Leading Innovation and Change: Assisting Employees in Lifting Where They Stand

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Abstract

For an innovative idea to be successful, the leadership team of an organization will need to possess certain skills that will enable them to execute the innovative idea. Some of these skills are derived from the upbringing of the individuals. The environment and association of the individuals will also determine if they will become effective leaders. This paper discusses the role of ethics and its responsibilities in leading innovation and change. The concept of lifting where employees stand is introduced. An analysis and evaluation of the challenges that may arise when leading and managing innovative changes are also discussed. Some principles and practices to implement in leading innovation and change are perceiving organizations as learning institutions, recognizing each employee as a productive member of society, and caring more for employees than leaders’ own prestige. Some new approaches to leading innovation and change in an organization are Refined and Scrutinized approach.

Keywords: Challenges; Changes; Ethics; Employees; Innovation; Idea; Innovative Project; Leadership Team; Lifting Where Employees Stand; Refine; Scrutinize.

Introduction

Every business approaches an innovative idea differently. Some businesses approach innovative ideas based upon how they believe the public will respond to the change. What will determine if an organization will be successful in carrying out its innovative plan will depend on how the organization approaches the novel idea. Leading an innovation is not the same as teaching a college course or supervising a few people. The purpose of this research is to investigate the ethical issues relating to innovations and how employees may be supported through an innovation process. The problems this paper will highlight are that organizations leadership teams do not always encourage its employees to put in their best in an innovative project. It is important to put into consideration how an organization is doing overall. But, for
the organization to qualify as best, the leaders and managers need to care about the employees who work in the organizations as well. Leaders must be considerate of those they lead and help their followers “lift where [they] stand” (Uchtdorf, 2008, p. 53). The research question this paper investigates is how organization leadership team can encourage its employees to lift where its employees stand. In relating a story that explains this concept of lifting where people stand, Uchtdorf narrated that a group of people worked together in accomplishing a goal in an organization in Darmstadt, Germany. These groups of people were asked to lift a grand piano into a cultural hall. Because of the size of the piano, no one could move it. When the movers attempted to spread themselves around the piano to move it, they still were unsuccessful. After many attempts, one gentleman told the movers to stand close together and lift where each stood. “It seemed too simple. Nevertheless, each lifted where he stood, and the piano rose from the ground and moved to the cultural hall as if on its own power” (p. 53).

Likewise, leaders of organizations must assist their employees and followers in lifting where employees stand because, if the employees are encouraged to lift where they stand, the employees are more likely to perform well in an innovative project. Leaders may assist employees in lifting where employees stand by first demonstrating ethical behavior. To become effective leaders, leaders of innovations will need to act ethically and must consider the ethical issues associated with the innovation they are leading. Becoming an effective leader is not something one realizes or forms overnight. Leaders must constantly observe their actions and the way they respond to others to ensure that they are treating other people in a manner that is moral and ethical. This behavior will prepare leaders to become leaders who are always learning new skills. Callahan (2009) declared that “leaders should be students of leadership” (p. 32). By becoming students of leadership, people will be prepared to lead their society or community.

To become a student of leadership will require leaders to be open to new ideas from their subordinates. All ideas are important, and no ideas are asinine or irrelevant. Everyone has a voice in an organization and everyone voice should be heard. Because of the fear associated with criticism, some ideas do not go past the idea generator’s desk (Howell, 2005). This fear has caused employees in organizations to hold back their opinions even though the opinions may amount to something that may be beneficial to the organizations. Kupers and Statler (2008) noted that the human body undergoes different experiences that may be external or internal. The acquired experiences will determine how leaders exercise their good judgment on issues that will affect the welfare of their organizations and the organizations’ employees.

Leaders who exercise good judgment on innovative projects may contribute to the success of their employees. Innovators who started out as mere “brain stormers” have succeeded in their innovation. Such individuals were not born geniuses, but fine-tuned the skills they have acquired over the years. Howell (2005) asserted that people who are determine in innovating a good idea “promote the idea with conviction, persistence, and energy and willingly to risk their position and reputation to ensure the innovation’s success” (p. 108). This conviction motivates future leaders and innovators to put in their best into an innovative project.

This paper is mainly intended for leaders of organizations. It suggests some ways leaders may assist their employees in performing well in an innovative project. The researchers are interested in this topic because they have learned from their professional experiences that some leaders do not encourage their employees to do well. Instead of providing ways employees can make use of their different talents, some leaders focus more on enhancing their own skills and talents. For this reason, many employees find themselves performing poorly. Thus, affecting the organization as a whole. This problem is very common in organizations that are heavily
involved in innovation. Instead of showing equal concerns for employees and the organizations, the leadership team finds itself caring more for the organizations. Furthermore, leaders sometimes fail to recognize that the employees are the backbone of organizations.

This paper may contribute to other research by adding to our understanding of how employees may be motivated to put in their best in an innovative project. Slowinski and Sagal (2010) suggested some innovation practices management of organizations should have in mind. These practices are mentioned in the Want, Get, Find, and Manage model (Slowinski & Sagal). Another researcher, Huizingh (2011), discussed the importance of having an open innovation. Huizingh noted some advantages in having an open innovation. Dervitsiotis (2010) addressed the quality, the quantity, and the speed of introducing innovations. Birkinshaw, Hamel, and Mol (2008) discussed four perspectives in innovation. These perspectives are perspectives that focus on issues relating to socioeconomic circumstances, a fashion perspective, a cultural perspective, and a rational perspective. Friedrich, Mumford, Vessey, Beeler, and Eubanks, (2010) suggested some ways leaders can influence innovations in an individual level, group and organizational level. Igartua, Garrigós, and Hervas-Oliver, (2010) discussed the surrounding problems confronting general managers, particularly managers of small and medium-size organizations. Grönlund, Sjödin, and Frishammar, (2010) mentioned some approaches to product development. These authors recommended the open innovation and the stage-gate model for innovation. In spite of all the research that has touched on important issues regarding innovation, none have fully discussed how employees may be encouraged to learn or implement new changes put in place by an organization. Because innovation is significant for an organization’s growth (Fusin, 2000), all parties involved in the innovation must be certain that they are acting ethically.

**Types of Behaviors in Leading Innovation**

**Ethical Behavior**

Leading an innovation will require managers to be accountable to all of the people involve in the innovation process. In a work environment, managers who are experiencing some difficulties generating a solution to a problem or are not sure how to put new strategies in place may ask for the assistance of their subordinate employees. Gebler (2009) noted that when managers recognize that they do not know everything, they may invite their employees to contribute ideas. Employees may see this invitation as a way of expressing their opinions on issues that may contribute to the success of an organization. Managers will behave ethically by inviting employees to participate in an innovative thought or decision.

Second, inviting employees to be involve in an innovative process may lead to trust and respect within an organization. Employees within an organization want to feel comfortable sharing ideas with their managers and leaders. This type of sharing shows that both parties are not working individually but collectively. In such a situation, when an idea is generated by employees, the managers or leaders are more likely to give credit to the authors of the ideas. Managers have demonstrated this moral behavior in the past by acknowledging that they are not all-knowing. By acknowledging that they do not have all the answers, and by inviting employees’ participation in an innovative project, leaders of organizations will be encouraging their employees to lift where their employees stand. Gebler (2009) expounded that managers may not see the importance of ethical behaviors in leading innovation if they do not consider such behaviors essential in attaining business goals.
Third, everyone involved in an innovation process must be accountable for their decisions and actions. Giving credit to the person who generated a clever idea is a sign of showing responsibility for others’ decisions. There may be instances when an idea is recognized, but later, the idea affected an organization negatively. In such situations, the person or group who generated the ideas must take responsibility instead of blaming someone else or other groups. Some leaders of organizations are in favor of work environments in which everyone displays high levels of personal accountability (Gebler, 2009). Employees who take responsibility for their actions even when the actions do not yield good results are not only acting ethically, but also showing that they care for the organization. Employees at different levels of organizations take action when they see things that are not working well (Gebler, 2009). Gebler also noted that such employees do not take action because they like taking matters into their own hands, but because they want to “safeguard the organization that they care about” (p. 1).

Fourth, an organizational leadership team should consider the well-being of the subordinates. There may be situations in which employees could not perform their duties properly because they have been working extremely hard and are spending too much time on an innovative project. In such conditions, managers and leaders will need to cut down on the workload of the employees so that the latter will not perform poorly. Tvedi, Saksvik, and Nytro (1999) indicated that employees may be psychologically stable when they are working in a stress-free environment. Although, employees are less likely to perform to their potential when they are tired, they may certainly lift where they stand when there is enough energy to perform their tasks.

Fifth, managers and leaders must be aware of the different educational experiences their employees contribute to an innovative project. This is significant because some employees have educational backgrounds that may not qualify them to handle certain machineries or equipment in organizations that have factories. If the management does not put this into consideration, they may find themselves assigning tasks to employees that may require them to make use of machineries or equipment that they are not trained to use; this may be detrimental to employees. Assigning tasks to employees that may be detrimental is not encouraging employees to lift where they stand. When employees are distressed because of neglect from their employers, a lawsuit may be filed to this effect, thus reducing the credibility of the organizations. Tvedi et al. (2009) cited that leaders’ awareness of the diversity of employees helps the leaders to depict the mood concerning the innovation. Inconsideration of the mood within an innovative environment may result in leaders developing behaviors that are unethical.

Unethical Behavior

The values of the leaders of organizations will determine how they direct their employees in innovative projects. Mühlbacher, Vyslozil, and Ritter, (1987) expounded that “the basic values shared by the members of a firm seem to be of major influence on the possibility of implementing a new strategic plan” (p. 205). Some leaders may have unethical values, thus leading their followers through the wrong path. On the other hand, some leaders are caring and compassionate and desire their followers to be successful and productive in innovative projects. Such leaders make decisions that will not only promote the innovative project of their organizations, but, their decisions will benefit everyone within the organizations. These decisions may help all the participants in an innovative project in lifting where they stand. Ciulla (2003) mentioned that managers influence their superiors as well as their subordinates. The influence
leaders have over their subordinates may determine how they handle the stress they receive from an innovative project.

The creation of any novel idea may bring stress that sometimes induces leaders to make decisions about innovations that are unethical. Ciulla (2003) asserted that competitive anxiety at times leads people in charge to derelict fine principles and take decisions they believe serve some type of utilitarian “greater good” (p. 72). When fine principles are abandoned, leaders may find themselves sacrificing the well-being of valuable employees all in the name of success. Leaders may find themselves in situations in which their decisions may have a negative impact on some employees. When leaders make unethical decisions, they may, eventually, lose valuable employees, and customers. The following example illustrates the above point: the leadership team of an organization may choose to terminate a valuable employee. For example, they may think that the employee is over qualify for his or her job and thus may not be able to afford the employee’s salary. Nonetheless, keeping an overqualified employee may be considered less important when revenue and cost are contemplated. Issues of moral entitlement and longevity must be considered as well when deciding whether to terminate or retain an employee. Some leaders may see this act as ethical. Furthermore, if the discharged employee is valuable in that he or she has added to the revenue of the organization, and with his or her skills cut down cost for the organization, there may be a need to retain the employee.

Second, leaders may behave unethically when they fail to prepare themselves for what awaits them at the top of the ladder. Leaders preoccupy their minds with the word “success” when leading innovation and change. Instead of preparing themselves for the outcome of the innovation, some leaders put in all their resources in an innovation process, expecting that the process will be successful. Ciulla (2003) declared that overconfident leaders find themselves brusque, insular, and discourteous, all of which are warning signs along the road of a narrow-mind. Situations may arise when an innovative project does not meet the desired outcome. In such instances, the leadership team of organizations must be prepared to make use of their plan B of the innovation. Kerfoot (1998) noted that many people are convinced that the only way to do business is the only way to conduct a business and that there is no better way. This obstruction has prevented the minds of leaders to make future goals for their organizations. When leaders are not adequately equipped for the outcome of an innovation, their behaviors may cost their organizations a significant amount of money. An example would be investing a significant amount of money on an innovative project. Instead of reserving funds for a plan B, the leadership team of organizations may invest all their resources in the first plan. Invested resources may be the shareholders’ money and the organizations’ savings. Without a second plan, organizations may find themselves insolvent when their entire innovative project does not meet the desired outcome. A second plan will prepare leaders for the challenges that may arise from an innovative project.

Challenges in Leading Innovation and Change

Leaders and managers may endure some challenges when leading and managing innovative changes in multicultural and diverse organizations. One of these challenges may be that employees may not support the innovative idea. In an organization in which employees are use to performing daily tasks in certain ways, there might be resistance when an innovative idea or change is introduce. Tvedi and others (1999) affirmed that employees sometimes are afraid of change because of the increase in work demand and the insecurity they may possibly have regarding the innovation. Even though this may have validity, people may wonder if organizations may choose not to be innovative because the organizations do not want their
employees to feel insecure. Tvedi et al., also proclaimed that because employees are asked to change their daily routine in their work environment, they may have “increased level of stress,” (p. 80) and such stress may “affect the individual health of the employees” (p. 80). Because of the stress and feelings of insecurity that may come with an innovative idea, employees may find themselves against an innovation or change.

Another challenge managers and leaders may face when leading an innovation is that the employees may have difficulty in adapting to the new change. This difficulty may arise in the diverse work environment of the employees. When an innovative idea or product is introduced into an organization, it may take time for the employees to accustom themselves to the new idea because of their cultural backgrounds. Some employees may learn the innovation faster than others; nevertheless, consideration must be given to those who may be slow in understanding the new idea. Tvedi et al., (1999) stated that, simply because employees show signs of resistance does not necessarily mean that they are resistant to a change; such behavior is a natural human response. Managers and leaders must consider how employees will adapt to new changes, instead of assuming that employees are resistant to change when they show signs of not understanding an innovation process. Assuming that employees may not show interest in an innovation may result in managers becoming unconcern as well.

Some managers’ behavior may suggest that they are not interested in the innovative idea. Tvedi et al., (1999) indicated that some managers may make themselves unavailable to employees when a change is introduced in organizations. This behavior may motivate employees to become resistant to the change, thus affecting employees’ work performance. This behavior may also result in employees informing the organizations’ customers about the possible negative impact of the innovation. Managers must be aware of the requirements in their positions to support the positive changes in the organizations they work for. The changes put in place may have a positive effect on the surrounding communities as well as its employees. Tvedi et al., (2009) declared that, “adequate availability mitigates uncertainty and facilitates communication of the change goals and purpose” (p. 83). Positive changes may motivate managers to be understanding of the feelings that employees may have about the novel idea.

To avoid certain challenges that may arise from implementing new changes, managers need to involve employees in the innovation process. Tvedi et al., (2009) revealed that employees may be open to change if they are given the opportunity to be involved in the innovation process. If the employees are introduced to changes that may occur in the future in an organization, they may be more likely to accept the changes because they have been informed about it in advance. By informing employees of innovations, the management team of organizations will be preparing the minds of employees for the changes when the time to launch the innovation arrives.

After informing employees of changes that may be implemented, managers and leaders may allow employees to contribute to the innovation process. Tvedi et al., (2009) indicated that, “A sense of active participation and the acceptance of expressing one’s view imply a feeling of control and influence, and lessen the changes of feeling victimized and ignored during the change process” (p. 83). Participation in the innovation process may enable employees to understand the need for such innovation and also may provide the employees with ideas of how to introduce the innovative idea to their customers. In addition, participating in the innovative process may enable employees to understand their role in the change implementation. Tvedi et al., discussed that by understanding their role, employees may reduce ambiguity and role
conflict. If the employees understand their role, they are more likely to implement principles and practices that are put in place.

Principles and Practices for Implementing Innovation

As leaders mature psychologically and emotionally, they begin to discover that they possibly could not lead their organizations to success without the aid of their employees. Leaders and employees in organizations are more likely to achieve the organizations’ objective if both parties lift where they stand. The concept of lifting where one stand is not common in organizations. We live in a society where some leaders believe that for them to move ahead, they will have to work alone and may need to minimize others to make it to the top of the ladder. A true leader does not reason this way, but, they aim to help others succeed. Such leaders’ main goal is to help themselves and those they lead to lift where they stand. This section of the paper proposes some principles and practices that leaders of organizations may implement to help them guide those that they lead in innovation and change: (1) perceiving organizations as learning institutions, (2) recognizing each employee as a productive member of society, and (3) caring more for employees than leaders’ own prestige.

Organizations as Learning Institutions

The perception of organizations as learning institutions will benefit leaders of the organizations to lead those they supervise successfully. Learning institutions are places where people acquire new information. In learning institutions, there are no “wrong answers.” Students are taught new principles and concepts and also are instructed on how to apply what they have learned. In these types of institutions, students are taught to lift where they stand. Perceiving organizations as learning institutions may envision the same way a class is taught. The goals of educators are to ensure that their students can understand the materials being taught. After this is accomplished, the next step is to put the knowledge into practice. Educators are readily available to assist students in achieving this goal by helping them recognize their strengths and use those strengths as a foundation to put their knowledge into practice.

The same concept may be applicable to organizations. When leading innovation and change in organizations, the leadership team must help each employee perform to his or her best ability in an innovative project by helping the employees lift where the employees stand. Leaders may assist employees by asking how they, the leaders can help them by providing employees with the necessary tools and equipment needed for the innovation. When leaders of organizations support their employees by helping them to recognize their strengths, and use those strengths as a foundation of learning, they will be helping their employees to lift where the employees stand, and may recognize them as valuable members of the society.

Recognizing Employees as Productive Members of the Society

Employees who lift where they stand and make use of the best they have, are better more able to contribute to the betterment of the society where they belong. Uchtdorf (2008) alluded that “lifting where we stand is a principle of power” (p. 53). This power is not derived from merely using others to achieve a goal, but by making use of the talents and abilities of the employees. Innovators may improve an innovation by enhancing their skills and capabilities and may accomplish this by participating in continual educational workshops that will update them
on new techniques. Chong and Tway (2006) emphasized that “Performance analysis focuses on performance problems of the organization” (p. 28). An evaluation of employees’ performance may enable the management team of organizations to discover employees’ areas for improvement. This observation will enable managers and leaders to perform their duties in a manner that will benefit the organizations. When employees are adequately informed of better ways they can use their skills, they will use those skills to help others. Such employees do not hold back their talents but are “eager to roll up their sleeves and go to work” (Uchtdorf, 2008, p. 54). In time, employees will begin to understand that the more they contribute to the improvement of the organizations they work for, the more they are capable in contributing to the betterment of their society. Caring more for their society will enable these future leaders to focus less on their own prestige.

Caring more for Employees than Leaders’ own Prestige

Leaders of organizations may think that their purpose of leading others is to gain a sense of prestige. This should not be the main purpose for leading employees. Gaining cachet or a kind of recognition is far more purposeful in leading people. Leading people acquires the desire to help others reach their full potential. Leaders in organizations may help their employees reach their full potentials by getting to know them. This behavior will motivate employees to open-up to their leaders and may “create a positive environment that will free people to do their best creative work” (Kerfoot, 1998, p. 98). There must be a fine line between what may be share between employees and their leaders. Conversations pertaining to family issues or other non-professional matters should not be discuss in the work environment. Situations may arise where family issues may be discussed at work if those issues are affecting employees’ performance. All discussions should relate to work. Issues relating to employees’ long-term goals should also be discuss. What may be considered as an appropriate topic for discussion should depend on the leaders. Caring more for employees than the leaders’ own prestige will enable leaders to better lead their people.

Being Observant of Employees who Lead Innovations

Other principles and practices to consider when implementing innovation is to be observant of employees who are leading innovative projects. Leaders must be careful not to place sole confidence on those employees who have the interest of shareholders in mind (Tvedi, et al., 2009). This is vital because such employees may find themselves drifting away from the organization’s main objective just to accrue more dividends for shareholders. An organization’s objective may be to ensure that the organization’s customers can afford the innovative products or to increase the incentives given to employees. If the employees are given incentives for their good performance, the incentives may come from the amount of dividend the shareholders receive. If this becomes the case, employees leading the innovation who has the interest of the shareholders in mind may prevent these incentives from finalizing even though it may encourage employees to do their work better. Such behavior may discourage employees from lifting where employees stand.

Also, ensuring that the employees are not given additional roles from their formal role after an innovation is complete is significant. Hiring more people when innovations are made instead of using formal employees would be in the best interest of organizations. This will help
the employees of organizations to concentrate on their assigned tasks. Nonetheless, there might be circumstances in which organizations may not be able to afford to hire new employees. In such circumstances, the leaders and managers must ensure that the employees understand the situation and provide them the option of accepting additional tasks. Employees who accept additional tasks should receive support by getting help from their supervisors on a continual basis and also should receive incentives. Those who do not accept additional tasks should not be penalize. Such employees also may not be rewarded by receiving incentives. Those employees who are tolerant to change may be prepared for a refinement of their skills and abilities.

**Refined Approach**

The word *refine* means to polish, purify, distill, or improve. To advance an innovation from a refined approach will require leadership teams of organizations to refine the tools and skills of those involve in the innovative process. This refining of skills will motivate employees to lift where they stand. Refining may take place in two ways:

1. The leadership of an organization will need to involve their team in a Total Quality Management program (TQM). A TQM program is an approach that is distinguished by its principles and approaches (Kelly, 2007).
2. The expertise of the employees will need to be discovered.

**Involvement in a TQM Program**

The purpose of involving employees in a TQM program is to ensure that the employees are inform of ways they may add to the innovative project. The lessons learned in the TQM program will prepare employees for the innovation. The information will also focus on processes. Some processes that may be focus on are the impact of the TQM program in the innovative project. Below are the different ways organizations may involve their employees in a TQM program.

**Recognizing Error in the old system.** The first thing to consider when encouraging employees to be involve in a TQM program is to recognize the need of the program and the error in the old system. Recognizing the error in the old system will enable the leadership team of organizations to take the necessary steps to convert the error into a positive one. Junarsin (2009) stated that the management team of an organization will need to decipher the potential of the problem into something innovative and introduce it in the internal and external market. Converting a negative problem into something positive may enable an organization to reduce cost and advance on their innovative project.

**Check-list for Daily Improvement.** After the error has been recognized, the next step will be to make a check-list that the employees may use each day that they work on the innovative project. The check-list aims to remind the employees of their daily task and will also serve as an evaluation sheet to measure the progress of the innovative project. Measuring the progress of the innovative project will help employees to better focus on the need of their customers. Kupers and Statler (2008) emphasized that for an individual to be successful in his or her task, that individual need to be grounded in the task each day and connect to the environment on a constant interrelation. Employees may be grounded in their task by focusing on their customers’ needs.

**Focusing on Customers’ Needs.** The check-list formulated will remind employees to focus on the needs of their customers and will also serve as a reminder for them to focus on the organizations’ mission statement and values when working on the innovative project. Yetton,
Sharma, and Southon, (1999) asserted that the acuity of the people who decide to buy an innovative product or support an innovative idea, relates to the individuals’ tasks and roles. Focusing on customers’ needs will motivate employees to build the innovative project in favor of their customers. Employees may satisfy the need of their customers by using available resources.

Using Available Resources. Working on an innovative project does not necessarily mean that organizations will have to spend significant amount of money on the project. Oak (2007) affirmed that “to innovate does not necessarily mean to expand; very often it means to simplify” (p. 3). Leaders of organizations may simplify the process of an innovation by making use of their available resources. Available resources may be items in an inventory or inviting volunteers to help with the project. Also, organizations may benefit from offering internships to college students and, thus, will not have to pay new employees to work on the innovative project.

Evaluating the System for Results. After the innovative project is complete, the leadership team may evaluate the innovation for results. The innovation may be evaluated through testing. An innovation that requires the manufacturing of a product may be tested by volunteers. An innovation that is abstract such as an idea may be tested by employees for effectiveness. An example of an abstract innovation is putting new rules in place that may assist employees to communicate better with customers or changing some of the terms in the employees’ handbook. The evaluation of new systems should include comparison of old systems with the new ones. Chong and Tway (2006) mentioned that evaluation is necessary when determining if an idea is fulfilling its objectives and to gain information on how to improve the innovation. Leaders of organizations may evaluate an innovation by scrutinizing it for quality and value, and how their customers will benefit from the innovation. Figure 1 illustrates how an organization may benefit from a TQM program.

Figure 1. Benefits of TQM Program in a Refined Approach

![Diagram showing the benefits of TQM program in a refined approach](image-url)
Expertise of Employees

After employees have been introduced to a TQM program, they will be prepared to put into practice the skills they have acquired. Considering the expertise of employees is essential because it will help the management team of organizations to designate the employees into their different teams. Kerfoot (1998) noted that leaders who are successful provide their employees the opportunity to show-case their skills in reasoning and understanding. The talents of employees may be discovered through cross-functionality. Cross-functionality is essential in innovation and creativity within an organization. Cross functionality also creates room for people with different proficiencies. The expertise of employees may be discovered by:

1. Interviewing employees who will be involved in the innovative project to know the appropriate task or job that will suit them.
2. Giving employees a drill that will enable them to develop their skills.
3. Evaluating employees’ performance on the innovation for the first few months.

Furthermore, organizations that have a cross functionality team may have different expertise that will help in the advancement of the innovative project. For instance, when deciding on building new computers, leaders of organizations may use the employees who have backgrounds in information technology. This will be beneficial to the organization because instead of purchasing computer gadgets, the employees with backgrounds in information technology may reformulate or reconstruct the gadgets needed for the innovation. Callahan (2009) quoted British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, who noted that, “the secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his time when it comes” (p. 32). Employees need to be prepared when they are called upon to make use of their different expertise.

In addition, employees or individuals who are prepared in an innovative project may have contributed to a better outcome if they altogether lift where they stand. Employees may lift where they stand by encouraging each other to perform at their best and may also be supportive of others by assisting each other with their task if there is a need for it. Uchtdorf (2008) mentioned that when we seek to help others we are not motivated by pride or a chance that our good act may be recognized, but rather by charity. This charity in employees may prompt them to even go the extra mile. This feeling also may create in them a desire of wanting their fellow employees to be successful in the innovative project. When employees care more about helping their fellow employees rather than for their own reputation or contentment, they can achieve much more (Uchtdorf 2008). After a refinement of employees’ skill, the innovative project will be ready for scrutiny.

Scrutinized Approach

The word scrutinize means to examine, inspect, study, analyze or, dissect. In a scrutinized approach, the leadership team of organizations will need to study the refinement of the employees’ skills and abilities in the innovative project. Junarsin (2009) asserted that to lead innovation and change in organizations, the management team of the organizations will need to “scan its environments, both internal and external, for threats and opportunities for change” (p. 11). Internal threats could be a type of leadership style within an organization. An example of this is moving from an autocratic leadership style to a participative leadership style. In an autocratic leadership style, the decision of the organization is made by the CEO; whereas in a
participative leadership style the opinions of the subordinates are considered. A participatory leadership style would favor an organization that plans on innovating.

In addition, the leadership team will need to analyze the innovation to ensure that the intended purpose is being attained. The leaders of organizations may discover this by seeking the suggestions and opinions of their customers as well as potential customers. This will enable the leaders of organizations to satisfy the need of the society they serve. Leaders may satisfy the need of the society they serve by conducting a research to see how the organization can make life easier for the end-users of their products, planning a budget, and seeking the suggestions of end-users.

**Conducting Research**

We live in a society where most novelties are made without seeking the opinions of end-users. Seeking for the opinions of end-users does not necessarily mean that innovators do not know what to innovate but to have an idea of what the end-users need. When informing customers of an innovative idea, the leadership team must be careful so that they will not divulge any confidential information. Even though leadership teams may choose to do this, it does not necessarily mean that they will make use of the ideas. The rationale for this is to brainstorm and investigate how customers may feel about certain issues and ideas.

In addition, inter-organizational networks are essential to innovation and creativity within a multinational organization. An organization that specializes on manufacturing vehicles may conduct a research on how the organization can make life easier for their customers. After ensuring that the innovation will contribute to the betterment of the community being served, an organization will then conduct a survey by asking their customers and potential customers about what they want included in a vehicle. This may be accomplished by manufacturing cars that may cost less than $10,000, but of good quality. Before proceeding with this plan, leaders of an organization may ask their customers what kind of vehicles they are interested in or how they want the organization to improve on the way they manufacture their vehicles.

**Collaboration of Ideas**

After conducting a research, the management team of an organization will need to consolidate all the ideas to see which ones will suit the innovation. Kerfoot (1988) mentioned that leaders find themselves recognizing only a small fraction of opportunities for development. Leaders of organizations may recognize a small fraction of opportunities if they do not consolidate all the ideas of the end-users. Some employees may choose not to contribute to an innovative project because they believe that their ideas are worthless. Uchtdorf (2008) affirmed that all ideas and opinions are important and that other people may benefit from others’ talents and influences. The management team of an organization may go about considering which ideals may be use by checking the budget that they drafted for the innovative project. The budget plan will help them determine which ideals to use for the innovation. In addition, management teams may use most of the ideas of the end-users, if they think that the ideas are affordable or feasible. After deciding which ideas will be use, the management team will be prepared to execute the innovative idea.
Execution of Ideas

The execution of the ideas may be accomplished by first assigning the employees into teams. Kerfoot (1998) asserted that leaders will have a positive influence on their subordinates if they create a positive environment where their subordinates can freely express their thoughts. Employees may do their best creative work when they are put into teams. The assignment of employees into teams will be base on each employee’s skills and abilities. Employees who have skills in the areas of manufacturing will be assigned to the manufacturing team and those who have skills in the areas of welding will be assigned to the welding team. This assignment will also give the leadership team the opportunity to know their team. Callahan (2009) stated that there are leaders who acknowledge the importance of their employees to their organizations; such leaders do not only acknowledge the good qualities in their employees but also recognize such behavior by taking actions. Each employee will be assigned according to his or her skills and talents.

Situations may arise where employees may feel the need to lead the innovation rather than offering their skills and services. Uchtdorf (2008) mentioned that “those who seek to lead may feel they are capable of doing more than what they are currently asked to do” (p. 54). In such instances, the leadership team should encourage such employees to put in the best they have. Employees do not have to be in an important leadership position to make a difference (Uchtdorf). One does not have to be an executive to offer noble services to others. Neither do they have to be the Chief Executive Officer of an organization to provide services that are meaningful. The services of employees who occupy the lowest positions in an organization may have a positive impact on the communities they serve. This behavior may open doors to people from different nationalities.

Executing the innovative idea will provide a working environment in which people from different nationalities may contribute different talents to help in the innovative project. Every nation educates its people differently. These differences in training are pair with a unique way of doing and learning things different from those of others. An organization that has multinational employees will have an advantage because such organizations will be endowed with people with different talents. Callahan (2009) stated that resonance and resonant leadership can be understood through the sound of music. When different musical instruments are play together simultaneously, the result is music. The same vision is applicable in an inter-organizational network. When employees with different talents and nationalities are involved in an innovative project, the innovation will be highly develop.

Furthermore, intra-organizational networks influence ethical, innovative, and creative processes within diverse organizations. It will also help if the leadership team of organizations establishes mandated written ethical rules that will enable them as well as their employees to interact with each other regarding the execution of the idea. Callahan (2009) revealed that people can create emotional dissonance in their place of work or everyday lives if they allow their emotional state to affect others in a positive way. These emotions can be amplified as they are share. Figure 2 illustrates the scrutiny stage:
Figure 2. Scrutinized Approach Stage

Leaders of Organizations

Conducting Research

Collaboration of Ideas

Execution of Ideas

Research Summary

The concept of assisting employees in lifting where they stand may be use to the advantage of organizations and the organizations’ employees. The leadership team of organizations may encounter some challenges as they lead innovation and change. How the leaders respond to the challenges will determine if such challenges will affect the innovative project. The manner in which leaders respond to change may also reveal if they will act ethically in an innovative project. Leaders may implement some principles and practices when leading innovation and change that may motivate them to act ethically. These practices will determine the outcome of the innovative project and how shareholders and potential customers will respond to the change. As leaders become students of leadership, they will help themselves and their subordinates, put in their best in an innovative project. Ethical leaders possess moral and true values. Such leaders conduct a 360-degree evaluation of their organizations before making changes.

When challenges arise, leaders that behave ethically collaborate with their managers and employees on how to rise above the challenges. Kerfoot (1998) mentioned that leaders can encourage their employees to engage in conversations regarding business issues by giving them the opportunity to contribute to the issues being discuss. Leaders who have goals to lift where they and their employees stand do not lead innovative projects in an unethical manner, but instead make decisions that will contribute to the betterment of their organizations. Implementing these concepts in everyday activities will enable leaders of organizations to fine-tune their skills. This way of learning will open new doors to the leaders and assist them to better serve their customers and those around them. This new perspective may also help the leaders in their personal lives, in that they will become better heads of their family and be understanding and considerate of their loved ones. Figure 3 summarizes the concepts and the approaches introduced and how they all influence one another.
Future Directions and Conclusion

Future studies and research should focus on the possible impact of the skills of a leadership team on an innovative project. Simply innovating just for the sake of innovation is not enough. Future research should focus on how leadership teams of organizations may better decide on what to innovate and how to carry out an innovative idea. The principles and concepts introduced may also be tested by conducting research using employees of different organizations as participants. The different talents that employees may bring to an innovative project are also worth exploring. Muhlbacher et al., (1987) made reference to a source in their article that states that “a company’s success is not only based on ‘hard’ facts like strategy, structure, or management systems but also very heavily ends on ‘soft’ facts like skills, staff, or style” (p. 205).

Leaders and employees are vital in moving their organizations forward. Without these two parties, the foundations of organizations would be unbalance. Ciulla (2003) mentioned that “the influence process between a leader and followers is unidirectional. Leaders influence followers, but followers also have some influence” (p. 3). Both parties can lead their organizations to success. The role of ethics and its responsibility in leading innovation is vital. The principles and practices introduced, which perceive organizations as learning institutions, recognizing employees as productive members of society and caring more for employees than leaders’ own prestige will provide leaders new insight into how to run their organizations.

Instead of having self-centered thoughts, leaders may find themselves developing selfless and sincere thoughts. The two approaches introduced, Refine and Scrutinize will also enable leaders to take their organizations to the next level. Instead of spending a significant amount of money on innovative projects, leaders will find themselves cutting cost. Demonstrating these behaviors will assist leaders in helping their organizations and their employees to lift where they stand.
References


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