Global MBA

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Leadership

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EXTRA ASSIGNMENT

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Introduction

Summary of course Lessons

    1. **From the Birkman test:** Although leadership is a plural activity, the inner vision of the individual taking the risk to lead becomes determinant. As long as the leadership concept evolved, the relevance of teamwork has followed the same path. However, individual strengths and weaknesses become a fundamental subject of knowledge as well as the potential reaction in extreme cases. Knowing oneself is a crucial element of modern leadership and it gives some insight about the ways to exercise leadership in certain situations and how to mitigate some bad trends. The Birkman is an opportunity to rediscover ourselves and reevaluate our ways of being and even of intervening. So, the modern tool that allows a potential leader to get to know his own leadership style in advance is such a powerful help.

Lesson to my own leadership challenges: The Birkman is a helpful tool to improve leadership performance but it demands some openness from leaders. In my case, I was really skeptical about taking some advantage of the Birkman. I already had the information from a previous Myerss-Briggs taken at the IESA.... but soon I discovered many things about myself and especially about the peak level I may reach at certain situations that made me reflect back on many current situations. I learned about myself throughout the Birkman in such a way that I plan to take the certification course.

    2. **From the Shackelton´s Case:** Legitimacy is a permanent challenge as well as a continuous process. Shackelton was constantly building credibility and that implies informal authority which, at the same time, reinforced his formal authority. But It never was enough...he had to gain some more authority every single day along months and months. The fact that he was disappointed and hopeless, as the letters to her daughter allowed us to discover, was succesfully hidden and it was shocking to me. Shackelton understood that leading from an authority position implies many risks and responsibilities. He was challenged by them at every moment and especially during the mutiny attempt. However, he always tried to fulfill the expectations of his crew giving them the sense of the proper direction (vision), protection and order. Also the more dangerous the mission became the more willing he was to be the first man to bear the risks showing us that at moment of great distress, authority and leadership should be together.

Lesson to my own leadership challenges: A continuous challenge such as the legitimacy process demands great effort and the generation of constant attention, which is the currency of leadership. This continuum is the life cycle of the leadership practice. I learned from Shackelton that even in the worst moment, reinforcing the leadership position becomes key and it preserves the chances to succeed and, in some extent, the room to maneuver.

    3. **From the Shackelton´s Case, again:** The importance of resilience...the fact that you can easily adapt, get to be flexible but still yourself. Constant changes affected Shackelton¨s performance but he decided to adapt to those changes....instead of giving up. Adaptation in terms of being flexible enough to go to the encounter of change, embrace it and get some advantages of it. He never avoided changes...he

turned his performance into a flexible one and assumed that new circumstances were new opportunities. For example: when the Endurance got stuck in the ice....he acted as if they were still sailing at the open sea and decided to set some kind of routines just to keep the system busy, ready and eagerly.

Lesson to my own leadership challenges: It is not easy to adapt to constant changes....systems love stability and change is , at the very end, a sort of risk and instability, as Kahneman and Tversky (2000) pointed out. Therefore, there are primary mechanisms or reactions that usually try to justify the decision of preserving the *status quo* and leadership is about getting ready to face those mechanisms and dismantle them, defuse them. In my case, I learned from Shackelton that is more effective to rapidly accept the need to change than trying to defy the tendency of external events. Try to avoid change and justify those actions always lead to the same path: the attention to the conflict may diminish for a while the conflict itself may be postponed, but the change and its demands attached will remain there, expecting and getting stronger.

4. **From Managing cultural differences:** Synergy is the name of the game: the art of mixing the best resources of a group and get the best possible outcome having taken into account the strengths and weaknesses of the individual who composed the group. Cultural differences is not only about different citizenships...it is also about different minds, ways of living and life visions...even among peers. Shackelton recruited reckless people as well as normal people, sort of crazy pals as well as risk lovers in pursuit of their place in history. So...he recruited many different kinds of persons who resembled different ways of being, feel and think...but he was successful enough in combining them, assigning them to a certain task and getting the best from them under different circumstances. In fact what seemed to be just a group was turned into a team by his effort and under his guidance.

Lesson to my own leadership challenges: Synergy is challenging and sometimes painful. In my case, I have had the opportunity to face this challenge both, domestically and abroad...and it is quite difficult. But, in my case, I learned from Shackelton that modern leadership is more about the right teamwork than a reminiscence of the old caudillism. Shackelton was not a caudillo....he was a team leader and spent time to get to know the character of every single team member. That allowed him to assign the right people for every task.

5. **From situational perspectives:** The situation and its implications are not to be underestimated. The Milgram experiment pointed out the relevance of the context and how it affects both the behavior and the value system. The best initiative may end up in such a disaster if the context deviates it. So, the situational perspective is to be taken into account at the time of design the proper environment in which leadership should be exercised.

Lesson to my own leadership challenges: Choosing the right people is important, having the right vision is relevant but taking care of the context and shared values and principles is key. The tendency to follow the authority could be eased by the fact that most people validate what is right and wrong and people may accept it and behave consistently. Context may determine the success of a leadership exercise.

6. **From the leadership character model:** The constant unrest of keep both sides in balance (responsibility and respect). Is not easy but necessary. Respect side is

about dealing with people which is a crucial part of leadership, on the other hand, the responsibility side is about getting the job done which is as important as the first side. The right balance comes from the integrity concept as a whole but most team members have the tendency of emphasizing one or another. Mixing them with mastery is an art...and Shackelton was such an artist at it. If too much respect or too much responsibility is at hand it may be a formal authority or an informal authority case but leadership is about both concepts in balance (Turknett, 2005).

Lesson to my own leadership challenges: As a contribution of the transactional theory, values and trust in terms of service came up and gained attention. Today, transformational theory implies a system of values as a guide for the proper exercise of leadership...but what really is important from the leadership character model is the fact that combines both, situational and transformational leadership theories by giving importance to principles and values that are compelled by the daily routine and practical issues along leadership processes. So, humility is a desideratum as well as courage....but in the field of the said theories. And humility is a decision of life....a way of being.

7. From developing the GMBA team: Leadership is always about teamwork and a dynamic activity: sometimes one leads sometimes someone else take the torch. So, leading and following are both sides of the same coin.

Lesson to my own leadership challenges: No one is to lead 24-hour a day...so, there is no permanent leader. Leadership is just an activity and a process not a personality trait, thus, think of oneself in terms of *leader* is misleading. It is more useful to understand that MBA teams are scenarios to get along, to alternate the leadership and to respect the informal authority positions everyone may build. So, since there is no leader of the team...all members have the same right to guide, the same responsibility of exercising the leadership in a context of mutual respect and cooperation. *Ego*s must be channelized in order to succeed.

THE ENRON CASE (from The Smartest guys in the room)

1. What happened

A group of clever guys took advantage of public trust and finally led the Enron company into a financial collapse and the corresponding government intervention. The story is quite simple: no moral limitations, no moral values....money ruled and when no control was at the call....the inferno overcame. At the same time, this is a typical case of soft followership (Barbara Kellerman, 2008)

2. Analysis

Leading is pretty much about values and transactions. In the first case, it implies important moral ties, the latter implies that the trust that allows us to lead is to be returned in terms of service. The problem emerges when no moral restriction applies and the obligation in terms of transaction disappears. In fact, the networking of Enron teams relied in mutual monetary benefits ties (Thompson, 2011)

Organizational culture as a context imposes a set of rites, taboos, principles, sanctions and behaviors and the outcome is to be consistent to that set of rules (Moran, 2011) and that is exactly what happened in the Enron case. Money was the only motivation at work to the extent that the ends validated all means. Lying, forging and so forth

were part of the game. That, at the same time, made them obey any order with no hesitation just because the compliance was key. That implies that followers are responsible of the leadership exercise in the same extent that leaders are. In fact, at Enron it was easier to obey any order than accept the responsibility for disobeying it, in terms of social conformity and plural responsibility (Cialdini, 1996).

The compromise with shareholders demands the *bonus pater familiae* behavior regarding the need to preserve their investments and the moral obligations of looking after their interests. So, authority is an expression of confidence and trust and it has to be returned in better positioning afterward. When that compass is not available *egos* and *desires* come up and distort the path of companies. Enron was a mix of both, manager-led teams and self-managing teams (Thompson, 2011), in which the manager embodied the real owner of the company, as they ruled like kings...even from remote places as whore houses, etc. At the same time, no one was aware of many managerial biases.

Then, Enron was a case in which the organizational culture determined the managerial illness that finally made it collapse and the loss of the sense of compromise finally caused a sort of general blindness.

The divergence in that system was at the level of purpose, objectives and goals.

3. Lessons for management and leadership

a. Organizational culture has a tremendous impact on the view of leadership because of the set of shared values that brings up. Creating a value in terms of organizational culture is to build the future of that organization (Moore, 1995).

b. When managers prioritize their own interests they end up not able to preserve companies in good shape, not able to meet organizational expectations, objectives and goals. And leadership implies a vision that allows leaders to bring the notion of clear direction and a clear compromise. This is the current trend (for instance, Collins, 2010, states that great companies are those managed by level 5 leaders, who are distinguished by their humility, compromise and commitment. Level 1 are good employees, level 2 are good team members, level 3 are good managers, level 4 are good leaders, level 5 are humble people with great sense of sacrifice). On the other hand it is necessary to point out that being a follower is not an excuse. Followers are accountable too. So the model´s requirements that apply for leaders apply for followers as well.

c. Humility is a clear guide to finally reach integrity in dealing with people and accountability is very important for responsibility when doing the task. Being clever is not enough. Those guys did not have humility in spite of the fact that they were smart. Decent men with managerial skills resembles the right balance of the equation and the opposite, talent without integrity is a whip (as a Simon Bolivar, Venezuela´s liberator used to say). Team synergy is important but in a context of decency and shared values. Not being a hero...just a decent people, that idea is the right path for a decent company (Turknett, 2010). Arrogance is misleading and puts us on a road full of bias and heuristics (Kahneman and Tversky, 2000), coconut headset trend or halo effect disaster(Rosenzweig,2007). Exercising a leadership is call for becoming a role model and modeling is a 24-hour job.

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Appendix

cultural understanding and sensitivity

global transformations

Global leaders as influencers

adpating to the change — 1

transmitting skills and knowledge to subsequent generations — 2

involves

unwritten customs — 1

taboos — 2

sanctions — 3

tradition

culture

Chapter 1. Moran. Global leaders and culture

culture counts

a global person

no country is more important than others

lives and view-points are different

the extent to which is accpetable that power in society and institutions is distributed unequeally — Power distance

the power of threats and ambiguity — Uncertainty avoidance

individualism and collectivism

Masculinity (preeminent values are money, materialism and so forth)and feminity (preeminence assigned to quality of life and people)

Hofstede´s dimensions of National culture

win-win

Chapter 3. Moran. Negotiating long term mutual benefits

clear rules

Fisher and emotions

Chapter 4. Moran. Global leaders learning from others and change

Total quality management as an example.
- from USA to Japan

Change
- change requires preparation and planning
  - 1 — reason
  - 2 — reason
  - 3 — reason
- driving forces of social and tech change
  - 1 — globalization of markets, consumerism and work-forces
  - 2 — transformation of traditional hierarchy into more participative, multinational or global network
  - 3 — fragmentation of work and creation of global job market
  - 4 — ascendancy of knowledge and info services as primary global products
- role changes

Chapter 9. Moran- Leadership in creating cultural synergy

Synergy´s implications.
- represents a dynamic process
- involves adpating and learning
- involves joint action in which the total effect is greater than the sum of effects when acting independently
- creates an integrated solution
- does not signify compromise but nothing is given up or lost
- It releases team energies and enhances development the potential of members
- low or high synergy societies
- synergistic leadership

Chapter 1. Thompson. Teams in organizations

- good teams are not a matter of luck

- work team characteristics
  - a shared goal
  - interdependent in terms of the common goal
  - bounded and stable over time
  - authority as team members
  - a determined social system context

- the new trend is team oriented (quick and efficient) to face the challenges
  - customer service focus (today relational rather than trasactional)
  - competition
  - information age
  - globalization

- types of teams
  - Manager-led teams
  - Self-managing teams: initial instruction, self management of methods to achieve the goal
    - Critical success factors
      - Claear direction-purpose
      - real-team task
      - team rewards
      - Basic Materials resources
      - authority to manage the work
      - team goals
      - strategy norms
  - Self-directing teams: extremely time consuming.
    - Orpheus orchestra: there's no conductor
    - good for very complex and ambiguous problems
    - Ex. Google
  - Self-Governing Teams and Boards of Directors
    - Great commitment and participation but risk of misdirection

- Observations on teams and teamwork
  - teams are not always the answer
  - managers fault the wrong causes for team failure
  - managers fail to recognize their team-building responsibilities
  - experimenting with failures leads to better teams
  - conflict among team members is not always a bad thing
  - strong leadership is not always necessary for strong teams
  - good teams can still fail under the wrong circumstances
  - the most frustrating is developing and sustaining high motivation

- Developing team building skills
  - accurate diagnosis of team problems
    - be aware of a bias: sampling on the dependent variable: look the causes after find the effects
      - to avoid it
        - identify a preexisting baseline or control group
        - do a comparison experiement
    - hindsight bias: I knew it all along.It ends up as overconfidence
  - research-based interventions
    - evidence based management
  - expert-learning
    - take advantage from failures or even from mundane experiences

- Alert: there´s no such recipe for good teamwork.

Chapter 10. Thompson. Networking social capital and integrating across teams.

Team boundaries
- among the team nad the other parts of the organization.
- underbounbded teams: many external ties but inability to motivate team members
- overbounded teams: high internal loyalty but inability to integrate with others when needed

Networking
Communication
1. formal
2. informal

Human capital and social capital
1. Human capital refers that inequalities results from differences in individual
2. Social capital is the value that managers add to system through their ties to other people
   - Clique networks vs Boundary spanning

Type of ties in teams
- friendship ties
- idiosyncratic deals: mutual benefits ties
- trust ties
- advice ties
- are not mutually exclusive

Chapter 13. Thompson. Teamwork via information technology.

place/time model of social interaction.
- face to face communication.
  - same place
  - same time
- telephone or videoconference.
  - different place
  - same time
- e-mail or vocemail
  - different place
  - different time

Virtual teams
task focused, group not physically close
1. reason
2. reason
3. reason

threats to effective processes
1. lack of effort
2. not the most advantage of skills and talents of team members
3. complications to summon

structural solutions for virtual teamwork
- group support systems.
- virtual team technology
- initial face-to-face experience
- temporary engagement
- touching base

Loos of informal communication
- disconnected feddback
- loos of informal modeling

cross cultural teamworks
- cultural intelligence
  - capability to adapt to work with different culture individuals at the same time
- work ways
- cultural values