

CEO Leadership Training Intervention

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I. Rationale

Leadership skills are a necessity in corporate America today. Without strong leaders, a company will lack direction, avoid making critical decisions, and subordinates are given unclear tasks that are often not completed on time. It is the job of the leaders throughout every level of the company, particularly the CEO, to provide this type of information and direction to employees every day.

Effective leadership qualities have been defined in many ways throughout history, and specific definitions often vary dependent on the situation. Sometimes the qualities that define effective leaders include intelligence, adjustment, and masculinity. Other times they are based on levels of extraversion, conservatism, and sensitivity (Zaccaro, 1991).

A fairly new paradigm in leadership, as explained by Goleman (1998), suggests that all effective leaders must have a high level of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence includes such attributes as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Another approach to defining leadership focuses on leaders who are both task-centered and people-centered (Gordon, 2002). This model lists three necessary elements needed to achieve success as a leader. The leader must be able to meet the group member's needs, meet the organizational needs, and be able to resolve conflict among workers.

Finally, another vein of research shows that there are several critical skills that all levels of management need in order to be successful leaders. They include three personal skills (self-awareness, managing stress, and creative problem solving) and four

interpersonal skills (communicating supportively, gaining power and influence, motivating others, and managing conflict) (Whetten & Cameron, 1991). These skills, although appear to be straightforward and common sense, in most cases, need to be taught.

Given this information, it is essential that CEO's be trained in leadership. Since many of the company's important decisions ultimately go through the CEO, he/she must know how to act and react in an effective and appropriate manner. If, for example, there are potential new accounts that will double a company's annual profit, the CEO must know how to network with the account liaisons, creatively solve any problems that arise during negotiation, and determine how to delegate the new responsibilities that result from gaining the accounts. Without these skills, the accounts are likely to be lost to another company who has successfully trained their CEO on leadership skills and techniques.

The numerous leadership definitions available not only suggest that leadership is an important skill, but that there is a broad range of leadership skills a CEO needs on a daily basis. Nearly all of these skills can be found in the Managerial Practices Survey (MPS) (Yukl, Wall, & Lepsinger, 1990). This measure consists of 110 items (skills) that can be divided into 11 major leadership dimensions needed to be an effective leader. Through several revisions over the years, there has been solid evidence that the MPS is able to predict and explain managerial effectiveness.

Using a 6 point scale (1(never, not at all) to 4 (usually, to a great extent), N/A, and Don't Know), raters are able to accurately assess a leader's skills. Research has

shown that when many raters assess the same leader, they consistently agree on the ratings.

In addition to these findings, the items on the MPS are highly relevant to managerial effectiveness and accurately represent the behaviors they are defining. Furthermore, the MPS measures stable traits that do not change over time unless there is an intervening act meant to do so (i.e., training).

More importantly is the evidence that shows this measure is able to predict and explain managerial effectiveness. In a series of 6 studies, each of the 11 dimensions was shown to predict managerial effectiveness at least once, and many of the dimensions were supported in multiple studies (Yukl et al., 1990).

It is clear that the research evidence supporting the MPS is both thorough and convincing. This research support combined with the versatility of the MPS makes it an excellent tool to be used with CEO leadership training.

II. Specific Measures

1. The Managerial Practices Survey (MPS) will be used. The MPS contains 110 items that can be assigned to 11 dimensions (Informing, Consulting and Delegating, Planning and Organizing, Problem Solving, Clarifying Roles and Objectives, Monitoring Operations and Environment, Motivating, Recognizing and Rewarding, Supporting and Mentoring, Managing Conflict and Team Building, and Networking), each of which will be assessed.
2. Critical incident reports and other written documents exhibiting the CEO's performance of the 11 MPS dimensions will be gathered.

3. The CEO's reactions to the training will be gathered using a 5-point Likert scale.

This measure will include questions to determine whether the CEO felt that the material covered was important, if there were other important areas that were not covered in the MPS or in the training, the overall reaction to the training process, and finally a free-response area for comments about the training and suggestions for improving the training.

4. A written learning measure will be administered. The CEO will be asked to provide written answers to common workplace situations that were covered in each of the dimensions trained. Question samples include 5 ways to provide direction in a task, 10 ways to strengthen ties with investors, 5 ways to generate subordinate enthusiasm for work, and 5 ways to identify work-related problems.

III. Time line and costs

Pre-Training Assessment

Each CEO: 3 day (approx. 8 hrs/day) = 24 hours

Gathering Critical Incident Reports: 5 hours

Explanation of MPS to subordinates: 3 hours

Scoring the MPS assessment: 2 hours

Development of the personalized training schedule: 1 hour

Subtotal: 35 hours @ \$40/hr = \$1400.00

Training – For Each Individual Dimension rated below a 3

Dimension Discussion: 2 hours

Individual Dimension Practice: 2 hours

Feedback for each Dimension: 1 hour

Second Dimension Practice: 1 hour

Second Feedback: 1 hour

Subtotal: 7 hours @ \$40/hr = 280.00

Post-Training Assessment

Administration of the Reactions Measure: 1 hour

Administration of the Learning Measure: 2 hours

Each CEO: 3 day (approx. 8 hrs/day) = 24 hours

Gathering Written Information for MPS Assessment: 5 hours

Review the MPS procedure with subordinates: 1 hour

Subtotal: 33 hours @ \$40/hr = \$1320.00

Post-Training Assessment Feedback

Discussion of Trainer Evaluation and Learning Measure: 5 hours

Discussion of Subordinate's Evaluations: 3 hours

Discussion of the Reactions Measure: 2 hours

Final brainstorm/Ideas: 2 hour

Subtotal: 12 hours @ \$40/hr = \$480.00

Additional Costs

Cost of the MPS: At Cost

Development of the Reactions Measure: 3 hours

Development of the Learning Measure: 8 hours

Office Supplies and Photocopies: \$50

Estimated Trips: 2 @ \$800 (flight) + Hotel (\$60/night*20 nights) = \$2800.00

Subtotal: MPS + \$3290.00

IV. Methodology*1. Participants*

Participants will consist of CEO's throughout the USA that have not participated in a formal leadership training program since appointed as CEO. They must be in their home office for a period of three consecutive days for the trainer to complete the Pre- and Post-Training Assessments. The CEO must also be able to clear his/her calendar of daily activities to complete the 1 to 11 day intensive training program.

2. Pre-Training Assessment

The MPS will be administered over a period of 3 business days to determine if each individual CEO needs to be trained. This extended amount of time will allow for the most accurate ratings by giving the trainer a chance to observe many different situations. To supplement the observational information, the trainer will gather critical incidents reports and other written documents that exhibit the CEO's performance of the 11 dimensions being rated in the MPS (approx. 5 hours).

The CEO's direct subordinates that he/she works with on a daily basis, not to exceed 5 people, will be given one business day to complete the MPS based on their

observations of the CEO. To ensure accuracy, they will be instructed by the trainer (approx. 3 hours) on proper use of the MPS. Subordinate ratings will be used for comparison to post-training assessments only.

3. Training

Training will be administered individually to each CEO, and will be customized. The individual item scores will be averaged within each dimension and any dimensions with a mean score below 3 will be included in the training. The critical incident reports will clarify any specific problems that may not be identified by the MPS. This ensures that only problem areas are being targeted, and time is not wasted on satisfactory performance elements.

The first portion of the training will consist of one-on-one conversations between the trainer and CEO about what constitutes good leadership behavior. Topics for the dimension conversations come from the MPS items used to rate the CEO prior to training; more specifically, the actual behaviors that comprise each dimension will be discussed. The conversations, for example, may focus on the behaviors that help a person to be a successful planner and organizer.

When the dimension has been thoroughly discussed, taking approximately 2 hours, the CEO will then be given the opportunity to practice these new skills (approx. 2 hours). This will be done either with the trainer, if it is not an everyday occurrence (i.e., answering requests for technical information), or with employees if the skill is needed every day (i.e., assigning tasks).

4. Feedback

Feedback will be offered throughout this process, in the form of discussion. After each skill has been practiced the trainer will then go over the improvements made and the aspects that still need improvement (approx. 1 hour). For aspects that need to be improved, the CEO, with the help of the trainer, will then brainstorm strategies for accomplishing this goal.

Following the feedback activity, the CEO will have another opportunity to practice the target skills (approx. 1 hour). After this second practice session, the CEO and trainer will address what went well and also brainstorm strategies for developing the skills that are still not adequate (approx. 1 hour).

This process will be repeated until all dimensions with a mean rating below 3 have been covered. Training for each dimension takes approximately one day to complete, therefore the training will last anywhere from zero days (all dimensions were rated a 3 or above and no training is needed) to 11 days (all 11 dimensions need to be trained).

5. Post-Training Assessment

Immediately following the training, the CEO will complete a reaction measure about the training (approx. 1 hour).

In order to give the CEO time to practice and work on his/her newly acquired skills, the trainer will not complete the follow-up test until one month after the last training day. At this time, the trainer will again complete the MPS over 3 business days, and will also gather any new written documents that pertain to the CEO's performance of the 11 dimensions post-training (approx. 5 hours).

Like the Pre-Training Assessment, the same direct subordinates will again have one business day to complete the MPS for the CEO. The trainer will remind the subordinates of the guidelines and proper ways to complete the MPS (approx. 1 hour).

To provide a more complete analysis of how well the material was learned, the CEO will be asked to provide written answers to a learning measure described in the Measures Section (II) (approx. 2hours). This measure will allow the trainer to determine whether the CEO learned the material and is having trouble transferring the skills into the workplace, or if the material was not learned at all.

6. Post-Training Assessment Feedback

Following the post-training assessment, the trainer will again sit down with the CEO to discuss areas that have improved throughout the month as well as those that still need work (approx. 5 hours). Additionally, the subordinate assessments will be compared to see if they have noticed a change in leadership behaviors from before the training to after (approx. 3 hours). If they have not, then possible reasons for this will be talked about. Finally, the trainer will review the aspects mastered in the initial training (indicated by the written learning measure), offer suggestions for improvement (indicated by the MPS ratings of both the trainer and subordinates and the critical incident reports), and answer any questions or concerns the CEO has about the material learned (approx. 2 hours).

V. Evaluation

The proposed training program makes use of several measures, including a reaction measure, learning measure, and the Managerial Practices Survey. Evaluation of the success of the training program will first be conducted using the written learning

measure. This measure will require the CEO to describe, in writing, the techniques and strategies learned during the training. By using a written sample of knowledge, this will allow the trainer to determine if there was difficulty in the learning phase of training or in the transfer of new information (based on the MPS).

The learning measure will be administered one month after the conclusion of training. Although many factors can interfere during this month, ultimately the training is geared toward affecting change in long-term leadership skills. Therefore, administration one month after the conclusion of the training allows for enough time to elapse that any information retained will likely be due to learning rather than just memorization. One weakness of this approach is that it does not test the immediate comprehension of the information. Immediate measurement would allow the trainer to get a better sense of whether or not information forgotten at the one-month test point was learned during training. This would allow an additional look at the overall effectiveness of the training. A possible solution to these issues would be to administer the learning measure immediately after training, one month after training, and again one year after training. Using three measurement points allows trends in information/skill retention to be charted and training to be adjusted accordingly.

In addition to the learning measure, in the favor of multiple criterion use, the MPS will be administered both before and after training and then assessed for behavioral changes in leadership performance. This again has the same weakness as the learning measure in that it will be administered one month after training completion. The time delay on this measure, however, poses a larger problem because in many cases it can take at least three months to see a noticeable difference in behavior. Therefore, in order to

accurately appraise the success of the training program, the MPS should be administered between three months and one year after training.

The experimental design of the training proposed makes use of one group – the training group. Using a control group would be very time consuming and require a large amount of money to complete a pre- and post-test for individual CEO's that would not participate in training. A more realistic option to improve the design is to use a time-series design, which was suggested by the multiple post-training assessments. This design requires only one group and information is gathered at various points after training. The proposed training mimics this design very closely, but does not measure behavior multiple times after training. By adding two additional administrations of the MPS and learning measures after training, the design would then control for the effects of history. By controlling for history in this way, it becomes possible to rule out other reasons, for example, weekly work cycles that may differ, or variation in work productivity due to the season, which may cause training to seem effective or ineffective. Unfortunately, due to the time-consuming nature of administering the MPS and learning measure multiple times, this may not be feasible based on budget.

A training program such as this is difficult to rid of confounds and inconsistencies due to its time-consuming nature. The proposed weaknesses and their accompanying suggestions for improvement, however, are possible to implement given additional resources and time.

VI. References

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