

Leadership – A Capsule View of a Three-Step Consideration

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As in most industries experiencing consolidation/globalization issues, there are three considerations that must be understood to become even better leaders: dilemma, clash and resolution.

In our industries... coatings, paints, adhesive, sealants...we have very accomplished leaders within the large, medium and small formulators and supplier levels. Yes, the dynamics of industry consolidation, globalization and everyday business is increasingly challenging these leaders to become even better, especially at becoming more broadly capable.

As in most industries experiencing consolidation/globalization issues, there are three considerations that must be understood and mastered to become even better leaders:

- Dilemma – Since the primary task of leadership is to direct attention, leaders must be able to focus their own attention.
- Clash – Some would say that “being focused” is the act of screening out distractions and concentrating on one thing. However, we know that very good leaders can focus attention in many ways, for different purposes.
- Resolution – Alertness to the three “focuses” considerations is key.
 1. Inward focus
 2. Focus on others
 3. Outward focus

Focusing inward and focusing on others helps leaders nurture emotional intelligence. Focusing outward can improve their ability to devise strategy, innovate, and manage organizations.

Grouping these types of attention into three broad vessels – focusing on yourself, focusing on others and focusing on the world – creates new adjacencies to the practice of many essential leadership skills. Focusing inward and focusing constructively on others helps leaders cultivate the primary elements of emotional intelligence. A fuller understanding of how they focus on the wider world can improve their ability to devise strategy, innovate and manage organizations.

Focus On Yourself

The so-called “inner voice” prompts us all to

make better decisions. Being self-aware provides for improved emotional intelligence. One must, therefore, be self-aware while under self-control in the process.

In the role of an executive, functional performance is key to success. Placing one’s attention where it wants it and keeping it there in the face of constant temptations “pulling” it away, therefore, is a prerequisite to high functional performance for an executive. Self-control is centered in the will of the executive to concentrate and avoid distractions and setbacks.

In other words, the ability to uncouple one’s focus on a much loved object and the ability to resist distraction and to focus instead on the future goal that will magnify results is the mark of a leader.

Focus On Others

Successfully focusing on others is the prerequisite to the ability to be empathetic and to construct social associations. Managers capable of an “others focus” are those who find widespread beliefs, whose views carry the most influence and those with whom other people want to work. They materialize as natural leaders despite managerial or social rank.

Focus Outward

It has been observed that leaders with a strong outward focus are both good listeners and also good questioners. They thrive on learning and have an ability to and sense of connecting the sometimes, unrelated dots that indirectly but positively affect their business leadership successes.

Summary

Focused leaders command the full range of their own attention: They are in touch with inner feelings, they control their impulses, they are aware of how others see them, they understand what others need from them, they can weed out distractions and allow their thoughts to wander widely, free of preconceptions.

Almost every form of focus can be strengthened. As are muscles strengthened by exercise, ability to focus properly requires practice diligence. **CW**