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MGT560: Leading Organization

Leadership Critique Report for Tech Innovations Submitted

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1. Introduction

Leadership is one of the most critical aspects of any organization because it directly impacts the performance, culture, and long-term success of a firm. The type of leadership an organization chooses to operate under defines how decisions are made within the company, the motivation of employees, and, in turn, how readily a company can adapt to changes in the business environment. From the world that is moving at a faster pace with increased connectivity today, the aspect of leadership styles should incorporate new ways that consider technological advancement and better ways of communication. The following report aims to assess the leading style at Tech Innovations, a mid-sized technology firm, and to recommend a new leadership approach more germane to the 21st-century workplace.

Tech Innovations is a fast-growing company that specializes in developing software solutions for businesses. It has been in operation for over a decade now, expanding from a 15-employee tenant to a well-established organization with more than 500 employees. The same company, Tech Innovations, still retains a largely traditional leadership style that, although effective in its inception, is starting to show signs of potential breakdowns as the company continues to grow. While this has been quite effective in managing small teams, the hierarchical and top-down approach is proving to be less agile in managing larger and complex organizational structures. In addition to this, the system of leadership existing does not enable lateral communication among departments. Moreover, it is immensely slow to respond to the rapidly shifting technology market nowadays.

Tech Innovations faced problems in the recent past that have exposed the deficiency in its current style of leadership. These teams very often have to work with belated responses from management, which affects efficient and quick completion of projects. Also, interdepartmental communication has become highly relevant for the company while it grows, but the absence of an integrated approach has hampered smooth cooperation. There is growing irritation among the employees about not being able to involve cross-functional teams into decision-making. It has manifested in higher turnover rates, a slowing pace of innovation, and a growing divide between leadership and employees.

To that effect, Tech Innovations hired consultants who could help them evaluate and strengthen their leadership practices. The leadership in the company now recognizes that the way business was done is insufficient at this rapid pace concerning team management and internal communication. They are seeking a more dynamic and progressive leadership that permits teamwork, faster decision-making, and an extended use of technology. The leadership is equally interested in exploring the internal networks in the company which it has created but hitherto not fully utilized its potential and capacity in introducing innovations and efficiency.

This report shall examine the present leadership style and communication structure of Tech Innovations. It will also analyze the efficiency of the company's leadership practices and will come up with recommendations for a new leadership strategy that shall be more relevant for addressing modern business challenges. The strategy will then include a transformational leadership approach so as to ensure collaboration, innovation, and adaptability. Additionally, the plan on communication will be proposed, which will include the use of 21st-century technologies, developing collaboration, and enhancing the speed of decision-making between departments. It is supposed to act like a roadmap, which will help Tech Innovations migrate from its traditional leadership style to a more agile, network-based style that would fit the needs of a modern organization.

The report will be structured into three sections, the first of which encompasses an overview of Tech

Innovations' current leadership practices, including a review of how leadership decisions are developed and then communicated across business functions. The second part of the paper will critically analyze these leadership practices in light of the strengths, weaknesses, and areas that need to be strengthened or improved. Finally, the report will develop a new leadership strategy that includes the adoption of the transformational leadership style, revised communication strategy, and better use of the available networks of the company. With these changes, Tech Innovations will be in a position to adapt easily to the rapidly changing technological environment of today and enhance its responsiveness and innovativeness.

2. Leadership Practices of Tech Innovations

The Current Leadership Style:

In the main, Tech Innovations applies a transactional leadership style where the leadership role is defined in terms of specific goals to be accomplished with rewards linked to performance. The leader sets objectives, supervises employee performance, and provides rewards or penalties according to performance against targets set. Although this leadership style helped the company to be goal-directed, it also has its critical limitations. Most of the decision-making at Tech Innovations resides at the level of the executive; there is much less contribution from the lower-level employees or even middle management itself. This makes its decision-making top-down, where most decisions are made by the senior leadership and then trickle down to department heads and finally to their teams. As a result, hardly any opportunity arises for creative input from lower-tier employees, hindering innovation and dampening initiative.

The leadership style within Tech Innovations has served the company well in terms of meeting immediate goals and maintaining control over its operations. However, it is clear that such a rigid structure bears little application to the needs that continue to grow within this company. While the company is growing, it does present the leadership with difficulties that definitely call for more flexibility and adaptability than the transactional style can provide. Emphasis on performance metrics and rewards has made the leadership give less attention to employee development or building an environment where new ideas could be brought forth. This has created a working culture whereby laborers are more focused on job completion rather than the long-term strategic goals or even innovating within their scope.

The hierarchy within this organization is clear: the departmental heads and managers are to enforce policies that have been formulated by the executive team, and little room for divergence is allowed toward multiple directions. While this line of authority provides for smooth-running activities, it has also created a culture where workers are alienated from the general intent of the company. Most employees perceive themselves as taking instructions from others rather than being actively involved in fostering the growth and innovative ability of the organization. This lack of participation by employees at various levels of the company has led to lost opportunities toward innovative and collaborative solutions.

Leadership Philosophy:

Efficiency and the meeting of short-term goals are actually what dominate the leadership philosophy at Tech Innovations. The management team has emphasized meeting quarterly targets, controlling costs, and operational efficiency. This performance-based outlook insinuates that, through tangible results-a higher revenue or timelines associated with the development of a product, for example-a leader would be more focused on such. Although this has managed to sustain the company financially, it has concurrently worked to stunt the potential of employees long-term, along with the organization altogether.

While innovation at the project level is encouraged within the firm, especially in terms of product development, it is barely observed at the leadership level. Much focus is not placed on developing leaders internally, and there are very few leadership training or mentorship programs available. The philosophy of leadership invests little in employee development; hence, leadership rising through ranks is seldom seen. This has further led to employee turnover whereby employees seeking personal and professional growth leave to join more active and developing organizations.

Communication and Usage of Technology:

On communication, it can be asserted that Tech Innovations is still heavily reliant on traditional modes of communications, including emails, scheduled meetings, and memos. While this method of communication has worked for the organization over the years, they are now a hindrance, with the organization's growth. These practices rely on email and occasional face-to-face meetings to converse, thus delaying decision-making and the implementation of projects. Besides that, the absence of an integrated communication platform leads several departments to work in an uncoordinated manner, which then leads to miscommunication and inefficiency. For instance, a decision made at the executive level might take days or even weeks to filter to where teams will actually do something with it, slowing the pace of project implementation.

It has implemented a couple of modern project management tools, like Asana, to help better organize workflows and tasks. However, these tools are not consistently used throughout the organization. Where certain teams use Asana, others use very outdated tools or manual processes; thus, communication and coordination remain fragmented. This inconsistent use of technology has contributed to inefficient interdepartmental communication, whereby some teams have progressed faster than others simply because they happen to use the existing tools better. Basically, Tech Innovations should adopt a much more integrated and coordinated communication strategy that allows seamless collaboration throughout the levels of the company.

3. Critique of Leadership Practices

- **Strengths of Current Leadership:**

The transactional leadership style at Tech Innovations has been one of the significant contributory factors to its past successes, particularly during the company's initial period of growth. One of the significant positive aspects of this style of leadership is that it is very clear. The employees within Tech Innovations are set within clearly defined roles, where specific targets and expectations are clearly stated. As a result, there is little ambiguity regarding what is expected of them, and they can therefore focus on the key deliverables. The transactional approach has a very strong drive toward immediate, tangible results that have enabled the company to meet tight deadlines and ensure projects are completed on time.

The reward system associated with transactional leadership also plays an important role in motivating the employees. Performance-based rewards ensure that good performance is well rewarded, hence creating a strong incentive to meet or beat targets. This has been rather effective within the product development and sales teams of the company, where measurable goals are effectively linked to output and financial rewards. Due to this, Tech Innovations has met its financial targets each year, remained profitable, and thus sustained business growth over the years. The clarity of the structure and performance-based approach have resulted in stability within the work environment, where the flow of work is by and large predictable and fits well with the company's focus on projects.

There is also a sense of hierarchy within the company, giving a line of command. Its positive attribute is that decisions can be swiftly made at an executive level, which is passed on down the line to heads of departments and team leaders efficiently and clearly. This top-down way of making decisions has worked well to keep teams on task and maintaining control for projects that are smaller and more regular. In a nutshell, the transactional leadership style has worked as a means to develop a responsible, results-oriented workforce while keeping the company financially sound.

- **Weaknesses of Current Leadership:**

While strong in their own right, there are also considerable weaknesses associated with the transactional leadership style utilized by Tech Innovations, especially as the company increases in size and complexity. The major weakness of the approach is its narrow focus on innovation and long-term employee development. The transactional model has mainly short-term objectives and does not build a milieu where creative problem-solving or innovation can thrive. Workers are so busy trying to meet immediate objectives that little time or motive exists to consider anything beyond the task at hand or to suggest any new idea. This situation has resulted in stifling creativity, as new ideas fall by the wayside for the tried-and-tested method. The second major weakness is a feeling of detachment by lower-level employees from the managerial leadership. The strongly hierarchical system at Tech Innovations allows little room for input from ranks by placing the decision-making firmly within the upper levels of management; feelings among the workforce that their voices have to be heard spur this on to growing disengagement and dissatisfaction. As a result of not being actively included in the decision-making process, employees have quit the company to pursue more rewarding and engaging opportunities elsewhere.

The management of the company itself is highly structured, which significantly slows down communications and decisions. This is most evident when there is a need for cooperation between various departments. The top-down approach to making decisions causes bottlenecks in that the decisions need to pass through layers of management before trickling down to the teams executing them. This has proved to be a problem in the rapid-developing technological sector, where changes in market conditions may require immediate responses. The inability of the company to make quick decisions is realized in its slow pace of adjustment, which at the end affects its competitive platform in the market.

Further, a lack of emphasis on communication tools and platforms makes the issue even worse. The use of channels of communication that are deemed outdated, such as emails and scheduled meetings, contributes much to delays in project implementation. In addition, departments work in isolation without real-time collaboration tools; hence, miscommunication and delay in project completion occur. This has been a major weakness of the company, which has significantly added to inefficiencies. Thus, leadership modernization is highly warranted.

- **Improvement Opportunities:**

There are abundant opportunities for improvement in the leadership practice of Tech Innovations to shift more toward a transformational approach instead of a transactional leadership style. Indeed, transformational leadership-which specializes in inspiring and motivating other people to do more than simply accomplish a task-would be greatly beneficial to the culture of collaboration and innovation at the company. Unlike transactional leadership, which ultimately discourages creative thinking among employees in favor of meeting immediate, short-term goals, transformational leadership supports and encourages employees to contribute thoughtfully toward achieving strategic, long-term objectives. But not only would employee engagement go up; their innovations in either products or solutions could grant Tech Innovations a competitive advantage it has been lacking.

Besides this, transformational leadership emphasizes employee development and empowerment:. A very good use of the money invested in leadership training and mentorship programs would be to create a pipeline of future leaders within Tech Innovations. This would resolve the existing problem of employee disengagement and high turnover because individuals are willing to stay in an environment where they feel valued and see opportunities for growth. More autonomy throughout the levels of the organization will allow employees to be more invested in the company's success and will help to create a more cohesive organizational culture.

Modernization of the communication infrastructure would provide Tech Innovations with the opportunity to bring about remarkable improvement in interdepartmental collaboration. The integration of modern communication platform adoption, such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, or even some form of cloud-based project management system, will help them communicate seamlessly and rid themselves of protracted delays in decision-making. These platforms avail the teams' real-time collaboration and make sure that teams can communicate efficiently, either in or out of the department, no matter the location. Along this line, developing an agile communication system, Tech Innovations will be in a position to reduce bottlenecks, improve project completion times, and become more responsive toward market changes.

In the end, even though the transactional leadership model has proven successful thus far for Tech Innovations, improvements can clearly be made. By providing more transformational leadership and modernized communication infrastructure, one could spur greater innovation, increased employee satisfaction, and more adaptability in an increasingly competitive environment.

4. Proposed Strategic Leadership Strategy Plan (500 words)

A. Review and Revision of the Current Policy on Leadership

The transactional method of operation, which Tech Innovations has adopted, has been very successful so far in realizing short-term goals through the establishment of clear expectations and rewarding performance-based outcomes. However, the growth of the company and increasing demands of the business environment make this increasingly unworkable for long-term sustainability. While transactional leadership might have its place in routine tasks, it does little for creativity, collaboration, or employee engagement. What conditions of the prevailing competitive and fast-moving market call for is a kind of leadership that would ensure innovativeness and adaptability.

In any case, the company would have to go ahead with the Transformational Leadership style that inspires and motivates a workforce to perform beyond expectation and innovatively contribute towards the goals of the company. The transformational leaders are mentors and coaches who empower the employees to take responsibility for their role and participate in the decision-making process. A change in approach would call for a more distributed leadership model wherein the leaders at every level in the organization take active participation in empowering their teams.

This would mainly be a revision in the leadership structure to flatten the existing hierarchy. For example, both the departmental heads and middle managers would then have more autonomy to make decisions quickly without having to wait for approval from the higher levels of management. By empowering these leaders, Tech Innovations can speed up decision-making and, therefore, make it more agile. Also, designing an appropriate feedback mechanism through which the leaders interact with employees ensures that the leadership practices operate in an environment of constant evolution in practice through inputs from all layers of the organization. Periodical reviews, questionnaires, and open lines of communication will serve to crystallize policies of leadership and keep them oriented to the aims of the company for the long term.

B. Impact on the Organization Culture

A transformational leadership style would go a long way in positively affecting the company culture at Tech Innovations. Transformational leadership helps create a kind of work culture that is collaborative-in other words, one in which employees are valued for contributions other than just meeting quotas or short-term objectives. This engenders a more inclusive and dynamic work environment where employees are empowered to share ideas and work collaboratively across departments.

The growth of the employees through mentorship programs, training, and leadership opportunities would further create at Tech Innovations a culture of learning and continuous improvement. In such a way, employee engagement would be improved and job satisfaction and retention rates would increase accordingly. Employees will feel closer to the company's vision and mission since they would realize their active role and contribution to shaping the future of the organization. A culture of empowerment and open communication would further drive innovation, as employees feel encouraged to think outside the box and contribute creative solutions to solve the company's challenges.

C. Communication Plan Using 21st Century Technologies

Effective communication is always important in the growth process of any organization. For better inter-departmental communications and to build a well-knit team, it is recommended that Tech Innovations embrace one of the advanced online communication platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Slack. These solutions enable real-time communication, project management, and file sharing in one place, and no matter where the teams are actually located, working together will become much easier for them.

On the other hand, the integration of video conferencing tools should be done for virtual meetings, especially when the team or departments are from other locations. This will ensure that regular virtual check-in and collaboration sessions keep everyone updated on important aspects. Furthermore, the company shall implement a cloud-based project management tool such as Monday.com or Trello. These platforms not only facilitate communication but also give transparency to the project progress by enabling the teams to monitor tasks and achievements in real time. This will enhance accountability, reduce delays, and facilitate collaboration across departments.

D. Engaging Existing Networks

Certainly, there are a great number of informal networks within Tech Innovations alone, such as project-based teams and cross-departmental task forces. Leadership within the company underutilizes such networks. One way the company might better capitalize on these networks is through their formalization—that is, clearly defining leadership roles within cross-functional teams and giving such leaders autonomy. The result would be increased speed of decision-making and collaboration across departments.

Apart from that, Tech Innovations should embrace a regular "innovation roundtable" where various departments come together to share ideas and further work on projects. The roundtable discussions would give birth to creative ways and how leadership could tap into the myriad talents and perspectives within the organization. Formalizing these networks and encouraging collaboration across departments can have Tech Innovations unleash the full power of its human resources for innovative solutions in every nook and corner of the company.

5. Conclusion:

While such a transactional leadership style has been quite a good foundation for Tech Innovations, it is quite obvious that for the business to remain competitive in today's fast-evolving world of business, it needs to look into modernizing the styles of leadership. In light of these factors, the present focus on short-term performance and rigid hierarchical structures has empowered the company to realize steady growth, yet indeed has some limiting effects on creativity, innovation, and employee engagement. Tech Innovations must undertake a whole-scale transformation to usher itself into the future. It has to create a workplace culture marked by employee empowerment and teamwork, long-term development which would eventually trickle down to innovation and proactiveness in solving work-related problems.

Additionally, developing a communication strategy will involve adopting the most recent technologies such as real-time collaboration platforms and cloud-based project management systems that enable our departments to work a great deal more efficiently. It is expected that with better internal networks and the ability of cross-functional teams to collaborate more fluidly, the company should be in a position to drive innovation and quick response to changes in the market.

In sum, this places Tech Innovations at the forefront of this change and ignites a very dynamic, flexible, forward-thinking organization. Such an environment would give employees the morale to stay with the company and provide leadership with better-informed decisions much quicker, which is vital for 21st-century success.

References:

- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading Change*. Harvard Business Review Press.

This is a seminal book about change management, indicating how leadership is the driver for organizational change, and, as such, very relevant to your discussion on Tech Innovations that need transformational leadership.

- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Burns was the original proposer of the concept of transformational leadership, so this will be a seminal piece for the section related to your discussion on transactional to transformational leadership.

- Goleman, D. (2000). *Leadership That Gets Results*. Harvard Business Review, 78(2), 78-90.

This article describes several styles of leadership and their impact on business performance. The article discusses emotional intelligence, which links into your discussion of how leadership impacts company culture.

- Heifetz, R., Glashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Harvard Business Press.

This book describes adaptive leadership, which can support your recommendations related to agility and responsiveness to market fluctuations in leadership.

- Collins, J. (2001). *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap. and Others Don't*. Harper Business.

Discusses how companies create long-term success in a business due to a focus on leadership and culture and aligns with your proposal for revising the leadership strategies at Tech Innovations.

- Daft, R. L. (2014). *The Leadership Experience*. Cengage Learning.

This text will give a broad discussion on various leadership theories and practices that might contextualize further your critique of the leadership style at Tech Innovations.

- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. Doubleday.

This book by Senge places focus on the concept of learning organizations developed through leadership. You might find it helpful in discussing employee development and fostering innovation.

- Zaccaro, S. J., & Kalinowski, R. J. (2002). *The Nature of Organizational Leadership: Understanding the Performance Imperatives Confronting Today's Leaders*. Jossey-Bass.

Gives insight on the complex imperatives and drivers leaders face within today's organizations to inform your critique and proposed strategies.

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