Course Learning Outcomes for Unit IV

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

3. Recommend ways to motivate employees by applying a human behavior theory, a leadership theory, and a leadership style.

6. Identify the impact of different types of leadership on organizational behavior.

Reading Assignment

In order to access the following resource(s), click the link(s) below:


Unit Lesson

YouTube Video for Unit IV

Click [here](#) to view the video for Unit IV (1m 32s).

Click [here](#) to access a PDF of the video transcript.

John M. Schofield was a famous major general in the Civil War. In August of 1879, he gave a speech to the Corps of Cadets at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point. This is what he had to say about leadership and discipline:

> The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army. It is possible to impart instruction and to give commands in such a manner and such a tone of voice to inspire in the soldier no feeling but an intense desire to obey, while the opposite manner and tone of voice cannot fail to excite strong resentment and a desire to disobey. The one mode or the other of dealing with subordinates springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander. He who feels the respect which is due to others cannot fail to inspire in them regard for himself, while he who feels, and hence manifests, disrespect toward others, especially his inferiors, cannot fail to inspire hatred against himself. (as cited by Wilson, 2012, para. 1)

Leadership is so old it predates written documents of ancient eras and may predate language. Even so, the challenges of leadership seem both timeless and unchanged. For example, how can we inspire others to act for an agreed or authorized goal? Compulsion by force has been tried, including owning other humans in slavery. It has been tried by consent and contract in terms of indentured service to gain passage to North or Spanish America with the promise of eventual freedom. The early 19th-century years of the Industrial Era were marked with progress built on tight control and harsh treatment of business employees—hence the material used by Charles Dickens for his period novels. Obviously, evolving law and practice reflect a change in leadership styles and approaches over the centuries to better match democracies and capitalism for a free society. History teaches us what does not work, but what are the leadership styles and approaches that do?
Steve Jobs was both innovative and demanding at Apple, and his achievements transformed the information technology industry. Lee Iacocca exerted the efforts himself to work with the U.S. Government and Chrysler stakeholders to reshape the auto company’s approach to manufacturing and sales, including his innovation of introducing minivans to U.S. customers. Ed Whitacre, Jr. did much the same for Chrysler’s competitor, General Motors, but with less publicity and dramatic effect. Isaac Perlmutter employed acquisition, merger, and focused budgeting to restore Marvel to viability and popularity in an age when fewer youth read printed comic books but more would go to a Marvel storyline movie or buy licensed products. Dan Hesse rescued Sprint by pursuing up-to-date policies in recent changing times—in particular, better plan rates and entry into the prepaid market.

Terry Semel led Yahoo through the aftermath of the dot-com bust, mostly by refocusing on news and other media channeling. Richard Teerlink led Harley-Davidson to a marketing comeback by leveraging its strength in producing quality and coveted motorcycles with high quality service for customers. Doug Conant moved from Nabisco to Campbell’s, restoring the company’s stability by reversing its products’ rising prices and removing many of the legacy leaders. Richard Clark rescued pharmaceutical company Merck when it was facing a product scandal and related suits. He did so by restructuring the company to make it leaner and investing in new and promising drugs to provide Merck sustainability. Gordon Bethune reversed Continental Airlines’ decline by ending unprofitable routes, restructuring debt to buy time, and implementing incentive plans to improve efficiency. Time has proven that these leaders made very successful decisions, but how did they lead others to succeed? The specific answers lie in their individual stories, but the elements of what they practiced may be recognized in descriptions of leadership theories and styles.

In the required reading for Unit IV, Chalofsky (2014) shows us the progress of leadership thought since practitioners in the Industrial Age started to focus on how to lead and manage more effectively and compassionately. Leadership and management practice before the present day was a form of apprenticeship: Watch me, and then you try it. While this is a proven method, scholars and practitioners in the past century have wanted to discover the nature of leadership. What works and what does not in management? How can we tell successful managers from unsuccessful ones?

From the Chalofsky (2014) reading, you can distinguish the following styles:

- **Two-factor theory**: These studies pursued two lines of thought: how to manage tasks better and how to establish more mutually rewarding relationships with a manager’s employees or subordinates. This mirrors the “Mission First: Soldiers Always” motto of the U.S. armed forces and other large organizations and the associated dilemma: We have the job at hand to do, but to sustainably do it we have to set the conditions so our people are satisfied that their managers are watching out for their welfare.

- **Situational leadership**: This is a series of theories that acknowledges what we practitioners instinctively know, which is that a single approach to one’s day or all people will likely not fit any given situation. Instead, the manager must choose demeanors and approaches based on the situation. Whether an employee is experienced or new, the situation is routine or urgent, the stakes small or large, these are factors leaders intuitively consider—especially after some trial-and-error experience where they made mistakes or achieved good results.

- **Transactiona leadership**: This theory is often linked to managers of people and projects/processes who are charged with synchronizing the best potential of both. Many managers who use a transactional approach act as if people and materials were close in relative importance to each other. Without a regard for people as being the first priority, work proceeds under transactional managers in a relatively calm and businesslike way. The narrative to subordinates would be, “If you do X, Y will happen to you,” which can be either a long-desired award or a dreaded consequence, depending on the tone of the dialog. To other stakeholders, the transactional manager, when approached for
assistance or approval of a proposal, may pose the challenge, “What have you done for me lately?” The key dynamic in transactional leadership is the exchange or transaction. Little in terms of desirable items or processes is given outright by such managers but is always accumulated instead in a form of “banked” assets; other stakeholders must give something to the transactional manager to receive just enough to continue to function. Organizational work is getting done, but in a way that does not foster much of a sense of teamwork.

- Transformational leadership: This is a more recently developed theory that provides a promising leadership approach that benefits everyone. Transformational leadership inspires with charisma, but managers must be careful as charisma alone is not enough. Despicable leaders have been charismatic, which is partly how they were able to inflict so much damage on others. Rather than stop at the attraction of being charismatic, transformational leaders pursue a short list of attributes that are ethics- and values-based in addition to charisma: working to be inspirational to subordinates, stimulating their intellectual potential, and looking out for everyone’s welfare as individuals. Transformational leaders do not posture to make others (especially their superiors) believe they are managers for the people, but they actually are because they share their vision of what the organization can be, assume hardships themselves first, set an example, foster enthusiasm, and challenge aspects of the organization that could be working better.

Given these theories, what leadership styles are available to managers? For the most part, these theories are also leadership styles. A manager adopts one or more leadership styles by practicing the method of leading offered in the theories. There are many variations as a search for leadership articles in any database or search engine will show. For example, servant leadership is closely linked to transformational leadership and predates the latter’s description. Servant leadership, though, or the practice of serving others as their conscientious leader, can be followed to a fault by someone serving others when he or she should be showing more leadership, and in any case servant leadership does not address other areas managers need to address to succeed (Benson, 2015).

Can human behavior theories be of assistance to managers? Some may fit an individual manager more than others, and there may be no better way to take advantage of published ideas than to explore them in the literature. Human behavior theories follow leadership theories and styles closely by description as leadership is often framed by the reaction of people to these theories and styles in practice. For example, a task-oriented, relationship-oriented, or combination task-and-relationship-oriented behavioral theory will match the same leadership theory description (Ghasabeh, Reaiche, & Soosay, 2015). Managers assessing the situation to help decide how to act, practicing a situational leadership style, may find themselves combining many previously described leadership and human behavior theories. To make a manager’s job efficient and bearable, a manager may delegate work, but by clearly describing the work, expressing support and confidence in the subordinate, allowing leeway to decide how to do the work, and outwardly showing optimism over time, the manager is using some combination of transformational, two-factor, and situational styles (Alfred, 2015). As published scholars and practitioners can only recommend theories and styles, the beginning manager studying their literature may well realize what more experienced managers know: In the end, the responsibility for becoming a good leader is an individual one held by all managers along with the power to reflect on their abilities and change their methods.

References


