

Transformational Leadership; Checking Pulses & Infusing Passion



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Jennifer Grube, President

In a world burdened with economic challenges; companies are strapped for time, talent and treasure while feeling minimal control over external strains. However, we certainly have an ability to take full control over our strategy to successfully manage change.

Transformational leadership can be characterized as an approach to encourage direct reports or team members to successfully manage change.

Leadership theories by experts such as Bass, Burns, Kouzes and Posner can be recognized in this article as we continue to 'try them on for size' in our respective environments. The following review is meant to expand on prior work while breathing experiential input into the theories based upon an ongoing journey in the business of helping others achieve and succeed.

You may recall that there are three ways leaders encourage team members to successfully and consistently manage change.

1. Include the team in goal development & goal achievement.
2. Increase awareness & value of individual objectives & tasks.
3. Monitor progress & manage challenges.

Within any transformation, change or growth, three assumptions are relevant. First, people are guided by those who inspire them. Secondly, people with vision and passion can achieve great things. Third, the way to get things accomplished is by incorporating enthusiasm, energy and a sound plan. So, if you are with me so far in this reading, I encourage you to read on as together, we will partner to facilitate improvements in ourselves and our teams.

Ok, partners in business...of course, we all can agree that leadership charisma is necessary, but certainly not sufficient by itself.

In fact there are *two key charismatic effects that transformational leaders achieve:*

- Transformational leaders *evoke strong emotions* and
- Transformational leaders *bridge a 'cause connection' between leaders and partners.*

Ah, yes, this '*cause connection*' may be facilitated by the leader through stirring appeals or subtle methods such as coaching or mentoring. I do believe that successful transformational leaders possess a style which encourages uplifting experiences while infusing passion and energy into everything they do. These charismatic people are often *checking the 'organizational pulse'* while building a solid team *and* achieving goals. Now with a philosophical basis, we can identify a *four step transformational leadership which includes developing and selling the vision, checking the pulse, paving the way and infusing the passion.*

The Four Step Transformational Leadership Plan

I. Developing & Selling The Vision

Intrinsically, Transformational Leaders recognize the importance of personal integrity as they are not only selling a business vision but are selling themselves. Partners or stakeholders look to trust their leader. It is the leaders responsibility to maintain personal and professional standards which are aligned with positive business practice. *I believe success can be gauged by a leaders integrity and past project performance.*

Following a commitment to maintain ethically sound practices, the leader develops a vision of the future that elicits passion in others. This vision may be cultivated by the leader yet is best operationalized through a broad series of discussions and dialogue. *Transitional leaders live the plan in a virtual glass house while stakeholders continually peer in to observe the commitment and progress.* Of course, developing vision requires a great deal of energy and consistency as few people will immediately buy into changes in vision and some will join more slowly than others.

II. Checking The Pulse

We all realize that there are a multitude of challenges in a diverse workforce with generational, cultural and social nuances requiring full consideration. *In an ever changing work arena, we must realize and respond to the variables and value of our unique teams through their proverbial eye glasses.* The Transformational Leader studies, evaluates and takes action to facilitate involvement from team members.

Inquiry and dialogue are critical components of this step. Thus, the open door policy is passé as we must more actively seek out input! When utilizing eclectic approaches and venues to encourage others to get involved, we give respect to the fact that each individual has unique gifts, challenges, and is motivated differently. Therefore, *checking the pulse of your organization* and each member is integral in the process of change management and ultimately, successful goal achievement.

III. Paving The Way

Parallel with steps one and two is the activity of '*paving the way*' or guiding the way forward. Some Transformational Leaders know the way, and simply want others to follow them. Others do not have a ready strategy, but will happily lead the exploration of possible routes to achieve the goals. The route forward or plan may not be obvious and may not be plotted in details, but with a clear vision, the direction will always be known. Thus, paving the way and finding the way forward is an ongoing process of *course correction*. The Transformational Leader will accept that there will be bumps and blind spots along the road. They will also empower stakeholders to feel and see that progress is being made toward personal and professional goals. Confident leaders keep the path clear and ensure a quality job - paving the way!

IV. Infusing The Passion

The final stage is to remain up-front and central during the action. Transformational Leaders are always visible and will stand up to be counted rather than hide behind their troops. Their attitude and action is THE example for others. Even in the darkest of times, *the leader motivates and rally's others through listening, soothing, enthusing and infusing passion!*

It is clearly this consistent, unwavering commitment that keeps people going, particularly through transitions when some may question whether the vision can ever be achieved. If stakeholders, team members or direct reports do not believe that they can succeed, then their efforts will fail. The Transformational Leader seeks to interject and re-interject a high level of commitment to the vision through the use of rituals and symbolism. Small changes and certainly task achievements are reinforced. This recognition is a significant indicator of progress which reinforces and motivates team success. Perhaps more than other approaches, *impactful and successful transitional leaders are people-sensitive and believe that achievement is birthed through deep, sustained stakeholder commitment.*

If it is time to reinforce your team with a unique, experiential workshop by experts in the field, simply contact Dr. Jannice Bailey or Jennifer Grube at F.A.C.E.S. 855-533-2237 or visit f-a-c-e-s.org.

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