

Post-hoc Management

Although not an 'official' management theory, 'post-hoc management' is practiced widely on a daily basis around the world and most people will instantly recognize it. It is very common in small companies where there are few formal systems and where there is a general autocratic style. It also appears in larger organizations where results take precedence over rules or where politics leads to impression management being a primary activity. The basic principle of post-hoc management is that, as judge and jury, the manager is always right and never to blame.

The first sign of post-hoc management is a vague start to work, typically with unclear and general objectives. If the manager is asked for clarity, he will typically say something like 'you're the expert' or 'this is why we employ you', with the implication that not knowing what indicates a lack of competence on your part. This can be endemic in an organization where it happens all the way up the management tree.

Being right means judging others after the fact, where 20-20 hindsight allows post-hoc managers to conclude what should have been done. It places the manager as a wise expert who cannot be challenged. Seniority thus acts as a protective wall and any challenge to their expertise is reinterpreted as an attack on their rank. If you are always right, then others are always wrong and the post-hoc manager often bemoans how they are surrounded by fools. Yet, this also makes the manager feel clever and superior, and he seldom seeks to employ people who are better than him. Sometimes a good person slips through the mediocre net, but the frustrations caused by post-hoc management often means that the best people quickly understand the problem and move on as soon as possible.

The post-hoc manager also benefits from the 'critic effect', whereby people who criticize are seen as being more intelligent than those who propose creative solutions. The manager may be creative too, but does it in a way that protects them from blame. For example, she may make various suggestions as to what should be done. If people do not follow the manager's suggestions and things go less than perfectly, she will blame them for not taking up the idea. If they implement the idea and it works, the manager will take most of the credit, while if it fails she blames the employees for poor implementation.

While not an official management theory, post-hoc management is sadly an all-too-frequent reality. It reflects the human condition and the need for control, safety and status that often take priority over values that require integrity and concern for others.

Adapted from: http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/post-hoc_management.htm

Are You a Funny Leader?

Humor has many benefits, both personally and professionally. Research suggests that, used correctly, humor can also make you a better leader. Research by Bettinghaus and Cody (1994) and Foot (1997) showed that humor:

- Builds rapport and liking of the humorist
- Makes the target person want to listen more
- Relaxes the person, making them more receptive to the message
- Makes the person feel good and hence not think so carefully about the proposition
- Makes the information more memorable
- Distracts the person from thinking about counter-arguments



Excerpted from: http://changingminds.org/techniques/humor/benefits_humor.htm

Bennis' Leadership Qualities

Warren Bennis, widely known as a modern leadership guru, has identified six personal qualities of leadership.

Integrity

Integrity means alignment of words and actions with inner values. It means sticking to these values even when an alternative path may be easier or more advantageous. Leaders with integrity can be trusted and will be admired for sticking to strong values. They also act as a powerful model for people to copy, thus building an entire organization with powerful and effective cultural values.

Dedication

Dedication means spending whatever time and energy on a task is required to get the job done, rather than giving it whatever time you have available. The work of most leadership positions is not something to do 'if there is time'. It means giving your whole self to the task, dedicating yourself to success and to leading others with you.

Magnanimity

A magnanimous person gives credit where it is due. It also means being gracious in defeat and allowing others who are defeated to retain their dignity. Magnanimity in leadership includes crediting the people with success and accepting personal responsibility for failures.

Humility

Humility is the opposite of arrogance and narcissism. It means recognizing that you are not inherently superior to others and consequently that they are not inferior to you. It does not mean diminishing yourself, nor does it mean exalting yourself. Humble leaders do not debase themselves, neither falsely nor due to low self-esteem. They simply recognize all people as equal in value and know that their position does not make them a god.

Openness

Openness means being able to listen to ideas that are outside one's current mental models, being able to suspend judgment until after one has heard someone else's ideas. An open leader listens to their people without trying to shut them down early, which demonstrates care and builds trust. Openness also treats other ideas as potentially better than one's own ideas. In the uncertain world of new territory, being able to openly consider alternatives is an important skill.

Creativity

Creativity means thinking differently, being able to get outside the box and take a new and different viewpoint on things. For a leader to be able to see a new future towards which they will lead their followers, creativity provides the ability to think differently and see things that others have not seen, and thus giving reason for followers to follow.

Source: http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/articles/bennis_qualities.htm

