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Acronyms and Abbreviations

MILE Municipal Institute of Learning

LN Learning Notes



About MILE Learning Notes

Unlike music notes, these Learning Notes (LNs) have been documented to serve as reminders of key issues, discussions and challenges that emanated from the Management Seminar hosted by MILE in partnership with Corporate & Human Resources on 07 March 2012. They are based solely on Keith Coates presentation, experience, accumulated knowledge and current thinking. It is hoped that these LNs will be used extensively by municipal officials involved in leadership and management. Keith Coates' presentation highlights and identifies 'issues and challenges' to be considered in the field leadership and management. The purpose of the LNs is to assist in the generation of information required to prepare and enhance the quality of leadership and management within eThekweni Municipality. It is further hoped that the session will go a long way in assisting management within the municipality to provide practical solutions to leadership and management challenges.

Furthermore, the LNs aim to guide and support practitioners in the enhancement of their skills by providing reminders of issues and recommendations which will help them in dealing with important decisions in assuming their roles. Although it is assumed that LN users have had some exposure to leadership and management related matters; for those less familiar, additional sources of information and detailed examples can be provided. Comments and suggestions for the improvement of these LNs are welcomed. This is an open ended series of LN, updated and improved on an ongoing basis. Additional notes will be added as necessary. These, together with requests for further information, should be addressed to mile@durban.gov.za.

1 Introduction

Management Seminars have become a prominent feature on the MILE agenda. The Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE), in collaboration with eThekweni Municipality's Corporate & Human Resources, recently hosted Keith Coates, from the renowned organization, tomorrowtoday. The seminar focused on leadership in a changing world. It is understood that municipalities and private organisations are faced with similar leadership and management challenges as a result of rapid change. The purpose of the seminar was to congregate municipal management, professionals and officials to share knowledge, skills and experiences with the intent of improving management and leadership in their respective clusters, units and departments.

MILE, like tomorrowtoday, believes that management seminars are an important part of any attempt to change attitudes and behaviours in the municipality. Keith Coates, a high profile and world class speaker, provided the participants with a wealth of practical information and inspiration. His presentation style is highly charismatic and interactive. Keith brought fresh thinking and energy to the seminar.

Prior to the commencement of the seminar, Sogen Moodley, the Senior Manager responsible for MILE, in his introductory note, established useful guidelines to help achieve the desired outcome of the seminar. He set the context by highlighting the objectives of the seminar. Sogen reminded municipal officials that MILE's philosophy was to maximize opportunities for innovation, capacity enhancement, and learning and up scaling of municipal performance. The seminars provide practitioners with a platform to begin sharing good practice and learning from others' experiences.

Pam Matthias, the Deputy Head: Human Resources responsible for coordinating the seminar introduced Keith Coates, providing the audience with some insight into his achievements and expertise. She emphasised that it was important to have the opportunity to invite one of the country's leading leadership and management experts to facilitate a session on Leadership.

2 Overview

The focus of the seminar was on leadership and management in relation to the changing world. It was designed specifically for managers who, presumably, are grappling with issues of management and leadership in a changing world. The format of the presentation adopted an interactive approach in which learning is not only confined to the traditional slide presentation style but involves discussion, humor and the use of multimedia. It allowed the opportunity for participants to share their management experiences from their respective clusters, units, and departments which enhance learning and sharing and the comparison of approaches. In addition to drawing on Keith's experience, the seminar enriched participants' insights into a range of innovative solutions to effectively addressing management challenges. By understanding the impact of a changing world, both inside and outside the municipality, we can improve our leadership and interactions of our teams.

3 Changing World

Keith declared upfront that he has worked almost his entire life in the private sector and was therefore less familiar with local government. However, he indicated that he liked the concept of a "learning city" and stated that it was important to create cities that can adapt to change and produce world class leaders. There are three reasons why leadership has to change and these include: a changing world, a changing workforce, and leadership imperatives. Over the years, the world has experienced the emergence (or shift) of Asian market domination. In fact, if we look back; we note that the shift was initially from the Atlantic towards the Pacific. Futurists have predicted that, in future, power will shift to the Indian Ocean and Africa has the potential to become the next power house.

Coates referred to the “law of future” that states that any idea about the future that is not ridiculous, is not worth considering.

For so long, leadership has been based on American models and that is changing. People want to learn from China, Japan and South Korea. In order for us to be part of a “powerhouse”, we need to grab learning opportunities and change our mindset towards that. Municipalities should be able to think strategically as opposed to future planning. Strategic thinking is very important in a changing world because by the time that a plan reaches fruition, the world has changed, often rendering the plan redundant. Municipalities and organizations worldwide need know what they should be watching out for. They should look through the lens and be able to interpret things. Individuals view the world and their position in the world through various lenses. According to Keith, emotional intelligence is the ability to realize which lens you are looking through. There are a number of factors that have resulted in a changing world in recent times, namely, technology, demographics, globalization and shifting social values.

3.1 Technology

Nano-technology, DNA, robotics, energy, 3D printers and information technology is taking the world by storm. Robotics, for example, is very important for the medical profession. The latest information technology incorporates aspects of hi-touch, mobile smart phones, augmented reality and the creation of “Digital Natives”. Typically, “Digital Natives” are the Y generation raised during the information revolution and very techno-savvy. Keith argues that, the implications of having digital natives for organizations and municipalities are that if the employer does not have internet, they are “invisible”. The business world is in a transition from the information revolution to the collaborative revolution and organizations not only need to be present on the internet but engaging both their employees

and customers. The importance of user generated content, such as Encarta and Wikipedia, is increasing. Generation Y is still connecting, it's just that they are doing it in a different way compared to "Baby Boomers."

3.2 Demographics

Years ago, people earned minimal wages and life expectancy rates were very low. As some countries became wealthier, employee wages rose and suddenly life expectancy became higher. Although income disparities were very vast in the past, the gap narrowed tremendously with the emergence of the "Asian Tigers". The disparities suddenly reduced. However, the disparities increased within countries themselves.

There are a number of other factors. The fertility and infant mortality rates have dropped significantly. Although Africa is also on a downward trajectory, it is still much higher than the rest of the world. But on the otherside, Europe is rapidly becoming economically unsustainable because "baby boomers" are retiring. There are not enough people to fill the gap left in the workforce. In China, the one child rule has decimated the workforce resulting in the need to use migrant labour. Keith illustrated changes in the population over the years and made projections. In the 1950s, there were more young people and yet in 2007, there is evidence of more middle aged. In 2050, it is predicted that the majority of people will be old aged. The municipality needs to know that there is rapid urbanization and that over half of the world population now lives in cities. In future, political and decision making powers will move from national governments to cities and cities will have an impact on nations. We will see the demise on nation states.

3.3 Globalisation

There is an increasing global interdependence that is accelerating at an increasing pace. Societies are becoming increasingly complex. However, it is the expanding emphasis on difference that is bringing societies together.

3.4 Shifting Social Values

The changes in social values can be depicted by looking at the generational theory. However, there is a cultural paradox of who is right or who is wrong. Even if the different generations or cultures share the same values, they may be expressed in different ways. Keith argues that South Africa is the most diverse country in the world; it should be the most innovative and resilient. Diversification leads to resilience. However, the world is still faced with a dilemma of not only cultural but generational, gender, family and structural paradox. Organisations have an obligation to make employees understand these paradoxes without conflict. Changing institutional norms are underpinned by shifting societal values. Keith shared some findings whereby he claims that at the age of 30, 72% of graduates are not working in the fields in which they graduated but are following a different career trajectory. He further substantiated his claim by indicating that the Boston Consulting Group study revealed that the top three ways in which to attract talent are fun, freedom and flexibility.

4 Changing Workforce

It is important to note that a changing workforce is characterized by digital natives (as mentioned earlier) and digital immigrants. Digital natives are the Y generation whilst digital immigrants are the older generation. Organisations are experiencing

reverse mentoring whereby senior managers are learning from their subordinates about technology. Although leaders cannot control communication, they need to influence it and be part of the conversation. Digital Dinosaurs on the other hand still exist in most organisations. Digital Dinosaurs are mainly the “Baby Boomers”. Digital natives need instant access to music, shopping, soundhound, world of answers, electronic platforms to sustain the learning and so on. Social media in particular is transforming leadership. There is a social agenda that is shaping leadership through social media and social business. This socially driven leadership is creating a workforce that is fast, complex, technology driven, diverse, brutal and bold. There are three leadership imperatives, namely, engaged (command and control leadership is situational), agility and transparent.

5 Three New Skills Leaders need to Learn

Leaders need to learn and develop more skills for a changing world.

5.1 Adaptive Intelligence

Adaptive intelligence is the ability to deal with uncertainty and change. Keith reminded participants that we live in a connection economy and therefore people are our biggest commodities. In order to learn, we need to combine different types of knowledge for learning and be bold. This intelligence translates to adaptive leadership which means knowing what to do when you don't know what to do. The worst things that can be done by leaders is to apply a technical solution to solve an adaptive challenge. Diversity needs to be nurtured in order to build resilience.

5.2 The Balcony Perspective

The Balcony Perspective assumes that leaders need to be on the balcony and not on the dance floor. They need to have a more holistic view of what is happening in their organization/unit. A leader is selected because they are already “the best dancers” and therefore there is no need to be on the dance floor.

5.3 Conversations

Leaders also have to take cognizance of the fact that the nature of conversations has shifted. Leaders need to influence conversations.

Open Discussions:

Municipalities need to ask themselves the following questions:

- In the next 3 – 5 years, what will their biggest leadership challenges?
- What questions should you be asking (but aren't)?
- Where will you look for answers?
- How do you establish a balance between social media and meeting attention?

Questions around the use of social media at work have been raised quite often. It has often been felt that employees will abuse social media during working hours. However, social media, such as Twitter, can be used to enhance communication, meetings, live feeds, and universal questions. A global conversation can be triggered, raised, discussed and enhanced in social media.

Keith claims that studies have revealed that access to facebook during working hours actually increases productivity. Access to social media in the workplace is less about the abuse of company time and shirking working responsibilities than it is about being able to switch concentration. Organisations need to be more cognizant of what they offer in terms of fun for potential candidates that have critical and scarce skills.

A question was raised with regards to the fact that the municipality is a diverse organization (comprising of many sector departments with different needs) and that there may be questions around agility and adaptability of approaches. It was noted that a one size fits all approach cannot be adopted. However, increased diversity requires increased agility. There are three essential components to increasing agility.

1. Organizations need to recognize and accept the fact that differences exist and that there is no one size fits all solution.
2. They must adopt an outputs based (or outcomes based) as opposed to an inputs based approach to work. Keith notes that research has shown that productivity and engagement increases with an output based approach.
3. Leaders must have smart conversations.

Another issue that was raised relates to colleagues and superiors in an organization using experience as an excuse to discourage new ideas and attempts at engagement. They often insist that certain things have always been done in a particular way (don't fix it, if it aint). They often ignore the fact that proof that the idea will work in the future is not certain. Keith uses the phrase; success is the biggest inhibitor of future success. When there is doubt and uncertainty, it is often the best time for innovation.

When working with highly professional individuals, it is always important to consider the following questions:

- How do we change mindsets?
- How do you deal with aversion to technology?
- How do you monitor internet reality as opposed to fiction?

Organisations need to keep learning in order to adapt to a changing world. Emersion will create a disequilibrium that will result in the recalibration of the world view.



6 Lessons Learned

The municipality needs to consider the following:

- Exploring access to facebook as a means to creating productivity.
- Involvement and engagement from leadership in order to create an awareness of stakeholders.
- Engagement of political leadership.
- Re-examination of the way municipal employees performance is measured
- Political leadership and officials taking a lead in helping municipality become a smart city.
- Departments also taking a lead and doing things differently.
- WSP introducing new courses for managers in leadership.
- Relook at HR and IR policies.
- Timeframes for service delivery
- More engagement from leadership is needed in terms of future direction (generation gap, technology etc.). The “hows” of the way things have traditionally been done are changing therefore what needs to be achieved needs to be clearly communicated both internally and externally.
- Engage political champions with mindset shifts so that they make take this thinking to the communities who will then be aware of the service delivery strategy.

- Relook at the performance Management Strategy. A suitable environment to achieve objectives is needed. Managing operations as opposed to managing people.
- Leadership needs to step in to create greater flexibility. HR needs to take note of this and make the changes. Although there are policies in place that govern scope of decisions – certain units are going their own ways. HR needs to develop its people through courses on e.g. the nature of the changing world, workplace and mindset. Specialists in each unit need to take responsibility for leading the way in their respective fields.
- We are unique employees as we are customers (rate payers) of our own organisation. The current performance management system is ineffective and unclear for example; in certain instances it is impossible to achieve a 5. Consistent criteria need to be developed. People are the biggest competitive advantage in an organisation; therefore if we want to be a smart city, we need smart people. EM has a very high vacancy rate. Paying at the 50th percentile is average and therefore we are not providing competitive salaries. There are not very strong HR Policies.



7 CONCLUSION

Keith's presentation helped participants understand leadership in a changing world. This will help management with practical solutions in their leadership roles. The presentation is fun, interactive and visual whilst using a light-hearted, and edutainment-style approach, with lots of multi-media. He uses an interesting amalgamation of approaches to connect more effectively with participants. In a world where there is so much information available to us all the time via multiple channels. Keith has showed us that there is always a need for new learning, re-learning and un-learning. In addition to this, young people coming into the workplace are the new generation, who do things fundamentally differently and need practical guidance. Mentorship has throughout history, and in every society, played a very important role in passing on wisdom. This is what young people need, and older people may get some insight into how younger people think. By understanding changes in the world, management within the municipality will create a competitive advantage by understanding the drivers of people's behaviour and attitudes, showing them how to influence others.

