The Soft Leadership Model: A Solution For The HRM Department To Work With Technical People In The AI Age

Technical organisations are facing a dramatic shift from being behind the eight ball to being the entire playing field. While technical skills are important to find a job and keep a job, without the softer side of leadership skills, technical people fall short of a fulfilling and successful career. Most leaders will need to change not just their own approach to knowledge-sharing and interpersonal relationships but also their entire organisation's approach with the occurrence of artificial intelligence (AI). The necessary techniques of artificial intelligence are grounded firmly in the human relations movement in the 1930s, with Elton Mayo's Hawthorne studies. It is possible to build a technical culture that is not only productive but also healthy and enjoyable. Artificial intelligence synthesises thinking in technical skills and puts forward innovative ideas on what works when dealing with people and what does not bring out the best in people. By using AI to envision a technical organisation becoming more of a people-centered workplace, softer side approaches are becoming much more common.

Consider the importance of storytelling when working on technical work. The technical leader is the principal medium we use to transmit our ideas to the world. If we want our own insights to influence our practice and profession, we need to pay as much attention to the craft of storytelling as we do to identifying and answering interesting questions. AI has developed a way of capturing conversations through reiterating what was said and making it better and more appealing, and then the AI assistant will ask a pertinent question. This is the skill of the technical leader using a softer side of leadership.

The technical leader may consider themselves more of conducting more feasibility studies as opposed to creating an executive summary. One places the technical leader, as Einstein once said:

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Technical leaders are not oriented towards participative learning and cooperative learning. They live in their minds, and this has enabled them to be successful. The reason for this is that the technical leaders are somewhat passive, and anything that is retained does not pervade the area of the brain that needs to be transformed to be effective in the soft side of leadership. For a technical leader to change from being too dogmatic, this article introduces some participative and cooperative learning techniques, which will enable technical leaders to experience learning the softer side of leadership, to evolve to become more knowledgeable about organisational behaviour, and to lead from the heart and mind.

The Heart And Mind Meets AI

The technical leader, in many instances, faces what McGregor calls a Theory-X mannerism. This is because, for one, they possess a superior knowledge of the field that they are in, which is, in most cases, the cultural climate of the same people. There has to be some sort of element of control to the methods of transition for an organisation to begin to overcome inertia. In the following sections of this article, some selected methods applied in practice will be provided. Here are a few ways the technical leader can begin to create more of a softer-sided leadership approach.

- Challenge and validate all concepts regarding what they have been doing in the past and what needs to be changed in their behaviour. The technical leader must welcome the possibility of change and improve sound principles of effective knowledge management. Their AI assistant can be helpful in this manner by directing dialogue and helping them in the transition
- The objective of the technical leader is to provide an environment in which effective thinking can take place. Their communication should challenge not only themselves but also their colleagues to stimulate each other to find the solution of inertia
- The technical leader should try not to be defensive or condescending. The technical leader should logically surface inconsistencies and contradictions so that the softer side of leadership can become contagious.

While these ideas are simply thoughts on improvement, when used in conjunction with an AI assistant, a technical leader can transform into more of a softer side of leadership.

Controlling, Leading, Organising, And Planning As A Soft-Sided Leader

There are two potential problems that technical leaders face. One being

micromanaging and using control for manipulative purposes. Coercive leadership only works in the short-term, and long-term success is often stymied. The second is a realisation that they must reverse the mindset of manipulation to use the softer-sided leadership skills.

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When leading, ask colleagues and followers how they want to feel. A technique used by Jim Clawson is mentioned in the book Powered by. Soft-sided leaders establish emotional congruity by helping colleagues feel good about their work. Find out where subordinates are raising the bar incrementally to develop personal growth. Leaders who use the softer skills do not lose control because, as Jim and Scott argue, there is motivation and accountability. Thus, by focusing on how people want to feel, this emphasises the role of feeling in achieving personal and organisational excellence, suggesting that emotional well-being is crucial for success. Breaking away from the technical leader's manipulative behaviour by making subordinates feel that they are involved will help their followers be involved. A key to ascertaining the softer-sided organisational behaviour competency. For more detailed insights, you can refer to the book "Powered by Feel" by Jim Clawson.

Organising takes the sequential technical leader and attempts to get them to be more global in their thinking. Not a global mindset, a global perspective which takes many more things into account than simply leading from a script. The softer-sided leader is more of an organisational architect. This implies that followers can innovate and create without worrying about failure. To do this, a loose control system that encourages experimentation and trial and error is necessary, with the objective of moving the structure of the hierarchy toward a more distributed, flatter organisational chart. Bottom-up decision making, as opposed to the mechanistic style of the technical leader.

When planning, technical leaders conduct feasibility analysis based on organisational goals and put them into specific objectives that can be measured and quantified. The softer-sided leaders direct a process that helps subordinates find their strengths and then focus on using them for individual self-improvement. Given that this is successful, then the organisation will improve the bottom line as people develop a sense of self-improvement.

Rewarding Colleagues And Followers As A Soft-Sided Leader

The Basic Principle of Rewards is based upon one side of the gamut to the other. The technical leaders focus more on punishments, which are an integral part of the correction-control idea found in organisations suffering from inertia. Primarily, the leader has to realise that not only does the technical leader have the capacity to reward and punish, but this is also part of the cultural process determined over a long period of time. Theory X technical leaders, based on McGregor's theory, demonstrate that these direct attempts at behavioural modification are not recommended for the management of professionals. Therefore, one can honestly find that the soft-sided leader would attempt to assume more of a Theory Y mentality. This assumption can be found in the Hawthorne Effect. The softer side of the leader caused the desire to learn and become more cordial toward leaders on the part of the workers, which showed that the human side of organisational behaviour is more beneficial than the carrot-on-the-stick approach often permeated by the technical leader. Thus, the change in basic assumptions in the workers' perception was tantamount to the entirely friendlier paradigm of the softer-sided leader than these workers had seen before with the technical leader.

In Conclusion

Technical leaders are more successful than their softer-sided competitors early in their careers, but they reach a point at which promotion is not inevitable. The Peter Principle holds them back as they find themselves stuck in the expert category, lacking the linear longevity. Soft-sided leaders find themselves shelved right from the start because their lack of technical ability holds them back. Especially if their boss is more technical in nature. These leaders must embrace the technical knowledge enough to keep their jobs. Once mastered, they can learn to be more intuitive and show their soft-sided interpersonal leadership skills. Artificial intelligence is an agent of awareness for either of the two styles of leadership. Consulting with the artificial intelligence agent of change, both the technical leader and the soft-sided leader can establish a positive mindset to move forward. Self-awareness and focusing on building strengths to become your best self will enhance your leadership prowess.

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