsibility. To ensure that not only objectives are achieved by the human resources, but the task also elevates the human resources involved in execution, the mode of team work is the best possible way out. One caution to this is that everyone's responsibility must not end up being no one responsibility, the team tasks and their delegation must be properly defined and monitored. The organization approach for harnessing the feeling of "WE" rather than "I" helps create an ecosystem of joint ownership of task.



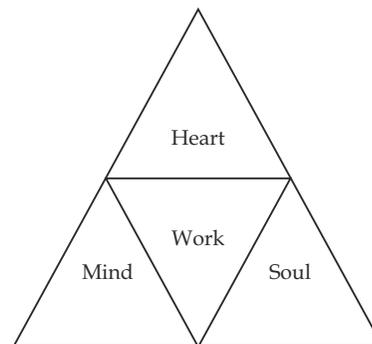
EMOTIVE

An emotional bond between the employee and his job; an employee with his boss; an employee with his management; an employee with his peers

serves to create a different level of engagement. The emotive feelings of an employee for his organization starts appearing once he has been exposed to the working of the organization, once he has been part of the execution team which has yielded the desired results; has been part of the experience where he has handled the appreciations bestowed to him, has taken the positive criticism for his self-development in the right spirit; has overworked to help the team and its members achieve the organizational goal. To make these happen an organization must ensure that the eco system prevailing in the organization is trust based, mutual respect based, open to new learnings, acknowledging that change is the only constant.

An organization must support an individual to reach this level through constant support and guidance. The error done by an individual must be seen from the facet of organizational learning opportunity and the learnings must be documented and tried to be institutionalized in the system. The emotive feelings of an individual for an organization must be away from any type of fear and favour. The positive intent and sense of optimism must be the focus areas of an emotive employee for his organization.

The organizational approach to develop emotive bond with an employee is to recognize (not necessarily award) the contributions of an employee in a timely manner, appreciate if the employee has taken extra steps to generate greater value, providing latitude to the employee for executing a task, not creating an eco-system of threatening for any diversions or mistakes, encouraging free thinking and freedom to voice the opinion and greater reliance on team work.



EMPOWERMENT

If an organization believes in the potential of an employee, believes in the past track record, believes in the character and ownership of an employee, has successfully reposed trust in him/her in the past, has undertaken mission critical tasks, have shown belief in the organizational values and have worked to strengthen it, then the organization must take proactive steps in finding ways to empower an employee.

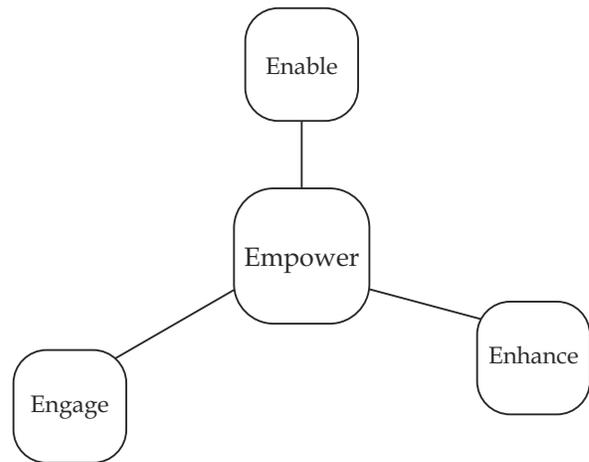
Empowering an employee means to have trust in the potential of employee, believing the intent of the employee for the organization and giving the employee the space to plan and execute the activities. The organizational approach for empowerment has to be incremental and it must be matching to the outcomes and responsibility assumed by an individual. The individual employee should not see empowerment as an end but as a mean to reach organizational goal.

Empowerment given to an employ can be varied forms like giving financial empowerment, strategic empowerment, execution empowerment, resources empowerment, task allocation empowerment, decision making empowerment, representational empowerment, task identification empowerment, flexibility to undertake the task, proposing the agendas for discussion and decision, deciding the best interest for the team and the organization, negotiating on behalf of organization, procuring goods and services an organization ends.

The empowerment generally starts from middle management level under the mentorship and support of senior management representatives. The empowerment process has to be planned by the organization in terms of time and efforts senior management is ready to put in for this. The empowerment process must be a process where a talent pipeline in middle management is identified and worked on. The organizational approach must also be to earmark some projects, some funds and some junior resources who can be led by a newly empowered employee. The organizational approach in empowering

employee for mission critical tasks must be of caution and the concerned employee after successfully undertaking other tasks must be assigned the responsibility of mission critical task. The organizational approach for empowerment must have close monitoring and quick feedback system so that timely course correction is possible. Empowerment must lead to an individual employee satisfaction that he/ she has contributed to the best of her abilities in making organization reach its desired goals. A feeling of content and satisfaction of an employee for his / her is a big achievement for an organization and this leads to a unique organizational culture.

The employee after this stage transforms himself/ herself from an employee to a Leader of the organization.



EXPERTISE

Once an employee has been empowered for a task, and the individual has undertaken the assigned task and job in a desired manner, and may be generating more value, then the individual self confidence in undertaking the tasks of importance increases. The individual is looking for critical tasks and is keen to make a difference for an organization. During the process the individual employee learns to take unique challenges, unplanned activities, foreseeing the bottlenecks, optimally utilizing the resources bestowed, representing the organization on difficult forums, knowing a way around for doing the things, handling stressful situations, undertaking

multifarious tasks with same efficiency, strong negotiation skills, has developed strong conflict resolution skills, strong understanding of organization working style, taking the best out of talents in organization and strong financial planning and financial execution.

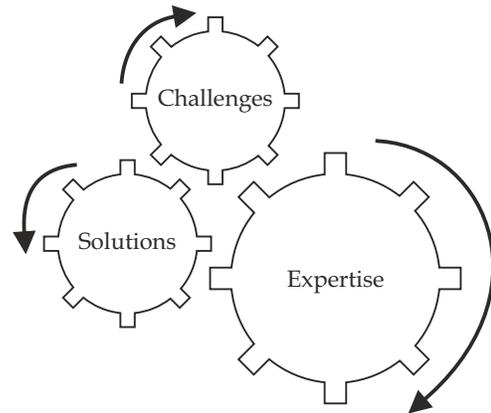
Once the individual employee reaches the stage of Expertise, then he / she is looking for impact making and highly challenging tasks. The organizational approach must be to gradually harness this expertise pool of their organization, but must also start identifying the project / activity pipeline which an employee can be a part of or may be lead that the project / activity.

The organizational approach must also be to engage these employees who have reached the expertise level to counsel and mentor new joiners and middle management team. Their journey of exposure to execution to emotive to empowerment can give the other employee a reflection of how organization is looking them for self-development and as they develop they being entrusted with more organizational level support. The organizational approach must also be ensure that the expertise team developed in an organization must continuously interact with counterpart expertise colleague. The chances of Silo formation is very high at this level as the individual may also start thinking that he /she is fully competent to handle the task individually and may not need anyone support or guidance on this. It is important that the collaborative team work and collaborative pursuit of organizational goals is still harboured and practiced by Expertise employee of an organization. The chances of attrition at this level is also high, hence the organization must plan to actively engage the expertise of employee and understand the value drivers the expertise employee has and try to honour them.

ENLIGHTENMENT

An enlightened employee is the destination of the organizational approach adopted by the model. In an Enlightened leader an organization sees an answer to all the risks, uncertainties, complex issues, building on the existing strengths,

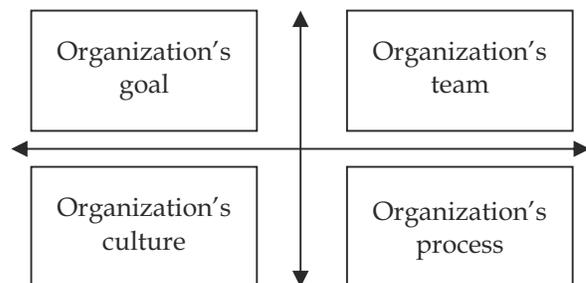
mitigating the shortcomings and the ethical dilemmas.



An Enlightened leaders acts as a motivator, influencer and influencer for the all the people of the organization. He / She derives immense respect in the organization because of the past accomplishments and for his dedication and service of the organization.

An Enlightened leader will not only be involved in setting the strategy and the direction of the organization but also interact with all strata of the organization. He will have to continue doing his tasks and also helping other to do their tasks effectively. The emotional and compassionate side of the leader comes out more profusely during this stage of leadership. The Enlightened leaders are looking beyond the problems and are looking for the solutions. The Enlightened leaders are not only competent to look deep into processes but they also good at looking deep into people, understanding their anxiety, happiness, sadness, inquisitiveness about their job and play the role of Coach for them.

The organizational approach for enlightened leaders must be to facilitate:



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