

Appendix: Four Frames for Leaders

Structural

The fundamental responsibility of managers and leaders is to clarify organizational goals, attend to the relationship between structure and environment, and develop a structure that is clear and appropriate to the goals, the task, and the environment. Without such a structure, people become unsure what they are supposed to be doing. The result is confusion, frustration, and conflict. In an effective organization, individuals are clear about their responsibilities and their contribution. Policies, linkages, and lines of authority are clear. When an organization has the right structure, and people understand it, the organization can achieve its goals and individuals can be effective in their roles.

The job of a leader is to focus on tasks, facts, and logic, not personality and emotions. Most "people" problems really stem from structural flaws rather than from flaws in individuals. Structural leaders are not necessarily authoritarian and do not necessarily solve every problem by issuing orders (though that will sometimes be appropriate). Instead, they try to design and implement a process or structure appropriate to the problem and the circumstances.

Human Resources

People are the heart of any organization. When people feel the organization is responsive to their needs and supportive of their goals, leaders can count on their commitment and loyalty. Administrators who are authoritarian or insensitive, who don't communicate effectively, or who don't care about their people can never be effective leaders. The human resources leader works on behalf of both the organization and its people, seeking to serve the best interests of both.

The job of the leader is support and empowerment. Support takes a variety of forms: letting people know that you are concerned about them, listening to find out about their aspirations and goals, and communicating personal warmth and openness. A leader empowers people through participation and openness and through making

sure that they have the autonomy and the resources that they need to do their jobs well. Human resources leaders emphasize honest, two-way communication as a way to identify issues and resolve differences. They are willing to confront others when it is appropriate, but they try to do so in a spirit of openness and caring.

Political

Managers have to recognize political reality and know how to deal with it. Inside and outside any organization, there are always a variety of different interest groups, each with its own agenda. There are not enough resources to give everyone what he or she wants, and there is always going to be conflict.

The job of leaders is to recognize the major constituencies, develop ties to their leadership, and manage conflict as productively as possible. Above all, they need to build power bases and use power carefully. They cannot give every group everything it wants, although they can try to create arenas for negotiating differences and coming up with reasonable compromises. They also have to work hard at articulating what everyone in their organization has in common. They must tell the people in their organization that it is a waste of time to fight one another when there are plenty of enemies outside that they can all fight together. Groups that fail to work well together internally tend to get trounced by outsiders who have their own agendas.

Symbolic

Symbolic managers believe that the most important part of a leader's job is *inspiration*—giving people *something they can believe in*. People will give their loyalty to an organization that has a unique identity and makes them feel that what they do is really important. Effective symbolic leaders are passionate about making their organizations the best of their kind and communicate that passion to others. They use dramatic, visible symbols that give people a sense of the organizational mission.

They are visible and energetic. They create slogans, tell stories, hold rallies, give awards, appear where they are least expected, and manage by wandering around.

Symbolic leaders are sensitive to an organization's history and culture. They seek to use the best in an organization's traditions and values as a base for

building a culture that provides cohesiveness and meaning. They articulate a vision that communicates the organization's unique capabilities and mission.

SOURCE: Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).