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The Middle Managers' Essential Leadership Styles: A Case of Global Technology Company in Myanmar

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Abstract

This article is a needs assessment research, comprising two objectives, 1) examining the leadership styles and 2) proposing the Organization development programs to enhance the middle managers' leadership styles for the future development program. Five leadership variables are studied: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, authentic leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership. The research instrument was a needs-assessment questionnaire to examine the differences and rank the priority needs using PNIModified. The target samples comprise generation Y and Z employees of Global Technology Company in Myanmar. The sampling method is purposive sampling, comprising of 60 respondents. The PNIModified results indicated that adaptive leadership was ranked the first-order need, servant leadership was ranked the second-order need, transformational leadership was ranked the third-order need, authentic leadership was ranked the fourth, and transactional leadership was ranked the fifth-order need. Four sets of recommendations for the Organization development program proposed for the managers and employees. Moreover, it is important at the management level to concentrate on performance and objectives rather than human desires to achieve operational effectiveness. Giving positive guidance and direction to employees would help them become more goal-oriented. Another main requirement in the global technology middle management is to monitor the success of subordinates and take prompt corrective steps.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Style, Gen Y, Gen Z, Organization Development, Middle Manager

JEL Classification Code: C12, D22, E44, J20, J50, L32, M54.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, leadership and innovation are the two most fundamentals need for the organization to be adaptive in the business environment and sustain its performance and growth. Organization experts and practitioners have formalized different leadership definitions and meanings; some view leadership as traits, and others view leadership as ability and skills (Northhouse, 2015).

Apart from leadership, innovation also plays an important role in strategic intervention to fuel productivity, improve precision and accuracy and strengthen long-term competitiveness and growth.

For the organization to continue leading its innovation, it invariably relies on the middle managers who orchestrate with their team members to not only get things done but to improve and change the ways how things are done by growing creativity, innovation, and collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders who are a part of products and services (Williams, 2020). Inevitably, the managers of respective functions play a crucial role in bridging the business strategy and their decisions and operational actions to streamline the expectations between the strategy and course of actions throughout the implementation cycle (Goleman, 2013; Gatchair, 2018)

Initial organizational diagnosis on Global Technology Company's current situation as the participating company was found to have demonstrated varied leadership styles, causing confusion and battle in balancing the business priorities. Such deviations started derailing the motivation and engagement among employees who represented

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different generations. The current leadership styles deviation and priority of the Global Technology Company's middle-level managers are being challenged in this global pandemic; the organizations can no longer rely on a quarterly or yearly plan and controls of budget to move the organization forward, but it all depends on how leadership can drive the organization for success and sustainability.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Considering various repercussions of internal and external organization issues confronting the company today, as highlighted in the introduction part, this research-based article focuses on identifying the order of priority needs of essential leadership styles of the middle manager and presenting the proposed organization development programs based on the findings.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.To examine the leadership styles of the Global Technology Company (GTC) middle management for future Organization development programs.

2. To propose the future Organization development program for the middle management to enhance leadership styles.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the current and expected leadership styles of the middle management of Global Technology Company (GTC)?

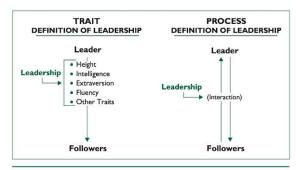
2. What can the future organization development program for the middle management of the Global Technology Company (GTC) be proposed?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Leadership

Leadership as a theory and practice holistically associate with leadership styles, leadership approaches, and leadership skills. According to the literature reviews, enhancing the leadership style has been studied and suggested as an invention domain to improve its performance and growth.

Leadership is characterized as a personality consisting of intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. As illustrated in Figure 1, five leadership traits are associated with the process of leadership, where leaders interact with fellows, employing different leadership traits to meet a goal or finish a mission. (see Figure 1)



SOURCE: Adapted from A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs From Management (pp. 3–8), by J. P. Kotter, 1990, New York: Free Press.

Figure 1: Trait and Process Leadership

As for the approaches to leadership development, it is noted that leadership development is developmental (e.g., specific skills and knowledge) and transformational (e.g., integrity, moral/ethical standards) (Neculae & David, 2017; Brown, 1992).

The integrity of leadership is by all means of ethical conduct and the ability to focus on doing the right thing. Another important development of leadership is sociability; this refers to creating constructive and pleasant relationships with others (Dartey-Baah,2015). Other leadership development domains comprise technical, human, and conceptual skills necessary for leadership, depending on the situation. Technical skill is the knowledge and proficiency in a specific type of work or activity. Human skill is knowledge about and ability to work with people. Conceptual skills can work with ideas and concepts (Peterson, Abramson & Stutman, 2020; Saha & Sharma (2020).

2.2 Path-Goal Theory

The Path–goal theory suggested that subordinates accomplish goals when motivated by specific behavioral interventions from the leaders, such as directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The leaders purposively vary their behavioral intervention to serve the needs of both the subordinates and the situation (Sanda & Arthur, 2017). Path-Goal Leadership theoretically suggested that the leaders aim their effort on improving the motivational needs of the subordinates to ensure they continue their work, believing that they can perform their tasks and accomplish goals (Northouse, 2015).

2.3 Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

LMX theory is another leadership model that describes the relationship between leader and followers as having a dyadic relationship. The assumption of LMX theory rests on the quality of leader-member exchanges that influence leaders' outcomes, follows, groups, and the organization. Additionally, the leader and followers' interaction is maintained within their groups and with other groups to create a high-quality partnership relationship throughout the organization. Finally, the LMX theory suggested that the leader's role is to nurture high-quality relationships towards achieving the common goal (Northouse, 2015).

2.4 Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Transformational leadership improves subordinates' performance and develops followers to their fullest potential. Transformational leadership tends demonstrate internal values and ideals by placing the followers' interests at the center of the leader's goal (Carucci, 2020). Transformational leadership emphasizes intrinsic motivation factors and its development, and its ultimate efforts are to activate, enrich and enrich the inspiration and empowerment. Transformational leadership is also viewed as a transformative process, morally encouraging people to move towards the desired values and goals and move beyond a set of goals (Northhouse, 2015; Aminu & Nana Ama Dodua, 2017; Curtis, 2018)

Transactional Leadership theory also focuses on the exchanges between leaders and subordinates, but it does not individualize each person's needs. Instead, transactional leadership focuses on extrinsic factors, contingent reward, and management by exception, leading to the expected outcomes and performance at large. Some examples of transactional leadership are the managers offer promotions to employees who surpass their goals are exhibiting transactional leadership, and school's teachers give students a grade for work completed. These are common transactional leadership styles that can be observed at many levels throughout all organizations. (Northhouse, 2015; Pliner, 2020).

2.5 Kouzes and Posner Leadership's Model

This leadership model by Koues and Posner is functional leadership, as cited in Northouse (2015), comprising of the followings;

Model the Way refers to the clarity and consistency of leaders' values, philosophy, and actions, leading others by example, keeping promises and commitments, and affirming common values shared with other members (Sun & Shang (2019). Inspire a Shared Vision aims to inspire the shared vision; leaders create compelling visions that

can guide people's behavior while listening to others' dreams and showing them how their dreams can be actualized by breaking their status quo.

Challenge the process is concerned with a willingness to challenge the status quo and move towards the unknown; this requires the leader to innovate, grow and improve, lead by example, do one step at a time, and learn from their mistakes as they go (Spain, 2020).

Enable Others to Act is concerned with effectively working with people by building trust and promoting collaborations; this leadership highly values teamwork and cooperation, listen closely to get diverse points of view, and treat others with dignity and respect, allowing others to make choices and support their decisions creating environments where people can feel good about their work (Venkat, 2003).

Encourage the heart is concerned with encouraging the heart by rewarding others for their accomplishment. Meanwhile, the leader supports and pays attention to the need and praises co-workers for jobs well done; and the outcome leads to collective identity and community spirit (Lin, 2020; Ruethaivanich, Scott, 2017).

2.6 Authentic-Servant Leadership

Authentic leadership emphasizes positive interaction and relationships with the followers. The central theme of authentic leadership emphasizes openness, honest relationship, self-awareness, and an empathetic work environment. Servant leadership also emphasizes the followers' needs over self-interests. Servant leadership focuses on self-awareness, promoting self-esteem, empathy, leading with mind and heart through actions and emotion. Lastly, servant leadership also encourages the followers to thrive for the best solutions when encountering challenging situations (Koole, 2020).

2.7 Adaptive leadership

This leadership is functional, aiming to mobilize, motivate, organize, and re-focus their attention to overcome challenging situations. Adaptive leadership is another functional leadership, operating under the four principles: emotional intelligence, organizational justice, character, and development (Jensen & Luthan, 2006).

2.8 Theoretical Framework

As illustrated in Figure 2, the theoretical framework is drawn from various Leadership theories, from traits and process leadership to functional leadership. Each of these leadership theories invariably influences the organization's management and organization development practices, where leadership plays an important role in

influencing the organization's culture, determining the management styles, and driving the organization's innovation.

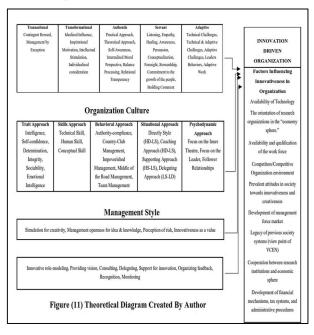


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is drawn from the theoretical framework, which serves as the focal system of this research work, comprising five leadership styles: LD1/Transactional Leadership. LD2/ Transformational Leadership. LD3/ Authentic Leadership. LD4/Servant leadership, and LD5/Adaptive Leadership. These five leadership styles are the study's focal systems to identify possible organizational development interventions to improve the leaders-members relationship and engagement. The researcher looked at which leadership style currently influenced the middle management and what the Organization Development program could be proposed for future organization implementations.

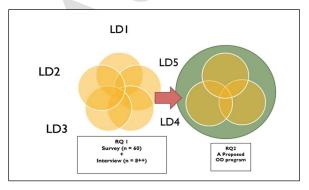


Figure 3: The Conceptual Framework

More than 30 research articles and literature were reviewed to understand the whole spectrum of existing leadership theories and select the existing theories relevant to the research objective, scope, and organization contexts for formulating the needs assessment questionnaire to identify the priority index for leadership development programs through the lens of Organization development. The proposed organization development program was the end output of this research, derived from the analyzed data findings.

3. Research Methodology

The study aims to enhance middle management's leadership style for future organizational development of Global Technology Company. The research design was divided into three steps: 1. Developing Objectives, 2. Collecting the quantitative data, and 3. Analyzing, interpreting, and formulating recommendations for future organization development programs for the company.

The total population (N) of all levels totaled 300, but this research targeted the middle management level (N=60) based in Yangon, Mandalay, Mawlamyaing Naypyitaw Bago. The demographics are over 25 years old; income ranges from 700 USD to 5,000 USD. The current job positions started from assistant manager, the executive's director, and director level. The sampling method was purposive sampling. Of the total population, the margin of error was 9.35% on the conference level of 90% for the purposive sampling of n=60.

These 60 respondents' nature was the homogeneity type because they all worked for the same organization. The 60 respondents involved different departments, including business development, business strategy, sales department, marketing, engineering, product, and systems integration. Additionally, the researcher also chose the respondents who led the team for certain projects, products, or business units or currently involved in creating new products, new strategies, and new services. All *n*=60 completed the survey.

The primary research instrument was a needsassessment questionnaire to examine the current and expected leadership styles of the middle management of Global Technology company and then propose a recommendation for organization development programs.

The questionnaires employed a 5-Likert scale: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree. The respondents were required to choose the only one-Likert scale that best described their perceptions or experiences. The questionnaire contained five leadership styles, which represented the main variables --see Table 1 below.

Table 1: Structure of questionnaire

Group	Main variable	Number of questions	Weight
1	Transactional Leadership (TSL)	1~5	20%
2	Transformational leadership (TML)	6~10	20%
3	Authentic Leadership (AL)	10~15	20%
4	Servant Leadership (SL)	16~20	20%
5	Adaptive Leadership (ADL)	21~25	20%

The questionnaire had two parts: Part 1: Demographic information and background of the respondents, and Part 2: the 25-statements or questions. The questionnaire was translated from the English language to Myanmar Language for Burmese respondents to understand the underlying meaning better.

The researcher ensured the validity and reliability of the research instrument. First, IOC (Item Objective Congruence) was reviewed by three experts who held a Ph.D. The communication with the experts was done through electronic email. After receiving the three experts' feedback: incongruent=-1, questionable=0, researcher revised the congruent=1, the survey questionnaire items and got back to them until the mean score of each item reached a minimum of 0.67. As for the reliability test, the researcher conducted a pilot study with a random sample of 20 respondents. The Cronbach's Alpha was all greater than 0.80 showing a great degree of internal consistency of respondents' answers to this questionnaire.

Table 2: The IOC & Cronbach's Alpha Co-Efficient Results

Variable	Items	ЮС	Cronbach's Alpha Co- Efficient
Transactional Leadership (TSL)	Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5	1.00 1.00 1.00 0.67 0.67	0.830
Transformational Leadership (TML)	Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10	1.00 0.67 0.67 1.00 1.00	0.887
Authentic Leadership (AL)	Q11 Q12 Q13 Q14 Q15	1.00 0.67 0.67 0.67 0.67	0.896
Servant Leadership (SL)	Q16 Q17 Q18 Q19 Q20	0.67 1.00 0.67 1.00 1.00	0.924
Adaptive Leadership (ADL)	Q21 Q22 Q23 Q24 Q25	0.67 0.67 1.00 0.67 1.00	0.885

4. Results and Discussions

The presentations of the results are presented by order of the main variable.

The demographics comprised 37 male (61.7%) and 23 females (38.3%). The majority of respondents were in the age range of 31-40 years old, representing 35 respondents (58.3%) of the total 60 respondents, followed by the age range of 41-50 years old, representing 16 respondents (26.7%), and finally, the respondents with the age range of 21-30 years nine respondents (15%).

Level of Education, 47 respondents (78.3%) of the total 60 respondents obtained a bachelor's degree and 13 respondents (21.7%) for Master's degree holders.

Work experience, 19 respondents (31.7%) work experiences were less than five years, 15 respondents (25%) work experiences were 10-15 years, and lastly, 14 respondents (23.3%) represented who worked for the organization for more than 15 years.

Job position, the largest groups were 18 respondents (30%) sales and marketing, six respondents (10%) HR officer (BOD Officer), five respondents (8.3%) engineers, four respondents (6.7%) Corporate Strategy Department Officer, and three respondents (5%) finance officers respectively.

As illustrated in Table 3, the results showed that TL1 was ranked No.1 Priority, and then TL2 was ranked No.2 Priority based on the modified PNI result for the transactional leadership variable.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and Priority Needs Index on Transactional Leadership (TSL), Variable (n=60)

Variable	Current (D)		Preferred (I)		Mea	PNI	
Transformatio nal leadership Overall	M	SD	М	SD	n Diff	Modifie d	Rank
TSL 1	3.48	0.98	3.87	1.00	0.38	0.11	1
TSL 2	3.93	0.69	4.18	0.75	0.25	0.06	2
TSL 3	4.20	0.80	4.27	0.78	0.07	0.05	2
TSL 4	4.27	0.80	4.32	0.70	0.05	0.01	4
TSL 5	4.03	0.76	4.15	0.78	0.15	0.03	3

As illustrated in Table 4, the results showed that TM4 and TM5 were ranked No.1 Priority, and then TM1 and TM3 were ranked No.2 Priority based on the modified PNI result for the transformational leadership variable.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics and Priority Needs Index on Transformational leadership (TML), Variable (n=60)

1							
Variable	Curre	nt (D)	Preferred (I)		Mea	PNI	
Transformatio nal leadership Overall	М	SD	M	D:cc		Modifi ed	Rank
TML 1	3.95	0.75	4.15	0.71	0.2	0.05	2
TML 2	4.17	0.72	4.28	0.72	0.12	0.03	3
TML 3	4.12	0.76	4.3	0.72	0.18	0.05	2
TML 4	3.83	0.91	4.08	0.89	0.25	0.07	1

TML 5	4.12	0.72	4.38	0.72	0.27	0.07	1
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As illustrated in Table 5, the results showed that AL4 and AL5 were ranked No.1 Priority, and then AL5 was ranked No.2 Priority based on the modified PNI result for the authentic leadership variable.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics and Priority Needs Index on Authentic Leadership (AL), Variable (n=60)

Variable	Current (D)		Prefe	erred (I)	Mean	PNI Modif	Dl-
Transformational leadership Overall	М	SD	М	SD	Diff	ied	Rank
AL 1	4.07	0.88	4.23	0.77	0.17	0.04	3
AL 2	3.97	0.76	4.13	0.81	0.17	0.04	3
AL 3	3.82	0.85	4.03	0.88	0.22	0.06	1
AL 4	4.22	0.76	4.47	0.72	0.25	0.06	1
AL 5	4.08	0.74	4.3	0.81	0.22	0.05	2

As illustrated in Table 6, the results showed that SL5 was ranked No.1 Priority, and then SL4 was ranked No.2 Priority based on the modified PNI result for the servant leadership variable.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics and Priority Needs Index on – Servant leadership (SL), variable (n=60)

Variable	Curr	ent (D)	Prefe	rred (I)	Mea n	PNI Modif ied	Rank
Transformation al leadership Overall	М	SD	М	SD	Diff		Kalik
SL 1	3.78	0.80	4	0.78	0.22	0.06	3
SL 2	3.93	0.71	4.08	0.77	0.15	0.04	4
SL 3	3.92	0.81	4.03	0.92	0.12	0.03	5
SL 4	4.05	0.85	4.32	0.77	0.27	0.07	2
SL 5	3.72	0.83	4.07	0.88	0.35	0.09	1

As illustrated in Table 7, the results showed that ADL5 was ranked No.1 Priority, and then ADL1 was ranked No.2 Priority based on the modified PNI result for the adaptive leadership variable.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics and Priority Needs Index on Adaptive Leadership (ADL), variable (*n*=60)

Variable	Curr	ent (D)	Prefe	rred (I)	Mea n	PNI Modif	Ran
Transformation al leadership Overall	M	SD	М	SD	Diff	ied	k
ADL 1	3.72	0.88	4.03	0.92	0.32	0.09	2
ADL 2	3.97	0.78	4.15	0.80	0.18	0.05	4
ADL 3	3.37	1.22	3.42	1.28	0.05	0.02	5
ADL 4	3.9	0.77	4.12	0.78	0.22	0.06	3
ADL 5	3.95	0.87	4.15	0.84	0.55	0.14	1

Table 8 showed that Adaptive Leadership was ranked the first-order priority, servant leadership was ranked the second priority, Transformational Leadership was ranked the third priority, Authentic leadership was ranked the fourth priority, and transactional leadership was ranked the fifth priority.

Table8: Overall PNI modified Value of all five variables

Main Variable	PNI modified	Rank
Pair(1): Transactional Leadership(TSL)	0.26	5
Pair(2): Transformational Leadership (TML)	0.27	3
Pair(3):Authentic Leadership (AL)	0.25	4
Pair(4): Servant Leadership (SL)	0.29	2
Pair(5):Adaptive Leadership (ADL)	0.36	1

Table 9: Proposed Organization Development Programs

FIRST-ORDER PRIORITY

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP (ADL)

Organization Level

- Make clear rules and procedures, transparency.
- Listen to concerns from everyone to get more familiar and friendly.
- Use productivity tools.

Managerial Level

- Pursue regular team meeting to get ideas and thinking of existing processes.
- Encourage to work more beyond authorized positions for unstable and uncertain situations.

Individual-level

Align morality and ethical standard principles are highly essential.

SECOND-ORDER PRIORITY

SERVANT LEADERSHIP (SL)

Organization Level

- Enhance the engagement and empowerment sessions between teams.
- Use Collaborative Tools to improve team communications.
- Employ productivity tools.
- Propel commitment by showing enthusiasm and optima through shared values and shared vision.

Managerial Level

- Encourage to innovate and encourage to solve the problem.
- Aim to attain higher-level goals and incorporate individuals' inspiration and needs.
- Run a mentoring program to get practice on listening and make the correction.
- Train the team to face rather than avoid the challenges

Individual-level

- Look leaders are leading tirelessly towards org success
- Align morality, and ethical standard principles are highly essential.
- Take ownership, duty, and responsibility of the group shared responsibility and goal attainment at the team's level.

THIRD-ORDER PRIORITY AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP (AL)

Organization Level

Develop a program to focus on what we are here and what this
organization stands for.

Managerial Level

- Run a learning program to improve resilience to widespread rooted.
 Activate a mentoring program to get practice on listening and make
- Activate a mentoring program to get practice on listening and make the correction.
- Train the team to face rather than avoid the challenges. Individual-level

Individual-level Align morality, and ethical standard principles are highly essential.

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FOURTH-ORDER PRIORITY

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP (TML)

Organization Level

- Use collaborative tools to improve team communications.
- Propel commitment by showing enthusiasm and optima through shared values and shared vision.

Managerial Level

 Aim to attain higher-level goals and incorporate individuals' inspiration and needs.

Individual-level

 Take ownership, duty, and responsibility of the group shared responsibility and goal attainment at the team's level.

FIFTH-ORDER PRIORITY

TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP (TSL)

Organization Level

- Formulation strong and Shared Sense of Meaning to demonstrate certainty.
- Use Productivity Tools.

Managerial Level

- Focus on performance and goal rather than individual needs.
- Give constructive advice and direction.

Individual-level

Inspire by the future.

The statistical results showed slight differences between the current and expected situations based on the PNI Modified values. Nevertheless, the order of priority can be concluded as follows:

The first order of priority per the modified PNI results was adaptive leadership, especially the statement of Q25 ADL5, "I help my subordinates mobilize their focuses while addressing challenges to accomplish goals."

The second-order priority was servant leadership, especially the statement of SL19, AL4: "I motivate the subordinate by providing effective platform and systems to allow them to achieve the organizational goals."

The third-order priority was transformational leadership, especially the question TML 5: "I emphasize enhancing my subordinate's commitments by showing enthusiasm and optimism through shared values and shared vision toward organizational goals."

The fourth-order priority was authentic leadership, especially the question statement of Q14, AL 4: "I lead my subordinates while facing challenges to inspire them and recognize the subordinate's accomplishments.".

The fifth-order priority was transactional leadership, especially the question statement of TSL 4: "I monitor each subordinate's performance and takes immediate corrective action when needed."

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

At the organization level, a strong sense of shared meaning is important to demonstrate certainty from within. A leader's role is to become activists who convene people: subordinates and the organization. To succeed, in good times or bad, the organization leader must be able to answer the question of "what we are here for." Focusing that question at the organizational level will have a focus on the needs to change. Leaders at the organizational level must shift their goals from maintaining the status quo to constructing a newly imagined future.

At the managerial level, focused on performance and goals rather than individual needs towards organizational success is important. Giving constructive advice and direction to the subordinates will get a more goal-focused for the subordinates. Monitoring the subordinates' performance and making immediate corrective action is another key required action in the global technology middle management team to achieve the organization's higher development. Enabling creativity to positively ensure job satisfaction is the key to achieving the targeted requirement to be completed.

At the individual level focuses on inspiring the employees by the future and leading them towards organizational success. Aligning the morality and ethical standard principles is essential while activating a sense of ownership and duty and responsibility towards shared responsibility and goal attainment.

According to the findings, some recommendations could be made for the Global Technology Company leadership team.

First, to help employees do their jobs better than asking and pointing out problems, the management team asks different formats like "how can I help you deliver excellent service."

Second, the managers need to model these servantminded behaviors to subordinates in light of role modeling for employees to serve customers better.

Third, re-focus the managerial approach to coaching while learning to gain trust, co-creating a healthy environment from within, and

Fourth, the subordinates who do actual work know better than managers how to do a great job. So, respecting the employees' ideas and encouraging them to try new approaches to improve work encourages employees to think creatively. The company continues exercising servant leadership. The leaders learn to be humble, show respect, and ask how they can serve employees to improve the organization and outcomes.

The research suggested evaluating the implementation of the recommendations whether those proposed recommendations work well and effectively and expand the scope to the company's shareholders and Board of Directors to see other aspects of problems and explore other possible Organization Development program and Leadership Development to increase the effectiveness of Global Technology.

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