WHAT DO I DO WITH BRAD AND KERRY?

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Introduction

NewBuild is a large general contracting firm. Jason, a project manager for the past six years there, needs to choose between Brad of Kerry as the manager of their next big construction project. Both had been working for Jason for the past nine months, however, because of the Great Recessions' continued effects on the construction industry, whomever was not chosen to lead the next project, will probably have to be terminated, due to lack of work (Mento 2012)

The Problem – Choices in Leadership, Management, Communication Styles, and Organizational Behavior though Human Resources Management

Brad and Kerry are different, as any two employees are, and analyzing their differences exposes many factors in management:

Communication style – Brad is more introverted and seemed passive when Jason tested him in a negotiation simulation and training session. Kerry is very outgoing, and did not prepare well for the simulation, but her ability to 'think on her feet' – create enough of a position to solidify her role in the conversation – was impressive to Jason. She did not, however, command the negotiation (Mento 2012).

Management style – The selected manager will be managing a small organization, a construction team on a project, contrasted to the large solid hierarchy and complex workforce in a large organization. Small teams tend to have a different relationship with their employees than in large ones – they are usually more informal, rules can be interpreted differently according to the situation with high levels of management tolerance (Senyucel 2009, Jack et al, 2006).

Leadership style – Effective managers need to be able to understand the values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations (VABEs) of all team members and stakeholders in an organization (Mento 2012, Clawson 2001). Jason knew that he wanted to develop a set of VABEs for Brad and Kerry and that a thorough analysis of stylistic differences presented in Brad and Kerry's 'lessons learned' emails (Mento 2012) would help him compare management styles.

The Cause – The Psychological Contract

The voluntary turnover rate at NewBuild was higher than the company desired as a result of lower salaries than the industry average. Jason assumed that employees who chose to stay at NewBuild were satisfied with the higher degrees of responsibility they were provided. Jason explored the psychological contract (the unwritten agreement pertaining to outputs provided to the organization in return for inputs from the firm) between NewBuild and Brad and Kerry (Mento 2012).

Psychological contracts started at employee's first viewing a recruiting brochure, other company documents, and then is built on with interactions with Jason and other employees. Over time, employees begin to get a feeling and understanding of the culture at an organization, and what they 'can and can't', or 'should and shouldn't' do, in terms of social norms at that organization.

Throughout time a psychological contract or understanding is developed which entails an implicit unwritten contract. This contract is a reciprocal relationship. As the employee views it, a set of mutual expectations between Brad and Kerry and Jason, as a representative of the organization. Based on the specifications of this contract, Brad and Kerry agree to exert a certain

amount of effort producing a certain amount of outputs in exchange for receiving certain inputs (pay recognition, and so on) from the organization (Robbins and Judge, 2011).

Jason wanted to thoroughly review the psychological contract between NewBuild and Brad and Kerry. He believed it could determine if their specific contracts served as an enabler or inhibitor to high performance.

Possible Alternatives

Jason could use one or more of many other analysis tools to choose between Brad and Kerry, including Harvard University's Implicit Association Test, which measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report, revealing attitudes or assumptions that people make on a daily basis (Schiavone 2018)..

Jason could also use the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator test, classifying fundamental traits such as introversion vs. extroversion, and intuition vs. sensing. USC's Leadership Style Self-Assessment and The Institute for Health and Human Potential's Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Assessment are also useful tools (Schiavone 2018).

Any tool that compares and contrasts management, communication, and leadership styles could help Jason in his decision.

Recommended Plan of Action - Kerry

Jason's job is changing due to the economic situation during the Great Recession, requiring him to spend an increasing amount of time pursuing new business, as in writing, and selling contract bids. This means less time available to develop and nurture new employees,

therefore choosing to retain Kerry over Brad is a logical decision, since it seems Jason would

need to spend less time coaching and working with her (Mento 2012).

Final Recommendation

Jason used sound analysis tools to choose between Brad and Kerry, analyzing their

communication, management, and leadership styles, along with a set of VABEs for each to

compare. Kerry seemed more prepared, more flexible and able to 'think on her feet' and

communicate (Mento 2012). Continuing this process to ensure that Kerry continues to manage

upward successfully, and keep Jason informed, is an important part of the plan of action.

Why This Case is Important

Understanding the difference between management, leadership, and communication

styles when choosing leadership requires analysis through various lenses, including VABEs –

values, assumptions, beliefs and expectations. VABEs are important to the analysis of leadership

and a leader's potential, as they are highly cultural and family specific, and effort is required to

become fully aware of one's VABEs and how they are influences on a leaders' conscious and

unconscious thoughts (Clawson 2011).

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