

Crisis and Change Management. Practical Applications in the Leadership of Intensive Care Units

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Submitted: 02-02-2021

Revised: 15-02-2021

Accepted: 18-02-2021

It is important to clarify that the concept of leadership is not synonymous with the concepts of power, authority and influence. This is because all three of these dimensions, although important in the exercise of leadership, are often confused and disoriented, as they are used in a way that their interpretation obscures the essence of leadership.

More specific elements such as: a) the ability of one to impose his desires on others (power), b) the legal right to exercise the power he holds (authority) or c) the ability of one to influence in his own way the behavior or in the way of thinking of others (influence), are important parameters of a leadership behavior, however they do not constitute the function of leadership at its core.

The concept of effective leadership

Despite the vast literature and theoretical controversies over the concept of leadership, we could concentrate on the performance of the concept, in that function which has a decisive effect on the way in which a group of people willingly and willingly adopts a way of thinking and acting in a social environment. Indicatively, we could define leadership as the process by which the actions of an organized group are influenced, resulting in high expectations regarding problem solving or the fulfillment of specific goals (Bass, 1990).

Also, effective leadership could be characterized as the process of influencing the thoughts, actions, attitudes and behaviors of a group of people (small or large / formal or informal) by one person, with the result, willingly and willingly and with the appropriate cooperation, to participate together in the effective implementation of goals for progress and prosperity (Bourandas, 2005).

When we refer to the concept of effective leadership we mean a complex and dynamic function which cannot be interpreted statically and unambiguously. This means that in order to be fully understood, it is necessary to see it as a process that is based on the pillars, such as: the personality elements of the leader (or collective leadership), the profile of the team of associates / members / subordinates, the culture that governs the group, its value system, its cultural capital, its source of power, the external environment, the opportunities, and the threats to the environment.

The role of leadership at work

The concept of effective leadership covers all institutional and non-institutional, formal and informal areas of social life, as well as all the individual areas of social relations in which people participate: in politics, in the economy, in the trade union movement, in the society of citizens, in the family, in social gatherings.

Work as a social and economic phenomenon is a top process in people's lives, since through it people meet their vital, personal and social needs. At the same time, people's working lives are about halfway through their lives.

The role of leadership at work

It is understandable that, especially in times of crisis, the role of effective leadership is considered particularly crucial as it depends on it: the formulation of the ICU strategy, the shaping of internal life and the quality of daily life of employees, the competitiveness of the product, the development prospects and economic viability of the ICU, the personal and professional development of the employees, its social responsibility towards the whole, the relationship

with the other medical units, the maintenance of the jobs.

Key characteristics of a leader in the workplace What are the characteristics that make a leader in his workplace? If one adopts the "genetic theory", it is obvious that one will be preoccupied with the "leading" genes that are inherited from one generation to the next. If we emphasize the characteristics of leaders (theory of characteristics) then we will look for leaders specific characteristics such as social status, gender, age, appearance, etc. which are considered to be responsible for the leadership behavior displayed by someone.

According to other studies and research (behavioral approaches), attempts were made to analyze specific behaviors that characterized effective leadership in the workplace, emphasizing two dimensions that were considered particularly critical in the development of leadership behavior: a) whether the leader can determine and to direct the activities of its subordinates within a specific framework in order to meet the goals of an organization and b) its effort to inspire mutual trust through respect, solidarity and the development of a human-centered orientation (Koutouzis, 1999)

Despite research and studies on the leader's profile and characteristics, no vision could provide a completely convincing answer to the question of effective leadership. Whether this "gift" is an inherited privilege or shaped by social circumstances is clear. That even today it is a debate that will obviously remain open and always extremely interesting. There is often talk of the difference between the "fear" we feel for the director and the "respect" for the leader.

Management and Leadership

An important distinction that exists within management and organization is the difference between the exercise of management and leadership. It is clear that leadership to be effective and highly constructive differs significantly from the standard exercise of management in the workplace.

This means that effective leadership is a complex and highly demanding process that requires the synthesis of many factors and parameters and in addition goes beyond the conventional performance of tasks in the workplace. In order to exercise leadership in a beneficial and effective way, management is not enough.

However, the most important element that constitutes leadership behavior is the voluntary participation and effortless mobilization of

employees in the perspective that the leader shapes and develops in the work environment.

Crisis and Change Management

Factors based on swallowing contribute to the creation of a vision in a workplace: a) the personality of the leader b) the economic situation c) the pressure exerted by the hospital management d) the pressure of the employees e) the competition of other equal doctors.

Leaders power sources in the workplace of ICU

The leader's sources of power stem from the influence he exerts through his personality and action on his associates. It is essentially his ability to influence the attitudes and perceptions of others in a way that they will follow him voluntarily and willingly.

Another important source of power for the leader is the possession and exercise of power. It is essentially the formal right that one has to rule and decide, a right that derives from its institutional role but also from the position it holds in the administrative hierarchy. This position in the administrative pyramid gives the formal institutional right to control the fulfillment of tasks and obligations in the work environment.

Finally, an important source of power for the leader is his power to impose his will, so that his associates share his vision and strategy willingly, willingly and decisively. The power of the leader is essentially a means of enforcement, but without such enforcement it is perceived by his associates as a violation of basic values, assumptions and beliefs.

What the leader in the workplace should avoid - The role of body language

Many times what is important is not "what we say" but "how we say it". The leader must use a clear and unambiguous speech, without being offensive, sarcastic and ironic towards his associates.

The role of the "image" of the leader within the ICU

The leader must form his image in a consistent and reliable way and not fall into contradictions which invalidate his existence. He should not "say other things" and "do other things" and especially follow what he expects and asks others to do.

Not just the leader speaking

It is important for the leader not to monologue and not to list.

The distant and hostile leader

The leader needs to not be distant, disliked and hostile to his associates. As important as it is for the leader to keep a safe distance from his associates, it is just as important to build bridges of communication and to prove his talent in everyday life.

The discriminatory leader

It is especially important for a leader to inspire a sense of meritocracy and justice in the workplace. This is because it is particularly problematic for him to show bias and for the prevailing mentality of favoritism among his associates.

Basic prerequisites for a successful leadership model

The issue of effective leadership in the workplace is not addressed unequivocally and with absolute certainty, because nowhere is there a ready-made recipe for all cases. As we have mentioned, the formation of a model of effective leadership behavior is a complex, complex and multifactorial issue.

However, in trying to create a commonplace around the development of an effective leadership model, we can point out some key points that contribute positively to creating a positive reference framework.

Capturing and disseminating a vision The leader should make clear the vision plan he has for his business and formulate his means and strategy to achieve that vision. It is necessary to look ahead and envision the perspective, sustainability and development of the workplace by clearly identifying the means, practices and techniques available to employees.

Encouraging and motivating his associates

The leader must mobilize, activate and encourage his associates to participate dynamically in the activities and strategy of their workplace by providing incentives that meet their real needs. It is important to provide incentives that encourage his subordinates and with them to cover needs that are vital for themselves and their families.

The pleasant working environment

It is clear that no one likes to work in a place that is cold, indifferent, hard and ruthless. The leader must formulate conditions of pleasant and comfortable operation of a workplace, both in terms of aesthetics and in terms of interpersonal relationships in a way that everyone would like to work in a friendly and pleasant environment.

The self-confidence and the morale of the employees

It is important for the leader to be able to inspire confidence in his colleagues and not to appear shocked at the first difficulty or any crisis he has to manage. It must inspire confidence and boost the morale of its partners. Especially today when the economic crisis threatens more than ever the viability of many workplaces, the attitude of the leader towards his associates must be inspiring and morally stable and unshakable. It is clear that this strengthens the perspective of employees and their willingness to perform more by serving a common vision.

Two-way communication It is important for a leader, in addition to his own messages to his colleagues, to listen to the anxieties, concerns, aspirations and desires of his colleagues. It points out that it must form the conditions for a two-way and honest communication between the leadership team and the existing ones in order to enhance the exchange of views, the updating of the ICU strategy and objectives, the open information about the perspective and the future of the workplace.

Flexibility in using different leadership styles

It is clear that the leader has at his disposal many tools and techniques that he can use if he deems it necessary. This is because it has been observed that no leadership style fits perfectly in all circumstances. It is therefore necessary for the leader to have a deep knowledge of all the possibilities offered to him both by the theoretical tools of management and by the experiences he has gained through daily medical practice.

In other words, he must show flexibility and use, depending on the specific circumstances and circumstances, the most appropriate leadership style that will best serve his vision and strategy. It is important that this flexibility is not understood as encroaching on or circumventing the value system or culture that he has developed in the ICU workplace. However, it is sometimes necessary not to be trapped in the narrow and closed borders of a leadership model which, even if it does not correspond to practice, to adopt and implement it with negative results.

Change management

In a world where everything is changing rapidly, workplaces are accepting these changes, with the consequence that many of the certainties of working life and the daily life of employees are overturned.

In the face of this situation, the leader must respond calmly and contribute to the understanding and rational response to these

changes, strengthening the morale of employees. It must prepare them, but also promote their smooth integration into the new conditions by equipping them with perseverance and effective tools in dealing with new situations. It is necessary to deal with resistance to change in an active way, but without causing more intense conflicts and problems than those it is called upon to face.

It is necessary to deal with resistance to change in an active way, but without causing more intense conflicts and problems than those it is called upon to face. The issue of change management is crucial because in the transitional periods the course, the evolution as well as the perspective of a workplace are often judged. And this is necessary to be embedded in the strategy of a leader since the changes are often of an objective nature, beyond and above the will of the employees and the rest of the executives.

The leader needs to manage in a fair, consensual and impartial manner the conflicts that arise between his associates. It is clear that both the competition and the psychological pressure that the nature of the works creates on the employees often provokes behaviors and feelings of angry co-workers. Undoubtedly the leader has an important role in managing this whole situation and this must be done without compromising the cohesion of the team, its efficiency and especially the strategy that the leader has defined.

Conflict and dispute management should lead to commonly accepted decisions and arrangements in a way that does not undermine the credibility and prestige of the leader. This management must be compatible with the overall value system of the workplace and the overall culture of the specific intensive care unit.

Essential Prerequisites for a Successful Leadership Model

When it comes to conflicts and their management, because it is a common phenomenon in the workplace, it is worth noting some basic principles on how an effective leader should deal with conflicts and disputes within the workplace space.

The key steps in dealing with a workplace conflict are:

Step 1: The first thing the leader must do is identify the problem and the existence of the conflict. This is ascertained through the existence of specific symptoms and events which indicate the existence of the problem.

Step 2: Once the conflict is identified, it is the identity of the conflict and in particular the nature of the problem. That is, whether it is a personal

conflict, a conflict of groups, a conflict of responsibilities or a conflict of personal passion.

Step 3: The leader must look for the appropriate way to deal with the conflict and to find the most appropriate model. In other words, you need to see what type of problem-solving is appropriate for the occasion and launch its implementation. Finally, he must take care of the settlement of the conflict and ensure that it does not happen again.

There are many ways to resolve a conflict in the workplace. However, which apologist the leader will choose depends on the type of conflict, the conflicting interests, the balances he wants to maintain or not, the entrenched mentalities he wants or does not want to change. Among the ways in which a leader can effectively manage a conflict area:

a) To reconcile with the situation, demanding the result of the formation in conflicting interests, b) to make decisions and individual disputes, achieving the unquestionable lecture of the lecture, c) to report news mediated by the nature of the application from the date d) to make its own use and to push the use or retreat as required, e) degrade the content and report it to relax at no time.

The role of the leader in the decision-making process is particularly important and that, through these decisions, determines the perspective of the ICU as well as the fate of its associates. It is clear, then, that decisions in a workplace can be made neither in the heat, nor without plan and planning, nor without rational thinking. The leader bears full responsibility for the strategy of his workplace and for this reason his decisions must meet the circumstances and requirements of the circumstances.

By decision we mean the process of choosing between two, three or more ways of dealing with a problem in a way that we must find the balance between an existing situation and a situation that we desire. Logically, this is a process which is not easy and "painless", since it presupposes the handling of many, complex and conflicting interests, situations, behaviors and conditions.

The role of the effective leader in the decision-making process The decision-making process is not simply the choice of a solution among the alternative proposals at our disposal, but the quintessence of the process of planning the whole strategy that the leader must have devised. The leader, if he wants to prove his role effective and beneficial, must constantly decide in a way that determines: a) what should be done, b) who should implement the decision, c) where and at what time.

In order for a director-leader to be able to give clear and solid answers to the above questions, he must follow the decision-making process according to a rationale and a coordinated methodology.

The first step is the process of identifying the existing alternatives to the problem, a process that is done in a systematic way taking into account factors such as time, available resources, the existing framework of opportunities, opportunities and threats to the environment.

The second step is to analyze the specific alternatives in a way that we must carefully consider the weaknesses and strengths, advantages and disadvantages. In other words, a process of evaluation and objective evaluation of alternatives is required in order to decide the most correct and appropriate choice.

Both the instinct and the personal criterion of the leader and other tools for identifying risks and opportunities in the choice of a solution contribute decisively to this process.

The third step is the final choice of the best alternative in order to implement and implement the decision. We understand, therefore, that the decision-making process is a top process, because it affects everyone's life in a workplace.

But once a decision is made, we must also apply consistency and efficiency to bring about constructive and beneficial results for all. The implementation of a decision is an important issue and depends on many factors both inside and outside the environment of an intensive care unit.

Based on the existing experience, the leader must take care of: a) the planned implementation of the decision, b) the correct transfer of information to his associates (the communication of the decision), c) to ensure the commitment of his associates for the implementation (d) the provision of appropriate means for the implementation of the decision whether it concerns a medical or administrative issue.

It is clear, then, that in a workplace decisions are made in conditions of certainty, uncertainty and risk. For example, in the first case when we make one or the other decision, we can know exactly the results of our choice. In the latter case, the decision may be the product of a difficult choice, because the environment and existing alternatives involve uncertain results and significant risks.

It is clear that the leader, even in this case should be ready to manage the risk (risk management) and the threats of the system in a rational, bold way and with calculations for the least possible damage in case of a negative outcome.

In addition to the specific set of key stages involved in the decision-making process, it is important to note that there are factors that the leader must consider: the seriousness of the decision, how urgent or not the decision is, the extent of it. Implementation, the level of conditions. In some cases, the leader, if he judges based on these factors or some others possibly, can make his decisions collectively by raising the issue in his team and transferring part of the responsibility to all his associates.

However, a number of obstacles must always be taken into account in any decision-making process that make it difficult to rationally and objectively choose the best alternative.

In conclusion

The issue of effective leadership in the workplace is an important challenge for every workplace, especially today when the Covid-19, economic and social crisis are hitting the sphere of employment and certainly the health sector in particular.

Despite differing views on what are the hallmarks of leadership behavior, it is clear that the debate remains open and up-to-date.

Undoubtedly, elements such as the conception of a vision, its dissemination, the creation of innovative goals, the mobilization of team members to achieve these goals, the ability of some to follow them willingly and willingly, are key elements of leadership behavior, which is practiced beneficially and effectively in every workplace.

Equally important issue in the field of effective leadership is the development and cultivation of emotional intelligence aimed at empathizing and meeting the needs of employees, as well as issues such as conflict management, communication, decision making.

Such obstacles are the existing prejudices and stereotypes that exist in social life. These are already formed perceptions, which generalize conclusions and assessments in an irrational and unsubstantiated way, preventing rational thinking from seeing things clearly and unaffected.

Substantial stereotypes and prejudices act as a distorting lens, which distorts the truth and obscures the clarity of a decision. Other obstacles that may arise in the decision-making process may be the dogmatic nature of our thinking, through the imposition of ideological or other political entanglements, as well as various technical constraints that may exist in the environment, which we cannot address with adequacy.

I deliberately did not expand into the management of COVID -19. In my personal view, it is untenable to analyze a specific situation in the midst of its crisis. There are some fixed conditions and behaviors that we must follow regardless of cause, critical condition, medical's or administrative's nature. The leader or even the director in the technocratic meaning of his role must be prepared for any kind of problem and its possible solutions to the extent that he has the responsibility. In the midst of a crisis you act or modify your planning, depending on the circumstances, the support you have and the quality of the live material you manage. However, you certainly do not design paper techniques from the beginning. You have to be prepared already regardless of the type of problem you are facing (whether we are talking about a pandemic, mass disaster or management of organizational change. The success of the leader and whether he was effective or not will be judged a posteriori.

The point in the midst of a crisis is director to have the ability from the moment he takes responsibility to form the sympathy of his team and that there is no pluralism and confusion.

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**International Journal of Advances in
Engineering and Management**

ISSN: 2395-5252



IJAEM

Volume: 03

Issue: 02

DOI: 10.35629/5252

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