Welcome to this audio visual presentation on leadership.

Leadership is a key variable in determining organizational success. It plays a central part in understanding group behavior. It is the leader who usually provides the direction toward goal attainment. Significant work has been done in the area of leadership. We will expose several of the approaches to the study of leadership and summarize some key findings in order to understand the role of leadership more fully.

The six traits of which leaders tend to differ from non-leaders are: ambition and energy, a desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence, and job-relevant knowledge. Recent research provides strong evidence that people who are high self-monitors are much more likely to emerge as leaders in groups than low self-monitors.

A major breakthrough in our understanding of leadership came when researchers recognized the need to develop contingency theories that included situational factors. The contingency theory now considers situational factors making the contingency theory more versatile and evolving.

At present, the evidence indicates that relevant situational variables would include: the task structure of the job; levels of situational stress; level of group support; the leader’s intelligence and experience; and follower’s characteristics such as personality, experience, ability, and motivation.

A difference between leadership and management is that leadership is characterized by having others who want to follow a person for a variety of reasons, whereas management is having the authority to enforce policy in order to have others do what is required.

Effective managers today must develop trusting relationships with those whom they seek to lead. As organizations have become less stable and predictable, strong bonds of trust are likely to be replaced by bureaucratic rules in defining expectations and relationships. Managers who are not trusted are not likely to be effective leaders.

Organizations are increasingly searching for managers who can exhibit transformational qualities. These kinds of leaders guide or motivate their followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role and task requirements. Transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the organization. They can change followers’ awareness of issues by helping them to look at old problems in new ways, and they are able to excite, arouse, and inspire followers to put out extra effort to achieve group goals. Transformational leadership is built on top of transactional leadership—it produces levels of followers’ [effort] and performance that go beyond what would occur with a transactional approach alone. If a leader is truly transformational, their charisma or idealized influences is characterized by high moral and ethical standards.

There is a range of leadership models. The laissez-faire leadership model is the most passive and least effective type. Managers following this model allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work or ask questions of the leader. The leader provides the followers with the materials they need to accomplish their goals and answers the follower's questions.

To the degree that managers project the qualities of being smart, personable, and verbally adept, others are likely to deem them leaders. For managers concerned with how to fill key positions in their organization with effective leaders, it has been shown that tests and interviews help to identify people with leadership qualities. In addition to focusing on leadership selection, managers should also consider investing in leadership training. Many individuals with leadership potential can enhance their skills through formal courses, workshops, rotating job responsibilities, coaching, and mentoring.
There is a debate as to whether transformational leadership and charismatic leadership are the same. Robert House considers them synonymous. Bernard Bass considers charisma to be part of the transformational leadership model. Studies show that a leader who scores high on transformational leadership is also likely to score high on charisma.

Transformational leaders employ an imaginative and creative style of leadership that inspires employees to broaden their interest in their work and to be innovative and creative. There is some evidence that a transformational leadership style is linked to employee mental and emotional well-being. Followers to such leaders are more likely to pursue ambitious goals.

Recent evidence has identified five key dimensions of the concept of trust. Integrity refers to honesty and truthfulness. Competence encompasses an individual’s technical and interpersonal knowledge and skills. Consistency relates to an individual’s reliability, predictability, and good judgment in handling situations. Loyalty is the willingness to protect and save face for another person.

Trust is a primary attribute associated with leadership. When trust is broken, it can have serious adverse effects on a group’s performance. It is evident from the literature that it is impossible to lead people who do not trust you. Trust and trustworthiness modulate the leader’s access to knowledge and cooperation.

When followers trust a leader, they are willing to be vulnerable to the leader’s actions, confident that their rights and interests will not be abused. Honesty consistently ranks at the top of most people’s list of characteristics they admire in their leaders.

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