

LEADERS' WORK

Bottom Line Results Through Applied Science

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Translating academic research into business impact.

Vision

Business leaders, talent managers, and consultants leveraging current psychology and brain science research to increase productivity and focus development investments.

GOALS

Increase the speed of moving from research to business use.

Typically, the lag time from research to application is measured in years; our goal is to increase the speed of application to months.

Increase the accuracy of translation from research to application.

As research results are "whispered down the lane" critical information is lost. Our goal is to preserve the conditions under which the research outcomes are true.

Author's Note

All human beings, including writer/editors have their own perceptual screens. In order to help you more accurately weigh the information in this Journal, this author is aware of the following personal perceptual screens which will impact selection and description of information.

- **Leaders have followers:**

If you are charging up a hill, saber drawn, and no one's behind you, you are not a leader. You are an individual contributor with a big problem on your hands.

- **Skilled people who have no followers can be valued as individual and/or team contributors.**

If you have Pablo, the Picasso of welding, on your shop floor, do not poke, prod, pester or promote him (unless he says he want that and has the skills). Let Pablo be Picasso, pay him well and applaud his work

- **Leadership is in the person not the title. A title can confer authority but not leadership.**

- **Leadership ability is best judged by followers, constituents and results over time**

Some leaders stand the test of time, others do not, even though we may pay them enormous speaking fees in the interim.

- **Not every one wants to be a leader but some accept the title in order to get a raise**

- **Not every one can be a leader, pop psychology to the contrary.**

Self mastery can make you a strong individual contributor and is necessary but not sufficient for leadership.

All "Case in Point" examples are factual and only the names have been changed.

All Overviews, Article Summaries, and Applications are the work the of the author who is responsible for their content and interpretation of theory. Readers are encouraged to read the original articles for more detailed accounts.

Key Concept:

The relationship between manager and employee is pivotal in business. On that relationship turns productivity, willingness to go above and beyond, willingness to offer improvement suggestions and stress levels exhibited. Stress levels and emotional impact are important to business in that medical studies indicate prolonged stress creates poor health which increases healthcare costs and decreases productivity.

OVERVIEW

Documented Business Impact of LMX:

1. High quality relationships between leaders and members generally result in increased productivity, going the extra mile for the leader and to a lesser extent going the extra mile for the organization.
2. Employees tend to generalize their impression of immediate managers to judge the whole company
3. Employees who have a good relationship with their immediate manager tend to see the company in a positive light. These employees generally are:
 - a. More productive
 - b. Willing to help others
 - c. Take on more responsibility
 - d. Better ambassadors for the company
4. Employees who have a poor relationship with their immediate manager tend to see the company as a poor place to work. These employees tend to:
 - a. Display a “not my job” attitude
 - b. Do the minimum required to stay employed
 - c. Bad mouth their manager and the company

Positive working relationships (high LMX) are developed when managers tend to:

- Adapt their communication style to the needs of each direct report
- Develop and build strengths in each direct report
- Build trust through consistency and follow through
- Reward informally and formally

Negative working relationships (low LMX) are developed when managers tend to:

- Communicate little
- Use a “one size fits all” style
- Either micro manage or are hands off

Whether high or low, LMX is the direct report’s perception of his or her relationship with the boss. Therefore, no fixed point exists against which the quality of the relationship can be measured. Also, LMX has largely been studied in the context of one to one relationships between the leader and a direct report. There is less research on leader to team interaction.

That said, the direct report’s perception of the leader-follower relationship still matters because it impacts productivity and the quality of follower’s contribution to the organization.

EXTENSIONS AND CONDITIONS OF LMX

Managers and direct reports interact regularly and, for better or worse, form a relationship. This is what academics refer to as Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). Many leaders are already familiar with the idea of LMX and so may wish to skim or skip the overview which is intended as a refresher. Following the overview are recent studies offering keen insights into specific business applications. These insights can be implemented to improve business productivity.

Leader-Member Exchange has been studied in relationship to other organizational behaviors and concepts such as:

- Psychological Contract
- Corporate Citizenship
- Workplace Emotions
- Leader/work team perceptions

Psychological Contract

Psychological Contract is an employee's perception of how he or she should be treated by the organization and what he or she in turn owes the organization. This has little to do with any written employment contract; it is what the employee believes is fair treatment in exchange for a fair day's work. Employees may see the organizations as "more than fair," "fair" or "unfair" in its treatment of employees. Any of those three perceptions tend to affect the employee's level of productivity.

The tie to LMX is that employees tend to see their immediate manager as the face of the organization. The employee's evaluation of the manager as "more than fair," "fair" or "unfair" tends to generalize to the organization as a whole.

Corporate Citizenship

This is the willingness of employees to take on responsibility outside their job description. This could include such behaviors as innovation and creativity, loyalty, conscientiousness and dedication—going the extra mile.

Corporate citizenship is based on reciprocity and so is more likely when there is high quality LMX. If an employee perceives the boss to be interested, engaged and willing to support the employee's development, the employee is likely to reciprocate by giving more on the job. This boosts productivity and supports organizational innovation.

Brain science supports the notion that reciprocity is hardwired in the human brain. It may grow out of long term survival behaviors. Quite simply, I help you survive now so that later on you are more likely to help me survive.

Workplace Emotions

There is a direct bottom line impact to managing emotions in the workplace. Brain science research has established the existence of mirror neurons in the human brain. What humans mirror includes the emotions of others, especially those humans perceived to be of a higher status, the boss, for example. This is particularly important because negative emotions are transmitted faster and prolonged negative emotions, such as stress, affect health and consequently the healthcare costs in business. In short, it's possible for the boss to make you sick.

Managing emotions in the workplace means encouraging authentic and respectful expression of emotions. Faking sincerity or hiding negative emotion is counter productive and produces more stress.

Leader/work team Perceptions

Alignment between external leader and a team is an extension of the LMX studies in that it moves the concept to a one to many model. Over time, the one to one relationship studies may be extended to one to group to determine the degree to which high quality relationships and their positive outcomes translate to a team environment.

Leader-Member Exchange, Differentiation, and Psychological Contract Fulfillment: A Multilevel Examination

Henderson, David J., Wayne, S.J., Shore, L.M, Bommer, W. H. and Tetrick, L. E. (2008)
Journal of Applied Psychology, 93, 1208-1219

The authors cite prior research which suggest the following conditions for LMX:

- ▶ First impressions count. The employee's perception of whether their exchange with the manager is high or low may be established early in the relationship
- ▶ High quality LMX is likely based on reciprocity.
 - I, the employee, will go the extra mile and later the boss will go the extra mile to help my career and develop me
- ▶ An employee's perceptions of the quality of the exchange may happen on several levels:
 - Relationship with the manager
 - How the employee perceives they are being treated relative to how other direct reports are treated
 - How a manager's entire team is treated relative to other managers' teams in the organization

The authors wanted to determine the relationship between an employee's perception of LMX (RLMX) and the employee's perception of the degree to which the company fulfilled its psychological contract. Also, the authors looked at whether the employee's perception on contract fulfillment had an impact on in-role performance (how well the employee does the job as rated by the manager) and citizenship behaviors (defined as not complaining too much or being a dramatic about small issues).

SIMPLY

- ▶ Employee's who perceive a high quality relationship with the manager also tend to believe that the organizations is fulfilling its contract, as the manager is "the face of the organization"
- ▶ Perception of quality is based not only on the one to one relationship with the manager but also on perception of standing within the group
- ▶ Employees who perceive the organization as fulfilling its contract are more likely to be productive and to be good organizational citizens
- ▶ Employees may help peers regardless of the perception of LMX or PC fulfillment. This is reciprocity at a different level and separate from reciprocating with the boss or organization. I help my co-worker; my co-worker will help me.

STUDY POPULATION

- ▶ 97.5% male, average 39 years old and a high school education; supervisors were slightly older and had about one year more education
- ▶ US based
- ▶ Manufacturing subsidiary of a Fortune 500
- ▶ Intact workgroups larger than 3 people

APPLICATIONS

- ▶ Leaders should take the initiative to build a strong relationship immediately upon:
 - Assuming a leadership position
 - Getting a new direct report
 - Being groomed for succession, build relationships with the new team
- ▶ Take the Goldilocks approach in relationship building
 - Too much variation in how you treat people and the perception will be that the leader has “teacher’s pets”
 - Too little variation in how you treat people and the perception will be that “nothing I do matters”
 - Just right variation coupled with clear goals and clear explanation of why people are treated somewhat differently will result in the perception that the organization is fulfilling it’s PC and therefore a greater willingness on the part of the employee to contribute a fair share.
- ▶ Employees who perceive they are treated fairly are more productive and better citizens.

CASE IN POINT

In her first supervisory position, Sandy was exceptionally zealous and enforced every standard to the nth degree. She role modeled this behavior and was harder on herself than everyone else. However it wasn’t long before the staff became rebellious. They argued with her on every point and dug their heels in. The more they pushed back, the more she dug in. Eventually, there were a slew of grievances. It was at the point of grievances that more senior management became aware of the issue.

As background to the story, Sandy was promoted from within the ranks and was now supervising her former peers. Sandy and her staff were all in their mid to late 20’s; this was their first full time, career oriented position.

Sandy’s case has happened in many organizations and so the remedies can apply in multiple situations. In this case, three approaches were implemented to resolve the issue:

1. Coaching Sandy to clarify the organization’s expectations of supervisors and discussing with Sandy how she felt she was doing. The coach and Sandy took a problems solving approach to how Sandy could supervisor differently to both keep the standards and engage her direct reports
2. Sandy requested a facilitated meeting between herself and her direct reports to both maintain high quality and how and when she could be more flexible in accommodating individual needs.
 - a. She and the team identified which standards were absolute, such as safety and manner of contact with the public and those which contained some flexibility such as grooming.
 - b. Sandy acknowledged that her relationship with her former peers changed. She also acknowledged that having been friends with people made it difficult for her personally. She was afraid to be seen as playing favorites, so she felt she had to be hard on everybody. The team shared that they respected her position and would not ask her for personal favors—her rigid enforcement was unnecessary and onerous.
 - c. Follow up meetings were scheduled, initially with a facilitator. However as Sandy’s supervisory skills strengthened, she took the facilitation role

The outcome of the interventions was that all grievances stopped and Sandy became a fine supervisor.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ This organization promoted from within and so had situations similar to Sandy’s many times over the years. They could have:
 - Conducted information sessions with people interested in becoming supervisors to set expectations, share experiences and engage them in developmental activities
 - Mentored new supervisors and/or implemented other developmental activities.

Leader-Member Exchange and Citizenship Behaviors: A Meta-Analysis

Remus Ilies, Nahrgang, J. D., and Morgeson, P., (2007) Journal of Applied Psychology, 92 269-277

A meta-analysis is a study of studies using statistical methodologies to refine results common among the studies.

Prior research that distinguishes different types of Citizenship Behaviors

- ▶ Citizenship can be behaviors directed toward benefiting the leader or directly or indirectly benefiting the larger organization
- ▶ Types of behavior included in citizenship studies have included: organizational loyalty, compliance, conscientiousness, dedication, sportsmanship
- ▶ Citizenship behaviors are extra to the formal job requirements

The authors of this article posit that LMX is more strongly related to leader directed citizenship than towards organization directed citizenship. A meta-analysis is a study of studies.

The authors categorize the following behaviors as individual-targeted behaviors (directed toward leader):

- ▶ Helping, courtesy, interpersonal facilitation, organizational citizenship benefiting an individual

Organization-targeted behaviors include:

- ▶ Creativity, innovation, organizational citizenship benefiting the entire organization as well as conscientiousness, sportsmanship, compliance, job dedication, civic virtue, and change-oriented behaviors

The meta-analysis confirmed that LMX is more strongly related to leader-directed citizenship. However, LMX has moderate strength in predicting organization-directed behaviors as well.

APPLICATIONS

- ▶ This study is important because it shows results drawn from multiple studies. Each of those studies uses different populations, so we can be more confident that LMX and the impact on citizenship can generalize to a greater variety of organizations and people in them.
- ▶ High quality relationships between leaders and members improves both the relationship and productivity of the leader and member and the organization as a whole (although to a lesser extent)

Relationship building in organizations is largely left to individual choice. Leaders

who choose to take the time and invest in relationship building are more likely to be able to accomplish more and to pull rabbits out of hats when necessary. These leaders are able to call on more resources and enlist more help than leaders who don't commit time to relationship development.

Organizations should consider:

- ▶ Coaching ALL leaders to build high quality relationships
- ▶ Model relationship building at all levels of the organization

CASE IN POINT

A new supervisor, Kim, got to know the people on the manufacturing line. Line personnel did not report to her, however, their efforts were critical when rush orders came in. The Line stepped up to the plate for the next rush order and got everything shipped on time even though it required extra effort. Kim got a "Thank You" card and gave it to the line. She was surprised several days later when she went back to the line and saw the card hanging from a ribbon.

Kim pointed at it. The line lead said, "Oh we put it up there to make a point. Your card was

the first time anyone ever said thanks. We got the order out because you asked us to. The guys can go pound sand."

Stories like this one are fairly common, as is the positive impact of taking the time to form a relationship. Part of that high quality LMX is being sure that employees feel fairly recognized for their efforts. A simple "thank you" will go a long way.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY:

- ▶ Clearly when the line personnel made such a point of displaying the Thank You card, they were loudly stating that they were feeling a quart low on being appreciated for their work. This organization could increase productivity by:
 - Saying "please" and "thank you." Yes, your mother was right, this matters
 - Having supervisors and managers take a few minutes here and there to get to know the line staff. Developing positive relationships mattered. After all, without the line staff there was no product to sell.

In-Role Perceptions Buffer the Negative Impact of Low LMX on Helping and Enhance the Positive Impact of High LMX on Voice

Linn Van Dyne, Kamdar, D and Joireman, J *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93 1195-1207

The authors of this study focus on LMX and its interaction with two specific behaviors, helping others and speaking up to offer suggestions for change. They further look at specific test conditions to determine under what circumstances LMX and these two behaviors interact. Two studies are cited in the article; the second works with a different population.

Specifically, they test whether:

- ▶ With High quality LMX employees tend to engage in more helping behaviors and also speak up to offer change suggestions
- ▶ Employees are likely to help more when they believe it is their job to do so
- ▶ Employees will help when they believe it is their job to do so even if they have a low quality LMX
- ▶ Employees won't help if they think it's "extra work" and they have a low quality LMX
- ▶ Since speaking up to offer change suggestions (voice) is risky, it will happen only when there is a high quality LMX and people believe speaking up is their job

These test conditions were confirmed and the authors then conducted a second study to clarify whether LMX affected helping behavior based on whether the helping was directed toward an individual or toward the organization.

Study 1 Population:

- ▶ Engineers and their supervisors
- ▶ Fortune 500 in India
- ▶ 94% male
- ▶ Average age 32
- ▶ 82% with at least a bachelor's degree

Study 2 Population:

- ▶ Clerical and administrative employees and their supervisors
- ▶ Multi-national bank in Singapore
- ▶ 64% male
- ▶ Average age 33
- ▶ 8.4% bachelor's degree

Study 2 results mirror those in study 1.

APPLICATIONS:

- ▶ People will help when they believe it's part of the job regardless of their relationship with the boss. This belief is unlikely to occur if it's simply in a job description. They will need to see others and their leader modeling helping behavior on a day to day basis.
- ▶ Two conditions need to exist before most people will speak up and offer change suggestions. They need to believe that it is their job AND they need to have a high quality LMX. Organizations seriously seeking to involve people in continuous improvement should look to meeting both conditions.

CASE IN POINT 1 HELPING

Employees in a large garden center started and maintained the culture of helping. A retired person working part time at the center to keep busy was one of those people who needed to be busy all the time. So, she did what was natural for her. When she finished her own work, she looked for another employee who needed help and helped them. Over time other employees adopted this same approach.

As new employees came on board they saw people helping each other and just assumed that that's what they were supposed to do. Eventually, this became "just the way we do work."

The leader was not particularly respected or liked however the helping culture flourished because people came to believe it was their job.

CASE IN POINT 2 RISK

In a systems division of a firm, a manager was hiring a trainer. The VP of the division would meet the top candidates. This VP was noted for having "in groups" and "out groups" of managers and it was very clear which was which. Moving from "in" to "out" was often quick and thorough. Therefore, even those who were "in" did not have high LMX as they were stressed about staying "in."

The manager, currently "in" was enthusiastic about a candidate who had shown great initiative in working herself up in the world. She put herself through school and had a great "can do" attitude, but unfortunately no experience.

The VP met with the candidate and then told the manager that she could make her own decision but that he would not hire that candidate. The manager went with the safe choice and hired a candidate the VP had no objection to. The safe candidate turned out to be average to slightly below in performance.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY Case in Point 1:

- ▶ The leader in this case could have done a far better job engaging people and could have raised the level of productivity even beyond what the employees themselves raised it to had he also modeled helping and good citizenship.
- ▶ Deliberately leverage the work ethic and good citizenship of those staff who display those behaviors regardless of the leader. Let those staff lead the charge for going the extra mile.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY Case in Point 2

- ▶ The organization potentially lost a strong contributor because the manager was unwilling to take a risk. The candidate who was not hired would most likely have worked very hard to prove she was grateful and worthy of the risk.

The Moderating Effect of Political Skill on the Demographic Dissimilarity – Leader-Member Exchange Quality Relationship

Robyn L. Brouer, Duke, A., Treadway, D.C., and Ferris, G. R. The Leadership Quarterly 20 (2009) 61-69

Prior research has indicated that a high degree of similarity between leader and member often results in a higher quality relationship and lower similarity with lower quality relationship. Based on the prior research cited in this journal which has established the importance of a high quality relationship to productivity, helping, good citizenship, etc. organizations have reason to be concerned that diversity is understood and valued in their workplace.

The inability to value diversity may have a negative bottom line impact as the workforce becomes increasingly diverse.

These authors seek to learn if employee's political skills, such as understanding the work environment and influencing can overcome the lower LMX resulting from dissimilarity. Prior research cited by the authors suggests that political skill encompasses networking, influencing, managing one's self presentation and appearing sincere.

The researcher study confirmed that employees with political skill were able to overcome dissimilarity. Conversely employees who had low political skill were not able to overcome dissimilarity and had the lowest LMX quality.

POPULATION:

- ▶ Retail service organization
- ▶ 75.8% white, 56 % female
- ▶ 25.3% of supervisor/employee relationships were dissimila

APPLICATION:

- ▶ LMX is a bottom line productivity issue. Therefore, organizations should consider proactively raising the quality of LMX.
- ▶ Diversity is a two way street so consider working with managers to increase their effectiveness in dissimilar relationships and with employees to increase their political skills

CASE IN POINT

The sales office of an international chemical company was a golfing culture. Golf was the subject of virtually every non-work related conversation. This particular office was also primarily white and male. Savvy women and people of color understood that in order to get the boss' ear, informal mentoring and an inside look at who influenced whom and how, they had to take up golf. Golf was a work tool that allowed them become more similar to the boss and increase the quality of their exchange with him.

Of course, not all of those savvy people actually liked golf however they did it as a contribution to their own career. If golf was what it took, they'd golf. Each leader has his or her own "golf." Attuned employees figure out what that is and engage the leader around that topic. Being able to talk with the boss about his or her interests makes the employee more similar and therefore more likely to have a high LMX relationship.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY:

- ▶ Employees are not always proactive in engaging the leader. Sitting back, doing a good job and smoldering with anger because nobody notices doesn't help, engaging the leader does.
- ▶ Organizations can also be more alert to their golf. For example, the parent of young children would have a tough time spending Saturdays golfing. Therefore the leader should reach out to skilled staff who may not be able to participate in golf—whatever form it takes.

Workplace Emotions: The Role of Supervision and Leadership

Joyce E. Bono, Jackson Foldes, H., Vinson, G., and Muros, J.P., *The Journal of Applied Psychology* 92, (2007) 1357-1367

Several distinctions are key to research into workplace emotions:

- ▶ People feel an emotion
- ▶ People may or may not express what they feel
- ▶ Deciding what to express and how to express it is the process of regulating emotions
- ▶ Consistently feeling the need to regulate emotions is associated with cardiovascular effects, stress, and physical symptoms such as headaches

Prior study indicates:

- ▶ There is an emotional link between leaders and direct reports

These authors seek to research several questions and to document the results:

- ▶ Leaders are in a position of authority which includes judging behavior. Therefore it's likely members will experience more negative emotions and few positive ones with the leader
- ▶ Leaders who practice high quality LMX (these authors use "transformational leadership") the more likely members are to experience positive emotions at work
 - High quality LMX leaders moderate the negative effect of emotional regulation, stress and lowered work satisfaction
- ▶ Members who feel a need to consistently monitor and regulate their emotions are less satisfied at work
- ▶ Lower work satisfaction is related to increased feelings of stress

As expected, members reported the most positive emotions when interacting with co-workers and the fewest when interacting with

the leader and members with high quality LMX reported more positive emotions during the workday.

Interestingly regulating emotion causes stress in each episode regardless of the overall number of episodes. This is true of both faking positive emotions or hiding negative ones. Unfortunately for healthcare costs, this stress association tends to extend over time.

IN GENERAL:

- ▶ If I have good interaction with my leader, I'll be more satisfied with my job and yet I will still have stress when I fake or hide an emotion. The leader makes a difference. High LMX leaders do buffer the negative impact of emotional regulation on the perception of job satisfaction. However, the high LMX leader does NOT buffer the stress created by incidents of emotional regulation.
- ▶ On a whole, if I have good interaction with my leader, I'll have more positive emotions and likely not feel the need to regulate my emotions as much. This will lower my instances of stress and I will still have stress when I do regulate my emotions.
- ▶ If I have poor interaction with my leader, I'll have both lower job satisfaction coupled with the stress resulting from faking and hiding emotions.

POPULATION:

- ▶ 94% women
- ▶ Healthcare organization
- ▶ Average age 41
- ▶ 86% Caucasian, 9% African American, 5% Asian origin

APPLICATIONS:

- ▶ Foster good leader-member relationships to decrease the stress-causing instances of hiding and faking emotions. This has a bottom line impact as stress is related to health problems.
- ▶ Good leader-member relationships also increase the likelihood of job satisfaction. Members can de-couple the emotional and logical responses. Humans have two systems for response emotional, which is

quick and less precise and logical which is slower and more precise.

- If I have a good relationship with my leader, my fast response to emotional regulation—stress, can later be separated from my logical response.
- “Yes, it stressed me to be nice to that customer, but it’s important to be nice because that’s how we do things and this is a pretty good place to work.”

CASE IN POINT

Leaders know when to let people blow off some steam to reduce stress. Great leaders help people reframe their stress. An operations manager knew his team would be under great stress pulling off a project that had NO room for error. Recognizing that high stress could cause people to second guess and create the very errors that would sink them, he called everyone together and told them what to say in the face of roadblocks.

Taking a line from the movie Wag the Dog he told his team that anytime they were faced with a problem they were to say, “This? This is nothing.” Dustin Hoffman’s character would always follow the line, “This is nothing” with “try...” followed by something completely outrageous and utterly impossible. Repeating “This is nothing.” Got some laughs and also helped the team regain their perspective and a sense of control in a high stress situation.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ More leaders could improve their attention to the emotional side of work. Staff who feel comfortable have less pressure to fake emotions which leads to less stress.
- ▶ Increased stress IS related to ill health. Widespread ill health leads to higher health care costs and lower productivity. With every company trying to contain healthcare costs and raise productivity, why aren’t companies coaching leaders to help employees reframe stressful situations?

Do You See What We See? The Complex Effects of Perceptual Distance Between Leaders and Team

Cristina B. Gibson, Cooper, C.D., and Conger, J. A. Journal of Applied Psychology 94 (2009) 62-76

NOTE: “Team” has specific criteria in research that includes:

- ▶ Interdependence of members
- ▶ Shared responsibility
- ▶ Achieving specified outcomes

“Team” and “teamwork” are used loosely in business to cover everything from collegiality to corporate citizenship to “doing what you’re told to do.” This generic business use has led to corporate disenchantment with teambuilding and wasted training dollars.

Organizations would be wise to specifically define outcomes from training prior to labeling the type of training.

- ▶ Better corporate citizenship? Raise the quality of LMX.
- ▶ Increasing team effectiveness? Team skill building

Confusing the two wastes time and money—and annoys a lot of people.

The authors of this study seek to gather data on the following:

- ▶ What is the impact of the leader on the team when leaders and teams view any of the following differently:
 - To what degree has the team met it’s goal
 - How conflict is handled

- To what degree can the team make its own decisions

- ▶ Does alignment between the leader and the team on these 3 result in higher team performance?

The authors found that:

- ▶ Team performance is better when leaders and teams see the degree of accomplishment similarly. However if those differ, the best condition is that the leader sees the degree of accomplishment as slightly more than the team sees it.
- ▶ Constructive conflict has a positive effect on performance until it reaches the tipping point, then performance drops
- ▶ Degree of alignment between the leader and the team had greater impact on team performance than degree of alignment among team members

POPULATION:

- ▶ 5 Companies in medical/pharmaceutical products
- ▶ Multiple functional areas
- ▶ USA, Latin America, Southeast Asia, western Europe
- ▶ 26% women, 74% men
- ▶ Team leaders were not members of the team and were Senior Managers who had daily interaction with teams

APPLICATIONS:

- ▶ Leader and team should get expectations out in the open at the start. Goals, measures and timelines should be shared between leader and team at the outset. This will mitigate lack of alignment later in the process
- ▶ Clear goals and measures facilitate the team's functioning in numerous aspects including:
 - Task definition
 - Information gathering
 - Processes and procedures
 - Decision making

CASE IN POINT

In an electric utility, a task force was given the responsibility of designing a "world class call center." The task force, based on their prior knowledge of how things operated, wanted to know what the budget was. Their manager would not give them a cost range.

The manager believed he was empowering the team. The team believed that he was withholding critical data. The team's argument was that they could benchmark and certainly design the call center, however they thought this an exercise in futility as the company wouldn't fund what they designed.

Unfortunately, this critical issue was never resolved and the manager viewed the team

as a failure. After the fact, an HR business partner was consulted and in interviews with the manager, found that the issue was really an authority and decision making discrepancy. The manager wanted the team to design the world class call center and he would pick and choose from what they designed. The team believed they were being handed the authority to make the final design and were uncomfortable doing so because they believed they lacked a crucial parameter—budget.

Upfront alignment and more openness regarding where the decision authority resided would have saved both wasted labor and finger pointing.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY:

- ▶ Open communication at the start of a team project is crucial for success. Leaders and teams that openly discuss and come to agreement on charter, goals and measure are far more likely to succeed. This need not be laborious, just clear.

SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES

Organizations and the people in them are complex systems. Therefore, there are specific things that social science can and cannot tell us. For those in business who have not specifically studied experimental design and statistical analysis, here are key factors to keep in mind.

Studies can inform about:

- ▶ Given a specific set of circumstances how people are more likely to behave
- ▶ Refine the set of circumstances and specific exceptions to behaviors under specific circumstances
- ▶ Define population characteristics for which something is more or less likely to occur

Social Science Studies Can Not:

- ▶ Predict the behavior of a given individual
- ▶ Predict the behavior of all individuals in a group
- ▶ Generalize beyond the prescribed circumstances and conditions of a given study except through additional studies that vary conditions and/or populations studied

Therefore the report language used here is conditional. “Tend to, likely to, more often than not” will be used.

Caution: *Results may or may not apply outside the population of the study. For example, a one country study be it USA, India, or China may not generalize to other countries. If the study population is largely male or largely female, results may not apply to the other gender.*

Important Note

It is particularly important to a business’ investment in employee development to pay attention to the limits of research and the conditions under which trends occur. This information can help you determine if it is worth investing in specific training or development initiatives given the unique nature of your business.