

Chapter 4

Leadership as Excellence Management

The idea that leadership characterizes only the excellent managers evolved from the leadership as scientific management perspective. It is essentially a transitional perspective rather than an operational one. Popular in the 1970s and 1980s, it focuses on performance excellence in managerial tasks. It centers on the leader's need to be sensitive to the workers' human relations needs along with the demands of productivity. Excellence-focused leaders are mature, horizon thinkers with a penchant for high-quality performance. They define their mission in terms of high quality and see leadership as broadly dispersed throughout the organization. They encourage creative use of systems and resources in responding to the pressures of the environment and the desired potential of the future. This accent on excellence encompasses the leader's ideas about self, followers, and their common corporate culture.

Historically second, this leadership perspective reformulates what has been called the excellence movement introduced by Peters and Waterman (1982). The excellence movement highlights systematic quality improvements with an emphasis on the people involved in the processes, the processes themselves, and the quality of products produced. The work of leadership is to foster innovation in an environment of honest concern for all stakeholders. The Total Quality Movement (TQM) of the 1980s is closely linked to this accent on excellence.

The skills highlighted in the quality excellence movement link directly to the definitions of leadership found in this perspective. The general framework of Leadership as Excellence Management relies on acceptance of the value of quality as a guiding dictum. It involves organizational cultural change toward a service philosophy centered on meeting customer requirements through continuous process improvement, encouraging innovation, ensuring high quality, providing service, listening actively, being accessible, motivating, engaging people, and showing common courtesy. The mechanisms to achieve success include training, role modeling, sponsoring feedback and communication, recognizing good work, teambuilding, and satisfying customer demands. Thought of as a bridge perspective linking management to values leadership, Leadership as Excellence Management deserves attention as a bridge to values leadership.

The Excellence Management Perspective

Unlike Leadership as Scientific Management, this perspective does not focus solely on direction or control, operational style, or productivity. Rather, Leadership as Excellence Management involves prioritizing ideas such as innovation, concern for customers, quality, and simple structures (Samuelson 1984). Drawing on the Japanese model, which used Deming's comprehensive quality approach, Gitlow and Gitlow (1987) predict a rise in quality for American organizations. They, and others like them, offer plans to raise American management and leadership to its former greatness, using the various systems of quality improvement.

Leadership excellence has emerged as both a technology and a value system. It is a mindset orientated toward the leader's role and defines it in service-to-others terms. Brassier (1985) defines it in strategic terms. She describes leaders as those who take confidence in a commitment to the development of the capacities of people. Leadership excellence requires no gimmicks, no complicated theory or philosophy, no new funding, and no great charisma (Calano and Salzman 1988). Evidence suggests that there are pockets of excellence in most organizations. They can be present in the most traditional productivity-oriented groups or in badly run organizations.

Historical Roots and the Modern Quest for Quality

The present day interest in leadership as a function of good management can trace its roots to the turn of the century interest in scientific management. Interest in good (e.g. high quality) management is, of course, not new. A focus on high-quality performance has always been a part of management and leadership. Lammermeyer's (1990) research shows that quality has been a factor since the earliest management systems. The actual beginnings of the excellence movement can be traced to the ancient past. Ancient civilizations valued high quality in individual and group performance (George 1968). The Phoenicians used a very effective corrective action program to maintain quality: they cut off the hand of the person responsible for unsatisfactory quality. According to Lammermeyer (1990), part of the ancient Phoenician housing construction standards stated that if a builder does not build a strong house, and it falls and kills the owner, the builder will be executed. Even our most fanatical advocates of high quality have not yet reached this level of urgency.

The early impetus of the scientific management movement was on quality, but this value quickly gave way to quantity in the drive for productivity improvement. The industrial revolution reconstituted the way work was done in much of the Western world, including America, by emphasizing the benefits of increased quantity to manufacturing and processing tasks. Quantity factors soon predominated and reduced the focus on individual and unit quality. Nevertheless, early scientific managers introduced us to technologies such as time-and-motion study, statistical

quality control, use of standardized jigs and patterns, and similar techniques to focus worker and managers alike on repeatable quality performance. Thus, the American work force has been committed, motivated, and prepared educationally and psychologically to produce “things” at high levels.

The pressure is still intense to provide more and more things to a growing and demanding population. This pressure to produce has minimized the independent craftsman’s role. As a result, much of the responsibility to secure high quality is built into corporate structures and systems, not in the attitudes and values of the organization’s people. We even delegate the problem of increasing quality to third parties who examine worker product after-the-fact. Now inspectors, behavior modification experts who use psychology to induce – often via implied threats and/or bribes – workers to produce at predetermined levels, and quality control units have responsibility for quality. The results have been to continue to increase quantity at the expense of quality.

The 1970s and 1980s especially brought a renewed interest in making quality a value in contemporary American business and government cultures. Spurred by the successes of post World War II Japan in applying quality control techniques coupled with participative structures, some American organizations moved toward this technology. Current systems typically focus on a commitment to organization-wide quality, a customer service orientation, and measurement of performance effort. The quality movement also impacted leadership theory. It gave rise to the excellence movement most prevalent in the 1980s but still a minor thread in leadership theory. The origins of the most recent ideas about leadership as a focus on excellence stem from the work of Peters and Waterman (1982). Their book, *In Search of Excellence*, relates excellence to caring for others, innovation, and high-quality service, with innovation being the key factor. However, this innovation occurs within an environment of honest concern for all stakeholders.

For Peters and Austin (1985) leadership connotes the task of unleashing follower energy, building, freeing, and allowing for their growth. This definition recasts the dedicated, analytical manager as an enthusiastic coach-leader. These leaders strengthen followers and recognize in tangible ways their creative contributions. This recognition allows followers to grow and the corporation to prosper. To foster excellence in followers, leaders also need to allow them some control in their work and to let them know what the whole organization is all about. Excellent leaders create a culture that fosters excellence and develop cultures that incorporate the leader’s values and practices. Excellent leaders instill a sense of vision of the potential of the individual and in the corporation as an institution.

Defining Quality Operationally

Dictionary definitions of quality include ideas of excellence. Some define quality as existing when successive articles of commerce have their characteristics more nearly like its fellows and more nearly approximating the designer’s intent

(Lammermeyer 1990). Crosby (1984) defines quality as conforming to requirements. He says that we attain quality best by having everyone do it right the first time. And, Juran (1989) defines quality as freedom from waste, trouble, and failure. Others suggest that quality is meeting and exceeding informed customer needs. Still others define quality in global terms, suggesting that it is a composite of the organizational components such as the design, engineering, manufacturing, marketing, and maintenance a given product or service receives.

Defined this way, quality is a function of any work process, including customer satisfaction. Today, many place a strong emphasis on customer satisfaction, not engineering, in defining quality. They see quality as a way of managing, not a task of management. In this connection, too, the Leadership as Excellence Management Perspective is a bridging idea from sterile management to leadership using shared human values. Deming (1986), a founder of the so-called Third Wave of the industrial revolution, defines quality as the result of forecasting customer needs translated into product characteristics to create useful and dependable products. Quality is, in effect, creating a system that can deliver the product at the lowest possible price, consistent with both the customer's and producer's needs.

Accordingly, a key to excellence leadership is to surround the leader with excellent people. To do this, leaders need to understand their followers' capacities and their corporation's particular niche in society. Leaders must also be willing to innovate solutions in sometimes critical situations (Flom 1987). In this leadership perspective, there is an emphasis on values of high-quality service, innovation, and concern for stakeholders. Excellence leaders devolve responsibility on the work force. They use techniques such as quality circles (QCs) or workers councils that recognize, use, and honor the work force.

Excellence leaders create an organizational surround fostering these kinds of people values. Such a culture encourages and rewards effective leadership throughout the organization. It fosters program or task champions and features close interaction between leaders, workers, and customers at all levels. Corporate systems and values emphasize concern with process rather than just product and with people over either product or process (Porter et al. 1987).

The Quality Movement in America

Once quality was only one element among many in corporate management. In the Leadership as Excellence Management Perspective, it is the key element. In this mindset, quality is more a function of the attitudes and style of the leader and the culture he or she creates than it is a function of a specific managerial control system employed. Quality becomes a part of the values, purposes, and goals of both leaders and their followers. It is a part of the value system of corporate leaders and all stakeholders, not a separate add-on system. The focus is on "total quality."

Deming (1986) is credited with introducing this new "philosophy" of management when outlining his TQM ideas. In TQM, a leader is successful as he or she

(1) defines mission, (2) identifies system output, (3) identifies customers, (4) negotiates customers' requirement, (5) develops a "supplier specification" that details customer requirement and expectation, and (6) determines the necessary activities required to fulfill those requirements (Ross 1993). The key ideas in Deming's philosophy are subsumed in his 14 points or philosophical principles.

According to Deming, the leader's job is to transform the system from its current *modus operandi* to one consistent with the 14 principles he enunciates: (1) create consistency of purpose with a plan, (2) adopt the new philosophy of quality, (3) cease dependence on mass inspection, (4) end the practice of choosing suppliers based on price, (5) find problems and work continuously on the system, (6) use modern methods of training, (7) change from production numbers to quality, (8) drive out fear, (9) break down barriers between departments, (10) stop asking for productivity improvement without providing methods, (11) eliminate work standards that prescribe numerical quotas, (12) remove barriers to pride of workmanship, (13) institute vigorous education and retraining, and (14) create a structure in top management that will push these 13 points everyday.

Each of these principles helps define the process of qualitycreation. His principles speak to the need of creating constancy of purpose toward improvement of products and services. They guide leaders toward adopting a philosophy of quality and rejecting the idea that the work group can accept delays, mistakes, defective materials, or faulty workmanship. Deming's philosophy creates a new paradigm of leadership. It involves the use of prediction techniques and scientific methods, but it adds the essential element of building relationships, encouraging communication, and inculcating pride in and rewarding quality work to the work of management.

Deming assigns managers the tasks of working continually to improve the system, instituting modern methods of training, and introducing different methods of supervision of workers. He says that the responsibility of the foreman must change from counting units produced to assessing quality. Deming also advocates the elimination of fear, ensuring everyone's effective work for the company. Leaders, he says, break down the barriers between departments. They abolish numerical goals and slogans for the workers, asking instead for new levels of productivity without providing detailed methods that employees themselves can better supply. The intent of the Deming philosophy is to remove barriers that stand between workers and their right to pride of workmanship.

Deming advises leaders that excellence cannot come as we continue to set specific numerical goals. Abolishing numerical goals lets us focus, rather, on improving the process of work, not just its results. The leader's job is to work continually on improving the system. It is to create a management structure that will strive for high quality every day. Deming says that the responsibility of leader – from foreman to top management – must change from numbers to quality. One way to accomplish this is to drive out fear from the workplace. Leaders should not let bad news intimidate workers so that they can use the information to improve the processes and strive for lowest product price. In every essential respect, Deming's philosophy is a prescription for corporate change favoring a work environment emphasizing excellence. He asks leaders to begin to require constancy of purpose,

including developing and promoting a long-term, corporate commitment to the aim/vision of improving the workplace.

Juran (1989) teaches a ten-step method for implementing quality similar to Deming's 14 principles. Juran's philosophy, however, centers on building awareness of the need and opportunity for improvement. He suggests that leaders set goals for improvement and organize to reach these goals. He supports establishment of quality councils to identify problems, select projects, appoint teams, and choose facilitators. His worker quality councils represent a new form of corporate governance based on values of quality, sharing, and participation. They provide training in quality techniques to workers, who then carry out projects to solve problems. Other elements of his philosophy involve giving recognition for quality performance, communicating quality enhancement skills developed by one council, and keeping score – that is, recording progress routinely to ensure all workers know and understand the organization's priority on quality performance. The bottom line of the Juran philosophy is making improvement part of the regular values, work systems, and processes of the company.

Crosby's (1984) view of quality and Lammermeyer's (1990) excellence focus both have a more managerial feel. Crosby proposes the following absolutes of quality management: quality is defined as conformance to requirements, not "goodness"; the formula for delivering quality is the prevention of poor quality through process control, not appraisal or correction; the performance standard is zero defects, not "good enough"; and rather than measure quality through indices, the measurement of quality is based on the price of nonconformance to the quality process.

Rago (1996) presents an example of excellence leadership in his case study of a planned TQM-type organizational transformation in a Texas State public agency. Although there were many successes over the course of events, they were marked by a series of struggles that had roots in a mixture of uncertainty regarding the next steps to take and in the need for the agency's senior managers to personally transform the way they go about their work. The struggle for managers to make this personal transformation is an important aspect of the study, and it is indicative of deeper leadership issues. Kee and Black (1985) also discuss overarching leadership concerns about bringing this perspective to the group's work. They suggest that implementing quality improvement ideas may face some distinct challenges to success, such as identifying the real customer(s), determining core values, and promoting risk-taking.

All together, the roles and functions of leadership in this perspective stress quality and productivity process improvement rather than just product and people over either product or process, and they require consideration of values, attitudes, and organizational aims within a quality framework. Some of the key elements of this perspective include being sensitive to the human relations needs of workers along with the productivity demands on them, improving the process, having a concern for performance excellence/quality, and focusing on stakeholder development and interaction.

In the excellence leadership model, the leader's job is to teach workers, customers, and indeed all stakeholders, what they need in the way of quality products and to

value high-quality products or services. Most quality control experts see work process as the amalgam of workers, material, equipment, customers, suppliers, and all other stakeholders as well as the larger community within which the firm is housed. These leaders consciously engage in activities to ensure that all coworkers uniformly accept and value corporate goals and methods that revolve around high performance. They do this by manipulating scarce resources, recognizing outstanding performance, setting organizational values, and otherwise establishing expectations of excellence.

Methods to Improve Quality Performance

Leadership as Excellence Management incorporates quality improvement systems that cause stakeholders to accept the values underlying quality enhancement, not just as discrete tools or systems to control worker performance. In this sense, quality is the factor in managing the organizational culture, not task control or supervision. Leadership excellence focuses everyone's attention and energy on high-quality service. The leader's intent is to change coworkers so they internalize the quality value in performing their work.

Attaining quality performance requires the concerted effort of all levels in the organization (Wharff 2004). The first step is to recognize that a quality improvement process can be beneficial to both the corporation and its individual members. Other steps involve specific training in improved techniques and institution of measurement systems to evaluate progress. Leaders are involved in creating and maintaining work systems that emphasize results, measurement of quality, and implementation performance (Danforth 1987). The search for quality extends to hiring, training, placement, and inspiration of coworkers. The quest for quality asks corporation members to accept the quality value and act in accordance with this mental standard. They do this via a variety of techniques seen every day in organizations worldwide and confirmed by study findings examined below.

The Leadership as Excellence Management Perspective appears to be an applied capacity. It is action-oriented, and often, it cannot be learned in classrooms. Of course, some leadership skills are acquired in the normal way through reading, studying, and analyzing theoretical propositions and principles. But leadership excellence is learned most fully as the leader models desired action. It is a dynamic process. Fairholm (1991) identified eight skills that seem to define the technology of excellence. They are as follows:

- The ability to assess the situation
- Sensitivity to evolving trends
- Political astuteness
- A refined sense of timing
- The capacity to build on employee strengths
- The capacity to be inspirational
- The ability to focus on a few key things
- Technical (job) competence

The factors that promote excellence in organizations include clarity of mission, clarity of vision, and effective leadership at the top. Excellence leaders select and support service champions or in-house entrepreneurs. They interact closely with both employees and customers. They understand cultures and work-community structure, emphasize process over product, and focus on human factors to get a high-quality product. These skill areas differ from much of the content of professional business school curricula. These schools teach quantitative analysis and rational decision-making as primary technologies. Unlike management, though, excellence management is more a political process of defining the situation, assessing the strengths of actors, sensing nuances in relationships, and acting to focus group resources at the right time. Technical competence in the job to be done is less important than political sensitivity, or similar skills. Leaders that focus too much on traditional managerial goals of tight control will fall short of attainable high-quality performance and can expect failure, even destruction.

Quality improvement is a long-term, values-changing process. Attaining high quality requires total employee involvement at all levels within the organization. It is a matter of cultural change to give high priority to quality values. It requires effort by everyone: workers, middle managers (Fairholm 2001), and those at the top. Each needs to play a role in changing the culture to value quality and performing to attain it. Producing high-quality products or services also implies quality of worklife factors that are difficult to attain. Excellence leaders need to create a culture that meets the needs of all stakeholders, both inside and outside the organization. They need to give employees something meaningful to commit to before they will obligate themselves to achieving quality goals (Pascarella 1984). Ludeman (1989) suggests, and rightly so in this perspective, that we need to replace the old Protestant work ethic with a “worth ethic.”

High quality will come only as we move from a situation where workers work because they fear economic deprivation to a situation where they work because they want to improve themselves and make a difference in the world. It is an empowerment idea that involves several kinds of leader skills, including self-development, the ability to help stakeholders, and the capacity to build an organizational surround that facilitates excellent performance. Perhaps the most critical feature of the leadership excellence approach is in the behavior exhibited by individual leaders. As they incorporate excellent principles into their lives, they change. And as the leader’s behavior toward others changes, the organization changes. Techniques leaders use to change are many and varied, but they all center on an overriding concern for the development of others so that both leader and led can do a better job in accomplishing the organization’s work. The most significant characteristics of leader behavior are summed up in the idea that leaders care for and respect their stakeholders. This caring behavior is demonstrated in courtesy, listening to understand, and otherwise showing respect for and acceptance of the ideas, actions, and opinions of all coworkers.

Excellence leaders have a penchant for close interaction with coworkers. As the leader seeks to motivate workers to want to perform excellently, critical relationships with employees are forged. Two technologies among several that might be identified in this connection are crucial: coaching and empowerment. Excellent

leaders also work to change corporate culture to value quality. This model of leadership is concerned with behaviors that link performance expectations to such compensations as productivity improvement, motivation, inspiration, commitment to doing right things, accomplishment, ethics, participation, and expectation. Excellence leaders devolve worker responsibility (e.g., QCs or self-directed work teams). Excellence leaders build a culture committed to development and concern for workers. It is results-oriented, not merely activity-oriented. In sum, excellence managers focus on (in order of priority) quality, vision, service, follower transformation, and productivity improvement (Fairholm 1991). This perspective transcends traditional management because it suggests a human values orientation to leadership.

Leadership as Excellence Management: Tools, Behaviors, and Approaches to Followers

This second perspective in the LPM suggests that leadership is limited to the few excellent practitioners of management. Popularized by Peters and Waterman (1982), this perspective concentrates on systemic quality improvements with a focus on the people involved in the processes, the processes themselves, and the quality built into the products produced. The leadership task here is to foster high quality in an environment of honest concern for all stakeholders.

The general framework of Leadership as Excellence Management revolves around an organizational cultural change based on a philosophy of meeting customer requirements through continuous improvement of people, process, and product. Elements of manager-cum-leader behavior in this perspective abstracted from the factor analysis include fostering an atmosphere of continuous process improvement for increased service and productivity levels, transforming the environment and the perceptions of followers to encourage innovation, providing high-quality products and excellent services, focusing on process improvement, listening actively, being accessible (managing by walking around and open-door policies), motivating, engaging people in problem definition and solution, and expressing common courtesy and respect. The mechanisms to achieve success in this perspective include training, communications, recognition systems, teamwork, and customer satisfaction programs. The following brief elaborations of the leadership elements found in Table 4 and shown in Fig. 4 help describe this perspective of the LPM.

Encouraging High-Quality Products and Services

Contrary to popular myth, corporate customers do not often provide useful information about what they need and the level of quality they require. Often customers do not know what is possible or what options may be open to them respecting new

Table 4 Key excellence management leadership elements

Leadership perspective	Leadership elements	Illustrative citations
Excellence Management	Foster continuous process improvement environment for increased service and productivity levels	Deming 1986; Juran 1989; Ross 1993
	Transform the environment and perceptions of followers to encourage innovation, high-quality products, and excellent services	Deming 1986; Juran 1989; Peters and Waterman 1982; Rago 1996
	Focusing on process improvement	Davis and Luthans 1984; Deming 1986; Ross 1993
	Listening actively	Fairholm 1991; Hefitz and Laurie 1998
	Being accessible (to include such things as managing by walking around, open-door policies)	Deming 1986; Hefitz and Laurie 1998
	Motivation	Deming 1986; Herzberg 1987; Herzberg et al. 1959; Hughes et al. 1993; Juran 1989; McGregor et al. 1966; Roethlisberger 1956

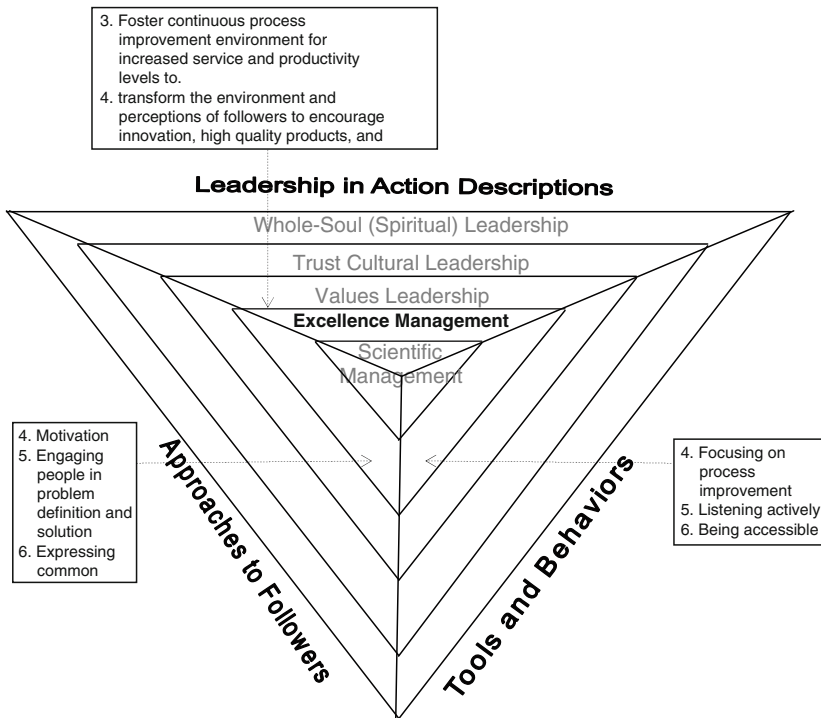


Fig. 4 Leadership Perspectives Model – leadership as excellence management

or higher quality products or services. However, leaders do. A central task of excellence leadership is to cultivate in customers and workers the idea that “best-practices” are most often guided by knowledge developed through the actions of leaders. Unfortunately, traditional definitions of quality, including automation, computerization, close inspection, zero defects, Management by Objectives, and quality control ignore the responsibility of leaders and place responsibility on workers, equipment, suppliers, or third-party quality control experts. Leaders create quality, shape control programs, and give these programs meaning. Surely this is the case with one such successful program: quality circles (QC). Consisting of small groups of about ten people, including a unit leader, a QC meets regularly to identify, analyze, and solve problems they experience on the job. In effect, a QC program makes the members minileaders, each with the same goal of improving current performance by creating improvement programs, selling them to higher management, and ensuring their implementation.

Ultimately, the success of quality improvement is a function of workers’ willingness to take personal ownership of their part of the organization. Along with other techniques, QCs help workers improve productivity, raise employee morale, sharpen interpersonal problem-solving skills, and improve the level of customer service – all functions and goals sought by leaders. To be effective, quality values must be an integral part of the organization’s management philosophy. Leadership as excellence targets productivity improvement by changing the way people work together, what they value, and their problem-solving and goal accomplishment skills. Excellence managers ask organizations to treat employees as adults: to trust them, respect them, and help them become their best selves. Attaining high quality requires group members to be involved in the quest for quality (Peters and Waterman 1982). More than just discrete programs of action, it is a philosophy of worker self-governance.

Process Improvement

A critical element in leadership excellence is the leader’s ability to direct attention toward established priorities. We all pay attention to something(s). The problem is to select and consistently focus on what the corporation needs and wants. Paying attention is focusing on one thing as opposed to all other – often good – things. Focusing helps the leader communicate a consistent message to all stakeholders and to the larger communities within which the corporation has place. Focusing tells members of the group and the world what the leader thinks is important.

The leadership excellence literature describes a new kind of leader, one markedly different from the traditional managerial model. The old model is not wrong; it is just incomplete. While it specified elements of style, the style espoused was sterile. While it included elements of interpersonal relationships, the relationships defined lacked passion, emotion, and commitment. The old management model is founded on one value: efficiency. The Leadership as Excellence Management Perspective is supported

on several development-of-others values in addition to efficiency. The practice of leadership is active, enthusiastic, dynamic, and personal. Excellence values honor people, innovation, and high-quality service. The leader's ability to inculcate these ideals and demonstrate them in his or her relationships with stakeholders and through the corporate culture is the measure of leadership success.

The essence of this philosophy is much more than just statistical control: it is a leadership paradigm involving a new iteration of the role of the executive. It involves the use of prediction techniques and scientific methods, but it adds to the leader's work the essential elements of building relationships, encouraging communication, and inculcating pride for and rewarding quality work. The role and functions of leadership in this perspective emphasize quality and productivity process improvement rather than just product and people over either product or process, and, furthermore, this perspective requires the management of values, attitudes, and organizational aims within a framework of quality improvement. Some of the key elements of this perspective include being sensitive to the human relations needs of workers along with the productivity demands on them, improving work processes, having a concern for performance excellence and quality, and focusing on stakeholder development and interaction. Certainly as leadership pertains to fostering quality improvement, Davis and Luthans (1984) are right in concluding that it exists as a causal variable in subordinate behavior and organizational performance by evaluating the impact of specific process improvements.

Listening Actively

Heifitz (1994) emphasizes the importance of listening and accessibility in managerial roles, and Fairholm (2001) mentions that leaders need to listen naively – as if they had not heard the worker's ideas before. Deming (1986) also makes a point that quality initiatives must place significant emphasis on the individual and on individual expression. Study respondents likewise emphasized the tools and behaviors referenced in the research regarding excellence management. Several of their comments elaborate this element's scope. They expressed that leaders should “listen, not necessarily agree, but listen”; “Give ideas, give feedback”; “Go to [the] group and ask, include, share.” Overall, participants indicated that leadership “is about involving other people, including others in the work done, and helping them feel good about it.” You must be a good listener. Some of the best changes have come from ideas generated by interactive conversation.

Being Accessible

Excellence leadership is done at the work sight. Excellent leaders cultivate people critical to their success, as well as other stakeholders, including ordinary workers. In this connection, surveyed executives noted that “because of leaders, some organizations are

progressive and come up with, and allow for, new products and services. Leaders are enabled to redefine the work place to make it more comfortable, productive, people-focused, employee friendly, customer friendly, diverse, etc.” They noted that Management by Wandering Around, a name for an extensive network of informal, open communications with all stakeholders, is often used by excellent leaders. The purpose of this technique is to tap information sources and get mutual understanding of what is going on, what is needed, and how to go about closing the gap. It involves staying in regular, informal contact with stakeholders at their work sites, not just in formal conference rooms. Good leaders wander around in all of the corporation’s workstations (Peters and Waterman 1982). Wandering puts leaders literally in touch with workers and their work and with customers and their concerns. It balances book knowledge about leadership with working knowledge of the work being done.

Motivation

Study respondents confirm that motivation is a key descriptor of the Leadership as Excellence Management Perspective. One commented that “leadership is a process of organizing to get work accomplished. The task is to motivate others and get others involved. Lead the ship; give guidance. Help others see the same vision.” Two techniques were highlighted by this research: Empowerment and Authentic Coaching. Empowerment assumes that the leader values workers as the best parts of the corporate machine. Study respondents urged leaders to “involve people in process” and to “[e]ncourage ownership of the work, of the process.”

Former theory believed the opposite: while they may be important to success, the employee was viewed essentially as a bundle of skills, knowledge, and abilities useful to the manager in the production process. However, times and people have changed. Workers no longer will accept this limited view of themselves and their level of contribution to the collective enterprise. Today’s workers are better educated and far more independent than ever before, and they are more wanting. Pfeffer (1977) argues that people want to achieve feelings of control over their environment. Workers want to make a difference, and leaders will attract followers if they allow them to make this difference.

Conger and Kanungo (1988) define empowerment in terms of motivation. For them, it is enabling, rather than simply delegating. Being empowered enlarges employees’ perception and gets them to explore possibilities. It raises their capacity to perform. It releases the power in others through collaboration. It endows employees with the power required to perform a given act, and it grants them the practical autonomy to step out and contribute directly, in their unique ways, to the job. Empowered people respond to work and to crises at work with commitment; powerless people do not. It is moving people from *believing* to *doing* to *becoming*.

Excellent leaders respect their coworkers. They expend large amounts of time and resources in seeking, developing, and expanding the capacities of those around them who are engaged in the common work. Leadership excellence reflects this

kind of caring in the same way that craftsmen feel about their craft (Tolley 2003). Real craftsmanship, regardless of the skill involved, reflects authentic caring, and real caring reflects our attitudes about ourselves, our fellows, and about life itself.

Sharing Problem Definition and Solution

Vroom and Jago (1988) advocate the engagement of followers in defining problems and solving those problems in a context of participation throughout the organization. Typical of this is the comment of one surveyed executive: “Leadership is change. It is providing tools that others need. You need to be able to see what change is necessary.” Hughes et al. (1993) confirm this when they state that many people think the key attribute of a leader is being able to help others to complete group projects. Roethlisberger et al. (1941) emphasize the impact of human influences in personal and organizational motivation. McGregor et al. (1966) summarize various perspectives and research findings concerning the managerial imperative of motivation. Herzberg et al. (1959) also emphasize the role of motivation in organizations and unpack the meaning and tools of motivation.

Surveyed executives confirm this aspect of excellence leadership by observing that “followers need to feel that their input is valid and appreciated. Having an open door policy is good and you need to be approachable. You must never seem that there is a disconnect.” Another adjured leaders to “get more people involved in decision-making to tackle whatever issues pop up. Involvement is essential. If you can change the level of involvement, you can change the quality of outcomes.” These responses support and specify the nature and scope of excellent leadership action.

Expressing Common Courtesy

Deceptively simple is the technique of showing courtesy to others’ works. Leaders can increase quality commitment in their employees through the simple act of being courteous in their relationships with them. Excellent leaders respect the talent, feelings, and concerns of their stakeholders, including customers. This often uncommon behavior works, but only if the relationship is authentic. This was confirmed by specific comments from study subjects. One said: “Treat everyone with respect; respect their skills, point of view, perspectives (professional, cultural, etc.)” Another remarked: “You need to be respectful to their opinions, whether you agree or not. You need to value them as people; as a person. At times, you have to call them on inappropriate behavior, but you don’t get respect easily by bossing them around.” These findings reinforce the idea that excellence management elements are useful in distinguishing this leadership perspective from the other five. They consistently focus on change and improvement, listening and accessibility, motivation, respect, and engaging others in the work of solving problems as key distinguishing characteristics of this perspective.

Summary and Conclusions

Survey and interview respondents who described themselves as holding the Excellence Management Perspective see leadership as a function of a few superlative qualities, concentrated around quality performance and excellence, which a manager possesses. The perspective differs from scientific management in that respondents referenced the Approaches to Followers elements most often in describing this perspective. Motivational elements in their Approach to Followers make up 32% of their descriptions here. All tolled, 48% of the references to this perspective deals with how individuals relate to and interact with followers. Data confirm that this perspective is more heavily weighted toward recognizing the importance of followers in the leadership phenomenon than is the previous perspective (only 22% of comments deal with Tools and Behaviors). The Leadership in Action category makes up 31% of the elements, suggesting that the perspective is reasonably well-defined and generally recognizable by surveyed respondents.

These data reveal that the main elements in this perspective deal with motivation, highlighting high quality, focusing on continual process improvement, and engaging others in responding to problems. The emphasis is on continuous improvement and follower involvement. Typical of this emphasis is the comment of one respondent: “Leadership is... a state of constant education. Not only of oneself but also of a process, the act of changing or trying to improve a system or process is one that needs to be a focus point of a leader. There is nothing worse than hearing ‘it’s the way we have always done it.’...” Another said: “The leader must facilitate continuous improvement in staff performance and continued input from staff and customers to keep the vision relevant as it moves along.” Innovation and improvement are central to these quotations and to the perspective as a whole.

Leadership excellence is partly about transforming the leader’s perspective, partly about changing follower perceptions, and partly about transforming the common culture. And in the attainment of these results, all three parts are improved, developed, matured. Leadership excellence is a change process affecting all stakeholders and the institution itself. This leadership mindset changes each into something more than it was before. This transformation takes place in a consciously created and managed culture that prioritizes quality excellence. As such, the Leadership as Excellence Management Perspective provides the bridging structure supporting the leadership tree that now is defined in terms of values, culture, and the spiritual center of both leader and led.