

The development of an Integrated Leadership model

Background

The impetus for the development of the Integrated Leadership Measure (ILM) lay in the observation that there appeared to be many models of Leadership in popular use in the occupational world and that each appeared to have its merits.

However there was little work around which related these to each other and there emerged a gap in that there was little in the way of reliable occupational psychometric measures for Leadership in general.

A small team was formed under the expert guidance of Dr Peter Clough, Head of Psychology at Hull University consisting of Nollaig Heffernan and Doug Strycharczyk, MD for AQR Ltd. The team set out:

- Firstly to examine all the popular leadership models, in both the occupational and academic worlds, to identify how they might relate one to the other and what was the nature of these linkages.
- Secondly from that output to develop a questionnaire which would seek to validate the hypothesis or model and could form the basis of a commercial psychometric measure.
- Finally to complete the development of a complete approach accessible to managers and HR professionals and valuable to them in their work.

AN INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP STYLES MODEL

The outcome for this work showed that every leading model in the academic and occupational spheres was linked to some extent. Moreover all the models seemed to have roots in one or more (sometimes all) of 6 leadership scales which emerged as the 6 aspects of leadership style.

The Specific Scales – Describing Leadership Style

This suggests that all leaders adopt a preferred way of working – an adopted style which is based on a position on 6 bi-polar scales. There is no implication here that there is a right or wrong style or profile. The position simply indicates what the adopted style might look like. These are the **specific** scales. Later, further analysis showed that a second order set of characteristics emerge which consist of 3 **global** scales.

Each person will adopt a position somewhere along a continuum on each scale which reflects their leadership style in terms of that scale. Some will adopt positions towards the extremes and in those cases the preferred style is likely to be quite marked and fairly clear to those around them.

Each individual brings their adopted style to the workplace. As each situation arises and changes, the challenge is to be effective - in each situation we may need to apply different combinations of skills & behaviours (competencies) to achieve this. As situations change then it becomes a development activity to work with managers to mediate their preferred style through training, coaching and development.

These scales can be used from an organisational perspective. One can map organisational preference for prevailing leadership style – and thereby identify a major element of its culture. This introduces another important consideration. It is often difficult to develop leadership style in isolation from the prevailing style adopted in the organisation. The six aspects emerged as:

1.Task v. Person

This reflects the extent which the individual is orientated towards focusing on the task or is concerned with the needs of individuals. A task orientated person believes “success breeds success” and this motivates followers.

2. Flexible v. Dogmatic (Rigid)

This reflects the extent to which leaders have a strong belief that they know how things should be done around here - “there is only one way to achieve somethingand it’s my way!” – or they are open to ideas and suggestions.

3. De-Centralised v. Centralised

This reflects the need for a leader to have everything go through them (an ethos of control) or they are content to delegate to others and to work through others. Their ethos is one of empowerment.

4. Reward v. Punishment

This reflects the leaders understanding of the relationship with the follower. At one extreme there is a desire to reward and recognise all effort and achievement. At the other is a notion that performance is to be expected and that shortcomings can warrant some form of punishment.

5. The Means v. The End

This reflects how much results matter for the leader and what can be sacrificed to achieve that. At one extreme results matter and little else does. At the other there is concerned about how the goal is achieved.

6. Structured (Architect) v. Organic

This reflects the extent to which ones personal style seems to come naturally in some way. In some instances this might be related to “charisma” but not always. At the other extreme leadership is drawn from text books & models and is highly structured, the leader following detailed plans & processes to achieve things.

The Global Scales – core leadership competencies

Further analysis showed that the specific scales are subsumed under three global scales. These scales appeared to be related to “performance” in that the higher one scores the more the individual appeared to be perceived by followers as an effective leader. This suggests that there are three essential components (or competences) for effective leadership behaviour:

A. DETERMINATION TO DELIVER

This describes a single minded determination to achieve – in the short term and in the long term. Most satisfaction – the individuals and the followers – is derived from this. Followers seem to indicate that a leader must have some degree of vision and convey the sense that they will achieve

B. ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIVIDUALS - Individual Cohesion

This describes enhancing the capability, confidence and commitment of individuals to enable them to perform and to fulfil themselves. If asked to give their discretionary effort the leader should support the development of skills and knowledge and provide an environment where success is possible.

C. ENGAGEMENT WITH TEAMS – Team Cohesion

This describes harnessing all the potential in an organisation so that processes can flow more efficiently and more effectively. The emphasis here is on cross functional team working – the effective leader understands and supports how people work together across the organisation – decision making happens at the right level.

A Reliable LEADERSHIP MEASURE – ILM72

Finally an important and valuable by-product of the research is the development of a reliable psychometric instrument which measures Leadership through the above scales – the ILM72.