
“THE LEADER UNMASKED”

[This interview was conducted on a respectable consultancy operations leader who supervised teams towards engineering goals – his psyche evaluation was respectable.]

You decided to reorganize the department or work unit that you lead. Tell me how you proceeded with the reorganization?

1st be clear in my own mind why reorganization required, and obtain an independent opinion;

2nd obtain authorization to reorganize;

3rd counsel persons concerned confidentially and obtain their feedback and confirm their understanding of the reasons;

4th inform the entire group of the reorganization with an appropriate explanation to avoid embarrassing the persons concerned.

Have you ever been a member of a successful team? If so, describe the role you played on the team and in its success.

Yes I was the technical leader in a successful project team and was in charge of quality control and conformance with the technical specifications.

The role I played was a final ‘gate’ through which all technical and quality issues were either approved or rejected for rework. In this role I needed to set the ‘tone’ and expectations (zero tolerance of substandard work) very early so that the team would quickly realize and take ownership of the quality and technical conformance.

Give me an example of a time when you played a leadership role in an event, an activity, a department or work unit, or a project. Describe how you led the efforts. Tell me how people responded to your leadership.

In the above role of quality control and technical conformance

leadership, I quickly learned the best way to say no to powerful people. The key was to explain the problem first, add a dash of humor, and then say no. The team quickly learned that I was confident, no fool, and would not be coerced into taking the wrong path. Initially there were some negative responses to my leadership style, but by displaying diplomatic conviction and persistence I won their support.

If I were to ask your reporting staff or your peers to comment about your leadership style, your leadership strengths, and your leadership weaknesses, how would they respond? What would this discussion tell me about you as a leader?

“My peers would probably say that I am mostly a ‘driver’ type of leader.”

Strengths:

- Takes initiative and is enthusiastic;
- Wants to lead;
- Analytical;
- Handles autonomy well.

Weaknesses:

- Rigidly meticulous;
- Sometimes too harsh on team members who lack initiative and motivation, or are generally lazy;

Those team members with similar a work ethic to mine would respond favorably, and those who lack initiative and motivation, or are generally lazy would respond unfavorably.

Tell me about a time when you created agreement and shared purpose from a situation in which all parties originally differed in opinion, approach, and objectives.

Just recently I was able to gain agreement and shared purpose by using a justification which contained something that the team wanted. The

team members can quite easily form agreement and shared purpose when they can see that the outcome clearly benefits them. In this case, I had no formal authority over the team members, so a bit of rational persuasion was appropriate and required.

As a leader within an organization, you must often build support for goals and projects from people who do not report to you and over whom you have no authority. Tell me about a situation in which you demonstrated that you can build the needed support.

In addition to the above answer, sometimes an upfront Team Governance Agreement (TGA) can assist where there is an absence of formal authority. Also, inspirational appeal or consultative power may assist in obtaining support.

What are the three most important values you demonstrate as a leader? Tell me a story that demonstrates each of these leadership values in practice within your workplace.

Humbleness, hard working and commitment, and respect and understanding for other people.

These leadership values are very clear to see when things go well, and even more so when things do not go well.

During your work experiences while attending college, tell me about a time when you demonstrated that you have leadership ability and skill.

Example: A true leader is able to see when someone else is in difficulty and / or distress and able to put them at ease without making it obvious that the person is showing the outward signs.

This can be as simple as helping a 1st year student find their way to a class without showing signs of the funny aspects of their situation. We were all 1st year students at one time, and a leader is able to put themselves in someone else's shoes to understand exactly what they must be feeling.

What would you define as your leadership style as being?

With no formal authority I tend to be a 'Coordinator'. With formal authority I become more of a 'Driver'.

Do you have any inspirational leadership role models?

I really look-up to leaders who exhibit Expert and Charismatic Power.

Can you tell me a bit about your inspirational role model?

Thinks, then acts; Pragmatic; Make decisions objectively; Honest and direct; Serious, and conventional.

How effective has your leadership style been? Can you justify with examples?

Well, there must be some effectiveness in my leadership style because I have been able to achieve objectives, and the team members have been willing to rejoin and work with me in subsequent projects.

What do you believe is the hardest leadership oriented goal to achieve in your organization? How would it affect other employees if accomplished correctly?

One of the most difficult leadership oriented goals in my current work is to ensure that the problem of 'groupthink' does not arise. This is particularly concerning in the Tuckman 'norming' phase which we are currently making the transition through.