Why aren’t they listening?

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Jim Anderson established a six-week training program on listening skills and communication for successful management in the firm. Jim’s sole goal was to improve communication skills in the organization and make the seminar enjoyable to encourage future participation. This case study examines the leadership model used by Jim, the level of the managers, mistakes made by Jim during the seminar and possible remedy.

Jim is using a supportive SLII model of leadership. The design is supportive and has a low directive. For instance, Jim did not put any restriction on participation or attendance. Moreover, he created an atmosphere that involved all participants. Furthermore, Jim is very friendly to members because he wants them to participate in the program. The coffee breaks he gave enhanced networking and socializing during the program. Northouse (2010) concurs that supportive SLII model of leadership entails listening, offering positive support, and inspiring individuals to get things done on their own. Similarly, supportive leadership allows the leader to involve subordinates in decision-making and problem solving. The model suits the manager because they are competent people. The only limitation to the model is that it has low levels of motivation. Jim used the model because he understood the managers are well learned and might need the program. Moreover, some of them had attended similar program and were not willing to participate in another program that would not offer anything new.

The managers seem to be at development level three that is characterized by capable but cautious performers. Moreover, it also features low directive and low-supportive attitudes. The participants comprised 25 managers who were well educated and believed they did not want more training and more if the training would not add any value to them. The managers were cautious that they have attended more training and believed an extra training would not offer anything new. That explains why these experienced managers were not supportive of the unproductive in-house training program. Besides, the managers at development level three have high levels of competency coupled up with varying degrees of commitment. This analysis is correct since the managers were high performers but showed varying levels of commitment to Jim’s training program.

From a leadership point of view, Jim failed to put restrictions on participation and attendance of the managers, which eventually led to poor participation and attendance by the managers. Additionally, he created a training environment that involved a lot of friendliness. As such, the managers took him for granted and ignored the training program. Being overfriendly gives room for poor attendance and participation. Besides, he allowed the managers to participate greatly in designing the training program. The managers eventually knew what the program was about hence their low levels of involvement. Similarly, the increased coffee breaks were not necessary since more time was spent taking coffee and socializing instead of learning new communication skills. Failure by Jim to establish authority by warning participants against arriving late or failing to attend the seminar gave the impression that the training was not very important hence the low levels of attendance and participation. Furthermore, Jim gave the participants too much freedom, which they took advantage of.

The first change is to make it mandatory for the participants to attend the seminar. Additionally, he should set rules that forbid the managers to visit their offices during training sessions. Alternatively, Jim could reward the managers who attend the training and punish those who fail to attend. He should also talk about the importance of attending the seminar during a training session to warn those who would be absentees. Griffin and Moorhead (2010), who advocate for rewarding the managers who attend workshops, also believe that punishing those who fail to attend would significantly increase the number of participants attending the workshop. Griffin and Moorhead (2010) further argue the use of external speakers to talk to managers might increase participation of managers since they would get new ideas from a new speaker.

In conclusion, to utilize a leadership model in a firm, a manager must realize what leadership is, understand the various leadership model, understand the culture of an organization, and evaluate the type of employees in a firm. Leadership entails influencing a positive change in a firm. However, this change is only possible of the right model of leadership is used. Jim ought to have used delegating model of leadership coupled up with more directives to make the seminar more effective and enable the managers to learn a lot.

References

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