The Emperor's New Clothes or Why It's So Difficult to Implement New Innovation Strategies

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Abstract   There are two topics, which people are currently very interested in: Leadership and management. Everyone interprets these topics in their own individual way – although the current course of events and style of innovation has challenged this. Depending on a person's theoretical and practical background and – of course – his position, his ideas range from a limited province to a broader multicultural point of view. In order to illustrate the reasons for this let us recall the fairytale the emperor's new clothes in which people perceived what didn't exist. In this article we will make use of an integral way of viewing things. Only if we look at an organization's proceedings in entirety, will we fulfil the task and solve difficult problems in the future. Decision-makers normally know this fact, therefore it is all the more important that people express their thoughts and feelings and why we ultimately need both leadership and management.

Key words   Organizational; Management innovation; Leadership innovation

1 Introduction

It doesn't matter what you focus on: irresponsible reckless innovation activities, futile attempts about change management, discussions about incompetent leaders, etc. etc. Without difficulty we could continue the list of the things which can go wrong. One thing they all have in common is that it seems impossible to get to the root of the problem. It seems as if we are unable to look at feedback of ourselves or the strategies of the organisations in a critical manner, let alone practise sustainable development. On the contrary, instead those responsible or people who think they are indulge in theoretical debates. Their goal is to become more powerful within the organisation, they stop at nothing, they destroy organisations, they prevent organisation strategies from running smoothly and they destroy scientifically tested applications or innovative programs.

However, we cannot say that this procedure isn't predictable: This article will indicate some symptoms and will make you aware of this old practice of retention of power. At the same time we should ask why these bad guys always act this way. Only when we have dealt with these points can we enter the arena on level terms.

1.1 Symptoms

When focusing on the symptoms of the current crisis about change processes it may be helpful to make use of an integral way of viewing things. Only if we look at the organization proceedings in entirety, can we take tasks, relations, characters, context and staff into consideration. Just a brief glance at the world of work is enough to explain what is going on. No matter whether you choose the academic world, nor a medium, nor large-sized organization, they all demonstrate the point.

Furthermore, the structure of the organisation is irrelevant: be it predominantly democratically structured or a hierarchy with a president, vice-chancellor or CEO, a dean, manager or a head of department at the top. It is also no secret that one university or company is much more innovative, has more money for research activities and has deep influence on social and scientific predictions than another. For those organisations which are less advantaged they dismiss this fact by saying that's life. This response merely reflects the harmful and passive attitude of the staff members. This attitude, fortunately, very rarely pervades the whole company. But if the working atmosphere in one part gets worse and the rate of resignation in some parts of the organization increases rapidly, then instead of working people begin to look for a quarrel. In this case people resort to mistrust and mobbing and ideological discussions take over which prevent innovations from happening whereas at the same time in other parts of the organisation all could be running smoothly. Some people get to the point where they only harm the organization. Sometimes it is not possible to dismiss these staff members – and over and above that it's not the right thing to do, anyway. The task would be to understand why they act in an

unusual manner; otherwise the reaction would be neither appropriate nor useful for the future. Let's speculate!

2 Innovation
2.1 Initial situation
Because great oaks from little acorns grow, in this situation it would be better to ask about the reasons and analyse why only a small group of people tend to react this way.

A change process always starts with flexibility and creativity. Therefore let's abandon the traditional way of thinking. Rule 1: don't begin by looking at the people involved, but take a look at the process. While doing this it would be helpful to combine and compare the functions of the president, the CEO's, the dean and managers with their functions of leadership and management. And if we do so, we will be surprised by the result.

Let's begin with some definitions about leadership und management:

LEADERSHIP

"… is not the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It is a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others. What we've discovered is that people make extraordinary things happen by liberating the leader within everyone"[1]

MANAGEMENT

Bennis and Nanus (1995) "summarizes their findings by saying that management is driven by efficiency, a focus on mastering routine activities, … Managers are reactive, focus on solving problems, ensure day-to-day business is carried out, seek order and control, regulate existing order of affairs… "[2]
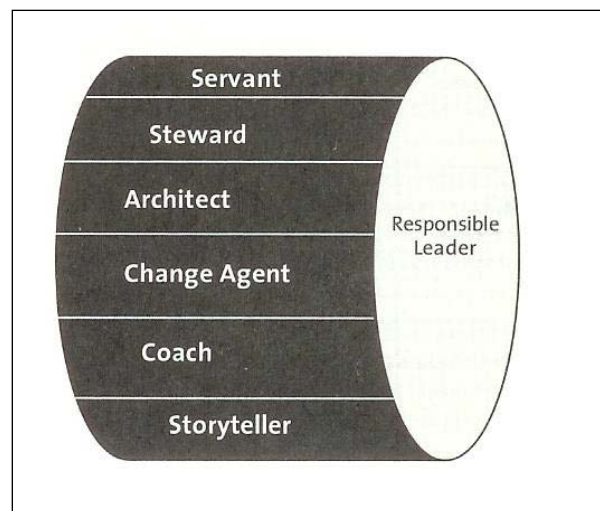

Figure 1   Responsible Leader

If we start from the top of the hierarchy, the position of the president or CEO, it's easy to decide which definition fits the best: leadership. A president/a CEO is the best if he inspires his staff, thinks in the long term, and formulates aims and strategies for his goals. For presidents/CEO's the sentence 'Life is full of unpredictability' presents a challenge not a threat. They deal with problems and upheavals, put transformational ideas into practice and see and do things differently . Although his style is top-down, if leadership allows mutual exertion of influence, in time it will change to a bottom-up style. During this process the task of leadership is to keep an eye on the corporate social responsibility (CSR) which is for all stakeholders not only for his supporters. The normative content of leading, the quality, has to be a subject of discussion. That means the questions: 'who leads somebody? Why does he do this? And with what kind of devices?' require an answer. It's a pity, but in most leadership theories a technical functional basic setting dominates. Well, because this concept is based on an integral way of viewing things the FOUR P'S of integrity management becomes the focus of interest. The Four P's include people, policies, principles and process.

When leaders now want to put a code of values into practice on the bases of the FOUR P's and

want to be responsible leaders, an understanding of one's role in the system is necessary. In the literature there are some definitions about the six roles:

The leader as a servant originally comes from the Servant-Leadership Concept from Greenleaf[①]. It is based on a care-perspective for staff members. The leader is responsible for work-life balance, for diversity management and for sustainable and load-bearing capacity and for relationship management.

As a steward he navigates all stakeholders through conflicts, in doing so, no way is too difficult. Leadership can be compared to the element water – it always finds a way to flow through. As an architect the leader is responsible for a culture of integrity. As a change agent, as the name already indicates, he initiates changing processes and commitment. As a coach he serves as an arbitrator of conflict and last but not least as a storyteller he contributes to the search for a deeper meaning[5]. It doesn't actually matter what item is on the agenda, one principle generally has to be accepted: a leader should not aspire to become a hero. If he walks his talk – that's enough. Looking back on the position of president/CEO, neither the tasks associated with the position nor the definition of leadership should create a problem. Presidents/CEO's are responsible for the internal and external stakeholders and for "potential future opportunities". In the face of the worldwide economic crisis, it's amazing that they still exist. However if you search, you will find people who are doing excellent work, "identify …the daily wall at work"[6] and this doesn't apply only to CEO's but also to presidents. There are many good examples, but usually only the black sheep come into the public attention.

2.2 Control, seek order

But have you ever heard of a person in a top position saying: "my business is leadership?" or have you ever read a job advertisement in which an organization is looking for "leadership f/m"? Normally vacancy advertisements offer the position of a 'manager'. Usually the role of a manager looks easier than that of a leader. A manager is the performer, his activities are reactive instead of proactive and he has to solve problems and not create ideas. Often the main principle of a manager is "to do the wrong things even more professionally". Have a look at a good example:

"And what do we do if we realize that we are riding a dead horse?
-   we buy a stronger whip
-   we replace the rider
-   we   visit other places to see, how they ride dead horses
-   we raise the   standard required for dead mounted horses

and
-   we set up an independent cost centre for dead horses"

You think these are fairytales? Welcome to reality with another example: perhaps you know that in the last few years there has been a big reduction of staff in Germany. The transport company Deutsche Bahn AG has reduced its counter service staff because they only want their customers to buy tickets via Internet or from a ticket machine in the stations. In the meantime they recognize that both of these ways are too complicated for elderly people or for people from abroad. Their new idea now is, to remove all ticket machines and make it impossible to buy tickets via Internet. Instead of this in the future people should buy tickets via an Internet available mobile phone. Nobody responsible thinks of increasing staff services on the stations. This is one-dimensional thinking, how people with open eyes and ears stop innovations or necessary changes. And – of course – these people do nothing to advance society or initiate the democratic process. Quite the reverse: they continuously ignore the results of opinion polls and want to return to the roots. All in all 'managers only make reasonable decisions 80% of the time and only by applying strict rules'

This is not the behaviour we are led to expect from modern management, but perhaps the question of why people expect too much of managers and leaders may be helpful for the fellow workers, for persons affected and for the leadership.

2.3 Shaping

In the theory of disharmony <Dissonanztheorie> from (Festinger 1940) the hypothesis in justification of the effort aforesaid: the more voluntary effort made to achieve something, the more the achievement will be valued. At the same time people will do their very best to maintain this achievement. The way to find solutions for difficulties is determined through an internalized context. If in addition the

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①   based on the Bijbel: Matthew 23:11; NASB

situation causes stress, people will display basic human emotions. Witkin and Ash, but also Levin showed in their scientific experiments during the 40's, that field-dependent-people will react much more dogmatically, morally and functionally, depending on the context. Under increasing stress people will cling more stubbornly to their ideas. Nowadays with a glance at the theories from Skinner[9], the field-theory can be confirmed in a particular way: behaviour will be learned from the people around one.

If shaping is caused by one's surroundings with strong moral or fixed principles, it's probable that the result is not far away from their initiator. According to these scientific findings, mentoring and modelling programs shape their young professionals. At first sign it's simply a relatively cheap way for companies to attract junior partners; on closer inspection this way causes trouble. Managers who strengthen a moral one-way street thinking are absolutely useless in situations where they need to have flexibility, courage, the ability to establish human relations[10] and an intact networking. Also managers need to have a mind of their own and respect for others and for themselves "the highest mutual dependence on loyalty and individualism"[12] The answer to the question what to do with incompetent managers is not difficult: if they are willing to learn, they earn a chance, if not, the leader can work with the support of the majority and if somebody won't accept advice – confrontation with its inevitable consequences is unavoidable.

Let's summarize: managers who think in a traditional way are never excellent but useful for traditional solutions because they are like trees, strong and stable. At this time, society and companies absolutely need innovative and progressive liberally-minded managers. Looking back, weren't these also the attributes for leadership, too?

3 The Emperor's New Clothes

"Lots of business leaders like to think that the top dog is exempt from the details of actually running things. It's a pleasant way to view leadership: you stand on the mountaintop, thinking strategically and attempting to inspire your people with visions, while managers do the 'grunt' work. … This way of thinking is a fallacy, one that creates immense damage"[12].There is hardly any difference any more between leadership and management. What is a dean/manager without any vision for his department, without empathy but morally fanatic? He's a person with emptiness instead of purpose. What use is leadership when it concerns itself with work and the people without having the core competence for change[13] Enumerating unnecessary and unproductive distinctions between leadership and management will not remove current problems. Only "transformation will require both… to take initiative and provide balancing structure"[3].A good idea – it seems – are the combination of Isaksen and Tidd. They link management with "doing things right" and leadership with "doing the right things"[3] and there is no doubt about the necessity of both.

4 Conclusion

As a result we can summarize the following considerations: At one time, management could be compared with wood, rooted in the earth. It had to be strong and stable for functions which it had then. In comparison, leadership was more like the element water. No way is too difficult for it. If water can't get through, it will definitely find another way. Wood and water today we need both of them, the best qualities of management and leadership can sometimes be united in one person. Perhaps management is more for short term solutions and focuses more on internal issues and leadership is multidimensional with an external view, too. Evaluative thinking alone is not enough; reactions of both managers and leaders have to depend on context and issues. Nobody longs for new heroes – if managers or leaders walk their talk, that would be enough. We can only avoid the "The emperor's new clothes" syndrome by positively influencing people, whose main purpose is to work creatively without any fear of ambiguous problems and with a positive feeling for problem solving. Not only but especially people at the top of the ladder will be judged if they are and stay modest and learn from their mistakes. In spite of all abilities don't forget to be open to criticism from people, who don't want to lose their power. Emperors need their spectators for their new clothes parade. That is not our battlefield. Be emotionally intelligent and if it's necessary shout: we can't see any clothes.

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