**Leadership Development Case Study No. 1: Becoming an Organizational Leader**

**By Lorraine Bastian Jones**

In 2010, following 4 years as a senior accounts clerk in the private sector, James Gasinski attained a Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting and Finance. Within six months of achieving the BA in Accounting, he received the credential of Certified Public Accountant. In search of better job security, as well as a new career challenge, James interviewed for a position in the public service as certified public accountant. With these qualifications, James was satisfied that he was fully qualified to assume an executive role in any reputable company.

In 2011, a government corporation (Corporation A) appointed James to head its entire business operations network. James reports to the Executive Vice President, and will carry out the role of Vice President of Administration. Under his leadership were more than twenty professionals. The other Vice Presidents questioned whether the brilliant CPA, who has never functioned in a leadership position, and much more, make the transition to effectively lead and drive the business operations of Corporation A.

Exactly one month after his appointment to the post of VP Administration, James realized that the job complexity exceeded his expectations and core abilities. Responding to new administrative issues, stakeholders’ finance related issues, and the prevailing leadership style together, consumed huge amounts of production time, and thereby compromising work quality and employee morale. About six months after James took office as VP Administration, there were performance execution issues that impacted the corporation’s ability to function effectively. The Executive VP observed all that was going on, but was resolute about giving James the space and time she felt necessary for him to develop and roll out the strategies to ‘find his way’.

It was clear to James’ staff and peers, as well as the other Vice Presidents that James did not possess the requisite training acclimated to his new role. During a series of ongoing casual conversations, James’ peers questioned the organization’s decision to appoint him to lead such major area of the organization. Corporation A has since secured the services of a full time Director of Administration to provide leadership and guidance to James, thereby ensuring overall improvement of the department.

In preparation for the focus group discussion, please chat informally, but candidly with your colleagues on the following foundational questions:

1. What is your personal definition of executive leadership?
2. What is your organization’s budget for executive leadership development?
3. What is your organization’s executive development strategy?
4. Is executive development activities linked to your organizational strategy? Explain.
5. What are the ongoing challenges with executive development initiatives, and how does your organization respond to such challenges?
6. What is the perceived stimuli/stimulus that inspires your desire for leadership development?
7. What is the perceived stimuli/stimulus that discourages your desire for leadership development?
8. If you were asked to solve this case, list in bullet points your course of action and supply a rationale.

*Focus Group Questions*

1. Analyze the method used to fill the post. Identify the leadership style that prevails. According to theory, which leadership style would you select?

Response: It appears that James presented his resume and was interviewed for the position of certified public accountant, however he was offered the position of Vice president of Administration. The leadership style that prevails in this organization may be Laissez-Faire. The highly qualified officers who worked under James may have required little supervision, but to those needing supervision would cause lower production. I would select the Participative Style of leadership. In this way, the staff working under James would be able to provide valuable input, however the final decisions would rest with James.

1. Discuss a plan that can be devised to link executive development with job promotion, corporate strategy, and critical success factors.

Response: Annual, one week intensive trainings of staff that tie in with the organization’s vision and personal goals of staff.

1. Do you feel James should be removed from the position of VP Administration, or should Corporation A invest in an executive development programme for James? Explain a reasonable rationale for both options.

Response: James should be asked whether he wishes to remain in the position. If yes, an executive development programme should be made available for him. This opportunity could also be used to offer the same training to other members of staff who qualify. If he wishes to be removed then a replacement should be sought. The company must be seen to want to help and should facilitate same.

1. In previous discussions, it was determined that Corporation A needs to establish an executive leadership development programme. What knowledge, skills and attitude do you believe to be essential for James to function beyond expectations in his capacity as VP Administration?

Response: James needs to be knowledgeable about organizational management, human resource management. He needs to be skilled in liaising with top management and support staff to accomplish the goals of his area. His attitude needs to be one of openness and humility and willing to learn. No one is an expert on everything. Admitting weaknesses is a sign of a good leader.

1. Should Corporation A develop a leadership development competency model? To provide a theoretic foundation for your response, analyze the leadership development styles provided. Recommend which leadership style might be most suitable for implementation at Corporation A. Provide a rationale for your recommendation.

Response: Yes, a competency model should be developed. The Leadership style that is recommended is a Transactional, where rewards or punishment is offered for performance or Transformational Leadership model. The latter depends on high levels of communication from management to meet goals. The employees in this style are motivated by the high visibility of the leader.

1. What procedures or strategies should the government employ to imbed executive leadership development within the operational framework of the public sector?

Response: The Government of The Bahamas through its Training Department should organize training for every area of the organization - from the custodial staff to top executive levels. Additionally, each Ministry/Department should have a budget for training of their staff in specialized areas/fields. For example, engineers, architects, surveyors, etc, should also be trained in management courses. Having the technical knowledge is good, but

1. Upon reading the case, do you have circumstantial evidence that there was external intervention in the appointment of James to the executive office? Explain.

Response: There is no evidence that external intervention was used in the appointment of James. He qualified himself and offered for a promotion in the public sector. This is typical procedure. The interviewer who made the selection made a mis-judgement in placing James in a position that he was not qualified for.

1. If you were asked to solve this case, list in bullet points your course of action and supply a rationale.

Response:

A frank discussion needs to be held with the selection process to ensure that this practice of improper selection is not repeated in other sections of the Public Service

A panel should be selected for hiring leaders, particularly at higher levels

James should be encouraged to be trained in executive leadership development and a personal coach provided.

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**Leadership Development Case Study No. 2: Leading Growth in the 21st Century**

**By Lorraine Bastian Jones**

Government Corporation B transitioned from a small size tourism specific operation with a 3.5 million dollar per annum budget to a medium size entity with a 15.7 million annual budget. With its vibrant succession plan and a team of 20 junior executives, it was not necessary to seek new hires. The corporation’s succession plan was rolled out to fill the new leadership positions that resulted from the expansion. The expansion launch is scheduled to take place within the next four months.

Just two years ahead of the expansion, a 360-degree survey was conducted by a contracted career coach. The launch of the new operation was only three months away. The Human Resources Department immediately requested that each executive conduct a 360-degree survey and submit the results to the HR department within three days. The feedback identified the executive’s key strengths and areas for improvement, and subsequently revealed that the skills and knowledge of 90% of the executives could not support the new constructs and functions of the new expansion. According to projected global demands for island destinations, Corporation B must expeditiously develop a short term goal to ensure successful participation in the market place.

In preparation for the focus group discussion, please chat informally, but candidly with your colleague on the following foundational questions:

1. What is your personal definition of executive leadership?
2. What is your organization’s budget for executive leadership development?
3. What is your organization’s executive development strategy?
4. Is executive development activities linked to your organizational strategy? Explain.
5. What are the ongoing challenges with executive development initiatives, and how does your organization respond to such challenges?
6. What is the perceived stimuli/stimulus that inspires your desire for leadership development?
7. What is the perceived stimuli/stimulus that discourages your desire for leadership development?
8. What procedures and strategies should the government implement to imbed executive leadership development within its operational framework?

*Focus Group Questions*

1. Analyze the case and list some of POB major challenges in terms of executive development planning.
2. What appears to be the main administrative challenges within Public Corporation A?
3. What plan of solution should be instituted to ensure that this developmental dilemma does not re-occur?
4. What methodology/ies should POB employ to align the executive development plan with the company’s strategic growth plan?
5. What stimuli you would design to inspire leadership development within POB?
6. The case states that: “According to projected global demands for island destinations, POB must expeditiously develop a short term goal to ensure successful participation in the market place.
   1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of out-sourcing this project.
   2. Without the requisite leadership training, should the POB executive leaders attempt to drive the success of this project? Elaborate.

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