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Executive Leadership Development

Case Study 1

Focus Group Questions

1. It is not clear what method was used to fill the post. I am assuming that James had connections to get that position because he is not qualified to head the entire business operations network of Corporation A.

From the case study James has no experience or training in leadership or administration. James’ qualifications are in accounting. He has managed figures not people. The responsibility of the new position and managing those individuals (20) was too great for James.

With the limited information provided I would say James’ leadership style is a combination of Laissez-faire and autocratic.

James’ realization that the job complexity exceeded his abilities and expectations will explain why he may have lacked direct supervision of the employees and their concerns about the company appointing James to lead such an integral position of the company.

It does not seem that James interacted with his workers or that they had input in the decision making process.

1. It would be good if there was an on-going training or certificated program linked to promotions in an effort to develop effective executives. In addition to paper qualifications the corporation would have to indentify the skill sets or experiences that are deemed necessary for success in their company, or various departments.
2. As James has no administrative training and should not have been given the position in the first place, he should be placed in an area where his skills and expertise are better suited. The corporation should invest an executive development program for its employees seeking or desiring promotion to the executive level.

When James was hired the company knew based on the credentials presented and the questions that should have been asked in the interview, that James lacked the administrative leadership required for the position advertised. Therefore, a stipulation should have been made that his taking the position was incumbent upon his successfully completing an accredited development program.

1. **Knowledge** – James needs to understand leadership, and he needs administrative training. It is important in that position that he knows about the culture of the company, understand the company’s branding. As an executive he has to share this information confidently with his subordinates. He needs to have an understanding of the different departments and what their roles or functions are.

Good people skills are imperative, good communication skills are key. It is important that he operate with integrity if he is to be respected by his colleagues. James needs to be open to constructive criticism as identifying and correcting others is a part of his job. In addition he needs to know how to teach or direct his subordinates so he has to have the knowledge necessary to impart such.

**Attitude** – James needs to have a positive attitude as learning is an ongoing process and lessons can be learned from all. Being new in a position (for which he is not qualified) James need to be willing to learn from those who know more than he does. He should be willing to listen.

1. Yes, Corporation A should develop a leadership competency model. I can’t recommend one, as there are benefits from each that Corporation A could profit from. But of the five, Transactional would probably be the easiest to attain.

Corporation A needs the components of Participative leadership that values the contributions of its employees, thus boosts their morale and makes them receptive to change. However, Transactional leadership empowers the employees more as they are invited to participate in the goal setting process which enables them to work harder towards the accomplishment of said goals. Their efforts are rewarded when goals are met and those that are unable to meet or accomplish goals are provided with the necessary training for future success. Transformational leadership would be ideal but Corporation A with its current hiring policies isn’t ready for it. It would require the re-culturing and training of the whole management staff. Some of the managers would have to be replaced.

1. I work in education. Currently the little that I know about the system is that much needs to be done. For example, if there is teacher in the system and an administrative position becomes available where he/she is at, if they are deemed suitable for that position, they are placed in that position – but in an acting capacity. But what should happen is that teacher should be offered administrative and leadership training. They are trying to do this now, but it wasn’t done in former years. With successful completion of the training offered through the Ministry of Education, that teacher should be encouraged to apply for that position through the Department of Public Personnel. With a successful interview that teacher is given the position and is deemed substantive. However, nothing much happens thereafter. Incentives should be given for Administrators to continually upgrade themselves through attending conferences, taking courses, shadowing and mentoring other administrators. These same administrators/leaders should be used in the training and development of other educators through programs offered by the system.
2. I feel that James’ hiring was political or personally motivated (we don’t know who James’ family is or who he sleeps with) but his hiring was not above board.

“The other Vice Presidents questioned whether the brilliant CPA, who has never functioned in a leadership position, and much more, make the transition of effectively lead and drive the business operations of Corporation A,” says to me that the there was some external coercion in James’ appointment.

There must have been someone in the Corporation able to fill that position, if only in an acting capacity until a qualified person could be hired to fill the position permanently . James came with NO administrative training or qualifications. The other Vice Presidents questioned James’ appointment but there was no opposition. If James was not ‘connected’ despite his being a ‘brilliant CPA’ he would not have been given the position because they all knew that he had never functioned in an administrative position before.