

Kevin L Cecil / Artifact Four / Management Module

Artifact Four Summary – Management Module of the TEAM Leadership Model

This artifact is a derivative of the overarching TEAM Leadership Model. The five artifacts that make up the model are Training, Education, Accountability, Management, and are underpinned by the artifact Communication and Commitment. The modules as they currently exist are the culmination of twenty-eight years of executive leadership experience and concurrent leadership education. They are a representation of a living document and concepts which have evolved over time as my experience and education have occurred. They are oriented towards the past (experiences), present (orientation), and future (application). As with organizations, no aspect of the TEAM Leadership Model is effective as a stand-alone concept. The elements of the model work in synergy with and complement one another.

Rationale for Selection

Program Outcome:

The module for the Management element of the Team Leadership Model aligns with the DEL Program Outcomes number 3 and 6. Management is not leadership and leaders, along with team members, need to understand the difference. Outcome 3 discusses assembling, aligning, and recording tangible and intangible assets. When I think of that, it strikes me that such assets would be the tools used to track, measure, evaluate, and provide feedback to the organization.

Leaders have a responsibility to ensure that the expectations and standards they put forth are captured in a way that is measurable. Management involves using metrics through data, measuring that data against organizational objectives, evaluating how team members are performing, providing them feedback based on performance, and ultimately evaluating them formally. It is tied closely to Accountability as capturing information in a formal manner provides quantitative and qualitative information to examine success and help with action plans to rehabilitate failure.

Management is also about holding the most important ideas in a manner that allows the organization to examine flow and trends that impact their effectiveness. Understanding this sort of information provides insight into the complex factors that exist and need to be considered during strategic planning. Having a document, such as a strategic plan, that anyone in the organization can print, make notes on, and critically examine will drive communication and collaboration.

As stated in outcome 6, such knowledge and expectation information can serve to establish the baseline of expectations that is transformational and communicates knowledge to others. In his discussion of eco systems as structure (Adner, 2016) describes organizational value propositions. Within every organization there are drivers designed towards a target that efforts are supposed to achieve. Management in general is the method that organizations use to define, measure, and formally communicate what the targets are.

Link To Knowledge:

A part of my belief in the value of tangible assets, typically printed or digitally available documents, stems from experience. For example, during my time in my last duty position the commander advised me he wanted to increase the access to professional education for traditional guardsmen. Traditional means those who serve one weekend a month and two weeks of the calendar year, barring any deployments they are called up for. The call went out for volunteers to create and run a first line supervisor's course.

The team that was assembled contacted the Air Force Professional Military Education (PME) center to inquire about what the curriculum should consist of. The course was designed to be a one-day event that all new Staff Sergeants or those recently selected to attend. Among the subjects discussed were strategic plans, performance feedback forms, evaluation forms, and other relevant documents to the Air Force mission.

Educating the supervisors in this manner provided a way to empower their ability to do their duties well without the need to attend a lengthy course to do so. This effort to teach management skills to these new supervisors is an example of innovation and aligns with the VUCA model of leadership disciplines. Leadership identified a need to teach first line supervisors' skills they could not obtain otherwise. By anticipating a need to do so leadership sensed and seized an opportunity (Shoemake & Heaton, 2018) to utilize internal sources to provide a solution.

Personal Growth and Development:

The process of establishing the first line supervisors course contributed to my growth as a leader because I experienced the positive impact of working with others to innovate and create a unique solution to a problem. The collaborative nature of the project reinforced my belief that leaders should provide intent and then let people run with the metaphorical ball. In this case we had to work with stakeholders outside of the organization to gain access to the elements of an existing satellite course which could be condensed down for our purposes.

The intent from the wing commander was clear and I was empowered to champion the initiative. The process was an exercise in listening, testing ideas, and looking for commonalities (Linden, 2010) to reach a pragmatic solution. The challenges that came up such as finding a room on a regular basis to conduct the class and determining who the instructor cadre were put to the team. They understood that leadership had their back and would help in discovering alternative solutions to any issues that arose.

In the end we established a course that met the organizational objective in a way that was tailorized to not interfere with the broader mission. This project may serve as a case study within the broader TEAM Leadership Model to reflect the importance of teaching and learning Management techniques.

Connect to Broader Leadership Context:

One of the best ways that teaching and helping others understand Management concepts as a part of the Team Leadership Model is the ability to evaluate my own thinking. The elements that make up management within an organization support being a leader but are not leadership in and of themselves. You can have feedback forms, evaluations, and a host of other administrative tools and they are vital to supporting the mission. Learning the purpose of them and how to properly utilize them is the heart of why it is important to proactively coach and mentor others about them.

Having a framework such as the Team Leadership model does not provide a cookie cutter solution to leadership and organizational success. It does however provide a roadmap to follow so seeing it put into action provides me invaluable insight into what works or does not work within the model. The discussion about leadership being different from management has gone on for a long time in academic circles. I think that when Kotter (1990) said leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities he was entirely accurate. With the Team Leadership Model, I am attempting to teach others to understand that difference.

Executive Summary

Presenting Situation:

When I was in the military, I often received phone calls asking about an interpretation of a regulation or instruction. These calls typically came from senior leaders within the field. At first I would go to great lengths to explain and interpret what I believed the document to be saying. At some point, I realized that most of the callers had not bothered to read the document prior to calling me. This realization made me realize that I was not doing the callers any favors by doing their interpretations for them. I needed them to use the

management tool they were provided with and for them to do so, they needed to be well versed in what it said.

This would seem to be an elementary thought but that was not the case across the spectrum. I began to ask these callers if they had read the document that they were calling me about in its entirety. When the answer was no, or if it was obvious that it was no even if they wouldn't admit it, I changed my tactics. I would tell them that they needed to read it so that we could have a conversation based on common ground. That I needed their interpretation as much as they needed mine, regardless of rank or place within the hierarchy.

This is the general topic area that Klein (2011) discusses in his examination of decision making and his belief that "we can't rely on procedures to make decisions in complex situations" (Pg. 13). I now realize that I understood this line of thinking but did not know how to conceptualize it for others. They wanted me to provide them with simple solutions to their problems without starting off by examining the baseline expectations first themselves. By asking them to examine the document that addressed their questions first we could then have a conversation based on the interpretation.

Overall, the leadership context is the intent to emphasize the importance of being experts based on common information that all can reference. Once someone realizes that knowing what is stated formally is vital, and then makes sure they understand it, they have a point of reference to apply context as circumstances arise. Prioritizing this focus internally results in external stakeholders being able to gain understanding of organizational focus.

Contextual Analysis:

The Management element of the Team Leadership Model stands as its own topical area for multiple reasons. An organization must have guidance and other formal management tools as points of reference for establishing expectations, capture policy, and document strategic intent. Management tools are the formal aspects of organizational performance and should be continually examined to ensure they are up to date and relevant to emerging factors.

I think of the documents that organizations create as a road map for all team members to refer to. Capturing ideas in a formal manner, such as a code of ethics, is foundational to every other management tool that will be used to track success. Publishing that code codifies what the organization's values and beliefs are. This provides those ethics in a format that can become a narrative frame (Fairhurst, 2011) that leadership and all team

members point to. Organizations that do not capture their ethics, values, expectations, and strategy in a format accessible to all will struggle to meet their objectives.

Executive Leadership Decisions and Actions:

During my career I have grown an increasingly greater appreciation for the value of written words. Capturing policies, plans, and perspectives in a central repository of knowledge increases collective competence. Not because it does so simply by existing but rather because it serves as a baseline for all to refer to. The effectiveness of these practices is determined by a leader's ability to mentor and teach what those documents mean across the entire organization. In essence, having such information to refer to allows for evaluation of how decision-making processes are working.

Capturing knowledge based on the experiences of others serves to ensure that a baseline of knowledge exists that a group can use as a part of their agreement to count as consensus (Innes & Booher, 2018). When policy is determined to be failing, a change in policy can be made to better manage resources or drive change. The effort to adjust policy should be based on collaboration and feedback both internal and external to an organization. The policy is the roadmap for how to conduct or manage a process, but leadership is what is needed to pivot to execution.

Outcome and Impact:

The example used above about the first line supervisors' course is one example of a management tool created by leaders to solve a problem. The rationale to do so was to solve a gap in organizational effectiveness due to a unique dynamic.

Creating the course in a collaborative manner ensured that the information captured within the curriculum was relevant to organizational goals. It increased the ability of those new supervisors who attended to lead in a manner consistent with the Air Force policies and expectations. They walked away from the class with reference points about where to go and what management tools to use to complement their leadership approach. Rather than make excuses as to why the part time Airmen could not attend the more formal courses the wing provided an interim alternative.

That act alone established a further expectation that could be monitored on an individual basis to evaluate the supervisors' performance. By taking time to create this course the wing also created a narrative that professional development was a primary focus. As a small sample of Management with the Team Leadership Model, creating this course served to consciously enhance the team, organizational, and stakeholder capacity (Tichy & Bennis, 2007).

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