

Charismatic Leadership: The Elusive Factor in Organizational Effectiveness

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- Charismatic leadership is a process that transforms followers and moves organizational members from an existing present state toward some future state or idealized goal or radical reform. In contrast, "Administrators" act as caretakers (influence others through *position* power). "Noncharismatic" leaders are change agents who direct or nudge people toward traditional goals.
- Charismatic leaders are different from both consensual leaders and directive leaders in their use of personal power—it is manifest in their elitist idealized vision, their entrepreneurial advocacy for radical change, and their depth of knowledge and expertise. Each of the following has cognitive and behavioral components:
 - (1) Critical evaluation of a context and problem-*finding* skills (sees deficiencies or defines problems in status quo (may create crisis); charismatic when vision represents embodiment of a perspective shared by followers in idealized form.
 - (2) Visioning (goals) and planning (tactics) skills: Envision long-term future, plan realistic but unconventional ways to achieve vision (can benefit from creativity training); see QUEST in Bennis & Nanus' *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge* (quick environmental scanning technique).
 - (3) Communication skills (provides meaning, inspiration):
 - (a) Speech articulation (of vision)—an act of persuasion, meaning-making (could use voice coaching, analysis of inspirational speakers on film/video; make it clear, *specific*, simple; inspiring language).
 - (b) Interpersonal sensitivity (to followers' needs)—what is right for the times, right for the organization, and right for the people who are working on it? Has to do with work motivation, what people can and cannot do, feedback, scanning the environment realistically, reducing resistance.
 - (4) Exemplary personal behavior and impression management skills:
 - (a) Modeling high personal risk and cost (financial, social)—unconventional and risky behavior; heroic deeds; personal sacrifices (impression management)
 - (b) Appearance
 - (c) Body language
 - (d) Verbal skills—word choice; metaphors; analogies; paralanguage/word intent; select words that convey assertiveness, confidence, expertise, concern for followers' needs; use of rhetoric; high energy; persistence.
 - (5) Empowering skills (continually reinforcing followers' sense of efficacy):
 - (a) Reward systems that emphasize innovation; jobs with task variety, advancement prospects; express confidence and high performance expectations.
 - (b) Foster opportunities for subordinates to influence/participate in decisions.
 - (c) Provide autonomy from bureaucratic constraint.
 - (d) Set inspirational, meaningful goals.
- Necessary = Goal commitment, work involvement, power/esteem motive patterns.