

Title of the Satellite Meeting: Leadership roles in international librarianship: how can information professionals from Africa, Asia & Oceania, Latin America & Caribbean be part of it?

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Strengthening Capacity of the Zimbabwe Library Association through Sustainable Partnerships. Convergence & Inclusivity: synergies for leadership development

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Abstract

What should be the strategy for Zimbabwe Library Association to enable its Information Practitioners in Zimbabwe to participate at international forum? Present day National Library Associations should link up and collaborate with other International Associations like IFLA for sustainable partnership in order to promote leadership development. Professional Associations' viability depends in part on effective leadership. In essence Effective leaders engage in both professional leadership behaviours such as setting a mission, creating a process for achieving goals, aligning processes and procedures and personal leadership behaviours which includes amongst others building trust, caring for people, acting morally. In reality leader behaviours and actions are important determinants of effectiveness. Professional leadership is an essential first step in the leadership process. It provides a foundation that leads to willing cooperation. Personal leadership is an essential contributor to willing cooperation. This particular paper takes a look at leadership in Librarianship at National Association Level and how it can be harnessed. It considers direction to undertake. This paper will also look at coordination within the National Association set-up to juxtapose with strategic alignment. It will also touch on aspects such as caring and sharing of information. It finally concludes with the issue of morality that touches on professional ethics that is the engaging in behaviours that promote effective leadership

Keywords: Direction, Leadership, National Association, Zimbabwe Library Association

LEADERSHIP within the Library community is critically imperative in the wake of constant technological developments, intermittent budgetary shortfalls, and the volatility of the job market for library professionals. Libraries must recognize and foster the intrinsic personal characteristics and skills considered most applicable for leadership in the field of

information management. Professional library associations play a key role in teaching and developing skills by providing realistic prospects for their membership.

Hershey and Blanchard's (1982) situational theory of leadership advocates that the extent to which leaders engage in relationship behaviours and task behaviours depends on the maturity of the followers, a major nuisance for Zimbabwe Library Association.

For this discourse we outline professional leadership as providing direction, process, and coordination to the members of an organization for the purpose of attaining the organization's goals. This embraces the "formal" part of leadership – setting the vision and mission for the organization, creating a progression for achieving organizational goals, and aligning processes and procedures, people and infrastructure, to attain organizational goals. Although professional leadership has its origins in initiating structure, it is a broader conceptualization of this task-related construct. We describe personal leadership as the personal behaviour of leaders in performing the responsibilities of professional leadership, including demonstrating expertise, building trust, caring and sharing for people, and acting in a moral way.

Establishments such as the Library communities' need persons that will do more than follow the lead set by management; they need co-operators that will contribute their efforts to realize the goals of the organization. Willing co-operators who are engaged in the common purpose do more than follow – they willingly contribute their efforts. A lack of willing cooperation implies that other means of facilitating "cooperation" for instance coercion, material exchange will have to be instigated to move the National Association forward. A strategic element in obtaining willing cooperation is engaging members by creating a "benefit" for cooperation. According to Barnard (1938) "benefit" is the synergistic effect that results in output that is greater than the sum of individual efforts. Synergy alone, however, is not a sufficient "benefit" to engage members in willing cooperation. What is also critical to willing cooperation is a win/win philosophy. A win/win philosophy ensures that, as the organization performs well, individuals benefit from organizational success. Win/win goals and outcomes have been shown to reduce conflict (Covey, 1989; Hill, 1994; Katz & Kahn, 1966) and increase motivation (Covey, 1989; Katz & Kahn, 1966). For these reasons, we've chosen willing cooperation as our dependent measure.

Direction. A main part of leading is being out front and providing direction. Perhaps the most important direction leaders provide is the function of defining a common purpose (Barnard, 1938). It is this desirable and attainable common purpose that engages members (Burns, 1978). Since organizations are cooperative and coordinated systems (Barnard, 1938), it is direction that defines "common purpose" which provides a nucleus for an effective system. It is also essential to success because it begins the leadership process with an end in mind (Covey, 1989, 1990). Some current terms for common purpose include "mission," "vision," and "philosophy." A National Association's "mission statement" should communicate the organization's primary reason to exist. Effective "vision" provides a simple and idealistic goal, presents a desirable future (Bennis & Nanus 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1995), and creates a "stretch" (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994).

Process. Critical to the success of leader direction is providing, implementing and managing a systematic process. Most importantly is that process has, as its goal, the attainment of the common purpose of the organization (Beer, Eisenstat & Biggadike, 1995). There are three especially grave elements of an effective systematic process: members must

have confidence that the process provided by leaders is effective in attaining the “common purpose” of an organization (Barnard, 1938), each member should understand how his job contributes to this effort, and the process should be focused on continuous improvement.

Coordination. Coordination is also a precarious element of professional leadership. The first and most basic function of coordinating is the acquiring of essentials indispensable to operate an organization (Barnard, 1938). Coordination as a part of leadership is both individual and systematic. It is individual, in that each leader must provide leadership to the individuals that he supervises; it is systematic in that each leader must contribute leadership for the maintenance of an organization (Barnard, 1938). Perhaps most importantly it is the “strategic alignment” of an organization, its resources and its members.

Professional leadership encompasses the “formal” part of leadership – setting the vision and mission for the organization, creating a process for achieving organizational goals, and aligning processes and procedures, people and infrastructure, to achieve organizational goals. Research has shown the importance of having a common purpose (Peters & Austin, 1985) and a process in place to achieve that purpose (Barnard, 1938).

Personal leadership can be understood as the personal behaviour of leaders in performing the responsibilities of professional leadership, including expertise, trust, caring, sharing and morals. It can be assumed as the “people” side of leadership. It is through these personal behaviours that leaders ensure the success of the professional leadership. In essence, personal leadership “carries” the professional message to the organization.

Expertise. Expertise is the perceived ability and competence of leaders. Competence has been found to be a key element of positive perception of leaders by members (Kouzes & Posner, 1993) as well as an essential characteristic in effective leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Yukl 1998). Further, expertise is a major source and method of obtaining power (French & Raven, 1959). Referent power accrues to leaders as a result of identification or admiration of the leader by employees (French & Raven, 1959). It seems reasonable that employees who are confident in the expertise of their organization’s leadership will be more likely to willingly cooperate with their leaders’ goals and objectives.

Trust. Trust is the perceived honesty, sincerity and dependability of leaders. It is a natural and essential component of relationships (Gabarro, 1978; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna 1985). Trust is also a powerful force; Covey (1989) considers trust to be the currency for his “emotional bank account.” The first element of trust is honesty. The “willingness to rely on another” has also been found to be an important factor in establishing trust (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Trust in this perspective has as its basis reliability, which is enhanced consistency and predictability (Cook & Campbell 1979; Deming, 1982; Kerlinger, 1986). It seems likely that the more trust organization members have in their leaders, the more likely they will be to willingly cooperate.

Caring. Caring is defined as empathy, listening, and politeness to employees regardless of the employee’s position in an organization. Caring is similar to consideration, an outcome measure used in countless leadership studies (Bass, 1990; Fisher & Edwards, 1988; Yukl, 1998), but more comprehensive. Consideration has empirical support when correlated with job satisfaction (Yukl, 1998). Greenleaf (1996) explains that most caring in the past was viewed as person to person. Now, most caring is institutional. The key to the perception of “organizational caring” by the members of the organization is establishing a collective,

systematic attitude of caring (Covey, 1990). We feel that an organization's members are more likely to willingly cooperate when they perceive that the leadership truly *cares* about them.

Sharing. Sharing is well-defined as sharing authority and information. The sharing of authority is the basis for empowerment, a key component of participative leadership, which has been found to be related to effective leadership (Likert, 1961). Empowerment is effective in that it is the utilization of referent and expert power of members (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The failure to share authority can be very damaging to employee morale. Sharing pertinent information is an effective tool in communication (Barnard, 1938; Stinchcombe, 1990) since the control of information is considered to be a basis for power (Yukl, 1998). It is also seen as an important aspect of control in the "leader member relationship" (Stinchcombe, 1990). Simply put, if organization members believe that relevant information is being shared with them, they are more likely to cooperate. Alternatively, employees who feel kept in the dark are less likely to willingly cooperate.

Morals. Moral behaviour is defined as providing a moral code that is a guide for the behaviour of leaders and members in performing their responsibilities in an organization. An effective moral code is based on generally accepted principles such as treating others the way one would like to be treated, integrity, fairness, and justice. Principles are essential to enduring leadership, because they provide a compass for moral behaviour (Covey, 1990).

Personal leadership encompasses the personal behaviour of leaders in performing the responsibilities of professional leadership, including expertise, trust, caring, sharing and morals. Organizational members must have confidence in the expertise of their leaders, and must trust that the leaders are doing what is best for everyone. Leaders must also demonstrate that they care about organizational members, must share authority and information with organizational members, and must act in a moral way. Engaging in these behaviours has been shown to contribute to effective leadership (Likert, 1961).

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