Implementing the PDCA Cycle for Change Leaders

Understanding Your Leadership Style

John W. Moran

A Change Leader’s main job is to motivate people to change to the new behaviors desired by the organization. Motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Motivation is what causes us to act differently. Change leaders need to understand what motivation is and how to use it correctly in leading change. Motivation is a key ingredient in making change since it is the way change leaders are going activate the behavior in others they desire in the organization.

There are three major components to motivation:

- **Activation** involves the decision to initiate a behavior – this what the change leader describes to the organization as to “Why” we must change.
- **Persistence** is the continued effort toward a goal even though obstacles may exist – this is the “How” we are going to change. It is the road map the change leader details out for the organization.
- **Intensity** can be seen in the concentration and vigor that goes into pursuing a goal – this is the “Passion” the change leader conveys to those involved to keep them moving forward.

In our fast-paced, deadline oriented, and constantly changing work environment, it is important that we have a leadership style to help us initiate and manage change. Leadership style helps us to correctly focus our change message and convey our passion for the change to others in the organization. Change leaders need to understand the different types of leadership styles available that can be utilized depending on the audience they are addressing. Different audiences at different levels have different needs to address to help them make the change required. Change leaders need to have a variety of leadership styles to deliver the message of change from visionary to commanding depending on the audience’s needs.

In Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence, the authors describe six types of leadership styles that can be used to help us perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of ourselves and others when initiating change. Managing the emotions in the organization in a change process is key to successfully helping others adapt and adopt the required change.

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2 [http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm](http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm), accessed 1/17/2012
3 [http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm](http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm), accessed 1/17/2012

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>When To Use it</th>
<th>What Does It Do?</th>
<th>Rating of leadership Style Usage</th>
<th>Recent Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>To create a new vision or direction</td>
<td>Motivates people towards a shared vision of change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>To help people improve their skills and performance</td>
<td>Aligns individual goals with the organization’s goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>To motivate people during difficult times</td>
<td>Builds harmonious relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>To reach agreements through consensus</td>
<td>Obtains input, commitment, and participation of those involved in a change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacesetting</td>
<td>To motivate people to reach a challenging deadline</td>
<td>Helps achieve stretch goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commanding</td>
<td>To quickly resolve a crisis</td>
<td>Helps to get out of an emergency</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Each leadership style has its time and place in an organization, but just using one style all the time as a change leader will not reach all the people involved in the change. As a change leader, you must use the different styles to increase your effectiveness in making change. What works for one group may not be appropriate for another. You must “observe and listen” to determine which one is right for your audience.

Rate yourself on the following scale as to how often you use the six leadership styles and describe a recent example of the usage.

(1) – Never used, (2) – Rare occasion, (3) – Occasionally, (4) – Regularly (most comfortable)

Using these leadership styles appropriately requires a combination of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management skills. Understanding and utilizing these leadership styles at the appropriate time and place will optimize your performance as a change leader to motivate and activate others to change.