Strengths Analysis and Leadership Profile

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Leadership Seminar

Nova Southeastern University

April 19, 2016

**Leadership Profile Analysis**

**My Leadership Style**

In my life, I have a variety of areas that involve much of my time and where I have the ability to show leadership. In my work setting, I am the local school technology coordinator at an elementary school. My position requires me to work with the entire staff and student populations of the school. My leadership involves the entire media and technology department and how we can use those tools to enhance the educational process. I am president of a mission organization, SOAR Ministries, which stands for Serving Others And Rejoicing, where we lead groups on short term missions stateside and internationally. As some say, I have all the responsibilities from the janitor to the CEO. If I want the organization to be more than it is right now, I have to cast the vision for myself and the board. In this role I see my greatest official role of leadership, but one of the hardest because of the manpower and time restraints. Finally, I have many volunteer responsibilities at my church where I lead the technology ministry, including video and technical support for the staff, teach a Sunday school class, and many other positions as needed. I see my greatest area of leadership at the church is in the technical ministry and how I can cast a vision for the way technology can be used to enhance the service and used as a tool to reach others for Christ.

Although all three of these areas have very different responsibilities and areas of leadership, I do find that my type of leadership in all areas is servant leadership. The term servant leadership first coined by Robert Greenleaf is described as one that puts the needs of others first (Ferch, 2015). I lead others by serving and showing the example of what can be done. One example of this is when our school had science fair and science technology, engineering and math night. I was not responsible for the activities, and it was on a day that I don’t even work all day, but I went back to the school and did a center on robots to show that as leader of the technology department, I support those that are in the department in different capacities. I am not afraid to do the menial work on a task, but can also cast a vision of how the environment can be better in the future and map out the steps that can lead us there. My work ethic and strong strengths in achiever and responsibility as discussed by Rath (2007) in StrengthsFinder 2.0 allow me to stay with a task until it is completed and follow through with my verbal commitments. Even when others think a task is finished, I will stay with it until it is just right in my eyes. As a servant leader, I work alongside others and want to see them develop into the best person or worker they can be. Anything I can do to assist in the process of them growing is part of my goal as a leader, whether it is in the school setting, on the mission field, or volunteering at church. I may not always achieve that goal, but it is what I strive to attain.

**Quantitative Analysis: Leadership Profile Instruments**

**Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire.** This questionnaire analyzed the thoughts of what makes a leader. Can a leader learn the skills to become more effective, are they born with certain traits, or is it an innate ability a person has for leadership (Northouse, 2015)? My highest score was for the skill emphasis with 19/20 with process emphasis coming in second with 17/20 and finally trait emphasis and ability emphasis tied for third with 16/20. My lowest score was behavior emphasis with a score of 11/20. Looking at these scores I believe that leadership skills can be learned and that the more time a person has in leadership positions, the more she can practice the skills and refine them. The score in process emphasis indicates that I believe the leader and the follower affect one another. I believe we all have room for improvement, and with a high skills emphasis, I believe that leaders can work on the particular skills needed to lead well.

**Leadership Vision Questionnaire.** The leadership vision questionnaire looked at the ability to cast a vision for the organization and the followers. My vision score was high at 44/50. This indicates that I do think in the future. I constantly am thinking about ways to improve the current situation and what changes the group can make to become more effective. Although I have worked with those that are highly visionary and yet don’t contribute to the process of reaching that vision, as other questionnaires and the StrenthsFinder (2007) show, I also have the ability to stick with a task and make it happen. Stam, van Kippenberg and Wisse (2010) discuss that leaders that cast a vision and involve the followers are more likely to have the vision become an ideal as compared to those that don’t involve the followers. This not only applies to this portion of the leadership vision, but also in the participatory path-goal questionnaire as well.

**Building Community Questionnaire.** This is my greatest area for growth. My outgroup score was 44/70. According to Northouse (2015), this means I don’t emphasize team building and get annoyed with members that don’t contribute to the whole group. I would agree with the second evaluation, but not the first. I do value team building and collaboration, but when individuals choose not to be a part of the team, I have very little patience. I believe that we are all adults and should have the responsibility to contribute to groups when we are placed in those environments. As a leader however, I need to make sure that I give equal time to those that don’t participate so I can still allow them the opportunities to grow and succeed, even if I don’t see things their way (MindTools, 2016).

**Conflict Style Questionnaire.** In this questionnaire, I evaluated someone from work and someone from family. For home, I have strong avoidance, average competition, very strong compromise, very strong accommodation, and very strong collaboration. For work I have very strong avoidance, average competition, strong compromise, very strong accommodation, and strong collaboration. I do not like conflict and if I have a choice, I will avoid it, but of course that is not possible in all situations. My priority is to create situations where both sides win, and can work together.

**Leadership Traits Questionnaire.** This questionnaire looked at different traits and how co-workers would rate me and how I would see myself. The Northouse (2015) evaluation available online grouped the traits in pairs. From highest to lowest order, my traits were ranked as conscientious/diligent with 4.85/5, trustworthy/dependable with 4.75/5, persistent/determined with 4.72/5, friendly/outgoing with 4.61/5, articulate/perceptive with 4.59/5, sensitive/empathetic with 4.48/5 and self-confident/self-assured with 4.48/5. The top and bottom traits don’t surprise me at all. I will stick to a task until it is finished, and I am careful about all of the details. For the lowest ranking of self-confident/self-assured, I believe that is low because of the work environment where I am as well as not wanting to think more highly of myself than I should as Paul writes to the Romans (New International Version). At work, when the leadership is not supportive of the work, it is hard to be self-confident and self-assured, even when I know deep down that I know my craft and do it well. I find myself in a mental balance between believing in myself and abilities, and being humble. It is a constant struggle.

**Leadership Strengths Questionnaire.** In this questionnaire I ranked a very high implementer with 29/30, a high innovator with 22/25, a high encourager with 25/35, a high analytic with 21/25 and a high mediator with 21/25. The high implementer is like the leadership skills of diligence. It is sticking to a job to its completion. If I start something, I will finish it. The high encourager shows that I want to build unity and cohesiveness among the team. I want to unite the team and point out their strengths through the process. The high innovator shows I can think outside the box and bring creativity to a project. The mediator and analytic styles were both high as well as I look at situations to examine all the parts and all perspectives to reach the goal, that may be a compromise as well.

**Leadership Skills Questionnaire.** In this questionnaire it evaluated administrative, interpersonal, and conceptual skills. I ranked high in all three categories with administrative at 23/30, interpersonal at 24/30 and conceptual at 25/30. The high conceptual score goes along with the high visionary score earlier. I can see and cast a vision for various situations and also look at a situation and see other solutions to a problem or how to improve a situation that may not be routine. The high interpersonal skills shows that I value relationships and working with others while the high administrative skills shows I can budget resources of time, people and materials to maximize the situation. All three skills are in great need for a good leader.

**Path-Goal Styles Questionnaire.** In this questionnaire, I received a moderate score for directive at 9/15, a high supportive score at 13/15, a moderate participative score at 12/15 and a moderate achievement score at 11/15. The high supportive score shows I want those with whom I work to do well and I try to work collaboratively with them to reach the goal. The moderate score in the other area of directive shows I want to point the workers in the right direction, but I don’t want to put too much demand on them to reach the goal. The moderate participative score shows my reluctance of delegating and sharing leadership with others. This stems from wanting to make sure everything is done a certain way and not knowing if that would happen if given to others.

**Qualitative Analysis**

For my interviews I chose a co-worker, Dr. Noreen Freeman, someone that has participated in my short term missions with SOAR, Chris Sapp, and someone from my church, my senior minister, Art Stansberry. When approaching this aspect of the assignment I actually sent an e-mail to several people in those three areas of my life. I wanted to get input in each area as they are all areas where I have some leadership roles and can use the feedback to improve.

Dr. Freeman and I have worked together at the same school for nearly nine years. She came as a second grade teacher and has moved to other grade levels over the years and now is a literacy coach with some administrative responsibilities. I respect her opinion and she is very insightful. I knew that interviewing her would give me a different perspective.

During the interview the story she shared was when I was teaching a staff development class one summer for the teachers at my school and I invited a small local private school that doesn’t have the access to the staff development that teachers in my school and county do. According to Dr. Freeman’s recollection, I was able to differentiate the instruction to meet the needs of the teachers from each school even with their varied technology backgrounds (personal communication, February 11, 2016). This is as Rath and Conchie (2008) discussed that good leaders need to understand what their followers need. I thoroughly enjoy teaching staff development so I was not surprised by her perception that I was able to meet the needs of the varied students in the class. I was a bit surprised however at her perception of how much hand-holding I do. She viewed it as a positive in that particular situation, guiding the teachers step-by-step through each process meeting the goals of the class. She mentioned that at other times in the school setting however some people tend to take advantage of that quality. Although this may lend itself to being taken advantage of, it is a quality I want to develop, helping and guiding them through the process. My goal is that the next time or two when I am helping the same person, it is in a different manner than the first time, hoping they have grown and moved past the first stage. This attribute goes along with the leadership strengths questionnaire that show I am a high encourager. I want people to succeed and will take the steps necessary to make that happen.

When Chris Sapp volunteered to do the interview I was pleased because although I use to teach with her for several years until she changed schools this year, we have also participated in short-term missions together through SOAR. She has seen me lead and organize various teams and all of the administrative work that goes into the ministry. Chris is a very straight forward person and can be brutally honest. I have a great respect for her because of her honesty. Although sometimes it is hard to hear things that are not always flattering, it is reassuring to know that she means what she says.

In my interview with Chris, she recalled a situation when she was observing my interaction with the Mexican government via phone calls over several weeks working on one of our major projects for the ministry called Angel Bags. Although we have been doing this project since 2001, the government has continued to change their requirements and it has been extremely difficult to get the permission to take the gift bags across the border. She said, “the quality I really admire in anyone, especially you is resourcefulness” (C. Sapp, personal communication, March 20, 2016). I had to be persistent and resourceful through the weeks of dialogue back and forth trying to meet their needs, insisting on answers and finding people and other resources I could use to meet the goal, all while keeping a positive attitude for myself and the others in the project.

Finally, my last interview was with Art Stansberry. He came to our church thirteen years ago as a youth minister. He served in that role for ten years until he transitioned into the senior minister position. Although I work in many different capacities around the church, the area he chose to focus on for my leadership skills was missions and how I lead and prepare the short-term mission teams. He focused on a time when we were in Mexico with a team and a large portion of the team got sick from food they had eaten. Although they were sick and I had to take care of their needs so they could get better, I still needed to keep the goal of the team in focus which was teaching vacation bible school to children in the area. He said, “The key to a good leader is you see the mission at hand and you go to tackle it, but not at the expense of your team. You take care of them too” (A Stansberry, personal communication, March 25, 2016).

**People Person.** The first theme that came through in each of the interviews was that I am a people person. I care about people, whether teaching them technology staff development, participants in a mission team, or those working on a project that may be in multiple places, including in another country. This theme is supported by the leadership questionnaires that show I have a high supportive leadership style and high interpersonal skills. People are what matter in an organization and supporting people in the process of achieving a goal can make the process more appealing. As Sinek (2014) says in his Ted Talk about feeling safe, when we feel safe we will give all that we have to work together for the common goal, fighting against dangers that may be outside our environment. I want to create a safe environment for teachers to learn and teach while using technology and I want to create a safe environment on the mission field as well. No matter what uncertainties are there, I want the team members to know that I support them and that they will have what they need to be successful.

**Persistence**. In all three interviews, the idea or theme of persistence came through in different levels. With Dr. Freeman, it was the persistence to make sure each teacher received what they needed from staff development, even though the needs were different. With Mrs. Sapp’s interview, she discussed the persistence it took to continue dialogue with the Mexican government and not giving up the first time they said no, and in fact continuing to try multiple strategies to complete the project. For Mr. Stansberry’s interview, it was showing persistence to get the project of vacation bible school completed even when team members were sick and the original team was not all available. In each of these situations I had to show the persistence that Scarnati (1998) says is looking at an old problem in a new way. Through this new perspective, solutions can be found that were otherwise elusive.

**Resourcefulness**. The third major theme mentioned is resourcefulness. Mrs. Sapp elaborated on the idea of how I showed resourcefulness when permissions were being denied for the approval for the bags to Mexico, I continually thought of people that may have a connection or another way we may be able to get the bags across as I looked at the picture of who all I know and what skills, talents and resources they can access. Kanunga and Mena (2005) point out that resourcefulness is analyzing the goal and diagnosing the general information to solve the problem at hand. Sometimes tasks seem unsurmountable, whether it is how to have enough team members to complete vacation bible school, or looking for new ways to get Angel Bags across the border to Mexico, but looking at them from a new perspective can allow one to find new solutions to solve the problem.

**My Legacy**

There are numerous areas where I work, serve, and hopefully lead. I want to leave a legacy of serving others first and putting their needs above my own. I also want to be known for sticking with a task until it is finished and finding any available resources to achieve the goal at hand. With the leadership style of servant leader, I want to always keep in mind my life verse in Colossians that I am serving the Lord first and with all my heart, and when I do that, all those I come in contact with will get my best, because I first gave my best to my Lord.

**Conclusion**

I have three very different areas where I am able to lead, but in each area, my goal is to lead by serving. I want to set the example of what needs to be done and put the best interest of others before my own interest and the interest of the project. My strengths in leadership are following a task to completion, looking at problems from multiple view points and being able to creatively come up with a solution, and caring about people. My greatest area of growth is including out-group members. From the questionnaires that I completed and the feedback from the interviews, I feel that leadership styles and qualities were pretty consistent in both area of how I evaluate myself, and how others see me. It is my goal that servant leadership would become my mantra.

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