



Facilitative Leadership - 5 Characteristics of Facilitative Change Leadership

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(1) Facilitative leaders exercise advanced communication skills

These 3 techniques can help ensure that your people are involved in the change management process and that they are assured of your interest:

(a) Confirming - your understanding. When you confirm, you verify that you understand what the other person said.

(b) Acknowledging - shows that you value what the other person has said.

(c) Bridging - make links between points you have both made. When you bridge, you make a connection between one or more points that the other person and you have made.

The purpose of all this is to build a shared perception.

(2) Facilitative leaders create the environment where people want to participate

So often I hear CEOs and directors moaning: "But why don't they just do it?"

Another question I often hear is: "How can I get them to share ownership of decisions and the outcomes - how do I get them to follow through on their commitments?"

There are 2 aspects to resolving this:

(a) Harnessing the emotional energy of the group

Your leadership style needs to be transformative and inspirational - it is up to you to exercise emotional intelligence, build connection with your people and to harness the emotional energy of the group - so that they feel the possibilities of belonging and cooperating together as a group for the greater good of the group.

(b) Personalise and "emotionalise" the energy for change

People need to know cognitively why the change is so important (vision, strategy, business case etc) but they also need to feel emotionally what it will mean to them personally. They need to feel the personal impact of the change.

The more they feel it the more they will prioritise it - because it matters to them personally.

It then rapidly becomes natural for the facilitative leaders to ask rather than tell groups what they need to be doing, and to ask them what help they need to move forward rather than attempting to control their activities.

(3) Facilitative leaders encourage people to "speak the unspeakable"

Facilitative leaders encourage people to identify and discuss important issues they may be unaware of or unwilling to address - I call this "speaking the unspeakable".

These are often issues that are felt to be "too sensitive", "politically difficult" or just plain fraught to be easily and openly expressed.

Yet it is very often these difficult issues that are key to unblocking log-jams.

As change leader you achieve this by providing the tools, language and process to make this possible.

There are many excellent tools available and you need to select an appropriate tool and process for your situation.

(4) Facilitative leaders recognise that they are changing the culture

If, as part of your preparation and planning, you have undertaken a thorough cultural analysis and planning process you will have been through - and equally important, taken your people through - a process of cognition involving a thorough cultural mapping and analysis of "How we look now" and "How we want to look in future".

You will have defined a cultural framework for the organisation that identifies the desired-culture (the dominant culture that will exist when the vision for the change is successfully realised) - i.e. "how we will look in the future".

As you involve your people in this and other processes, you are subtly changing the culture in the desired direction by your continuous involvement of your people in these processes. The new culture slowly emerges.

(5) Facilitative leaders operate from a position of considerable self awareness and emotional intelligence

As a facilitative leader you begin with self-awareness - awareness of your own thoughts and feelings, and how these affect your actions, and how they affect the states of others.

As your self-awareness develops, you begin to lead with an integrity and authenticity that resonates with others, and inspires them to follow.