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LEADERSHIP SKILLS: Thomas Sample

Private & Confidential

Leaders possess a 'vision': a long term view of the shape of an organisation, a brand, product, service or project. This vision shapes other people's actions and decisions. Leaders enthuse and motivate people by the way they communicate this vision. They form great teams, some of whose members know more about specific areas than them. Leaders point their team in the right direction, through their vision; they set the ground rules while enabling a team and its members to achieve their full potential. They allow people to make mistakes - but not too many. They praise as well as correct.

Leaders act quickly to solve problems. They know enough about their business or particular organisational competences to be respected, but they don't get lost in detail. They walk the talk: they act in a way which consistently reflects what they say, creating trust and a reputation for integrity.

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

Thomas's characteristics suggest that he could succeed in a leadership role where operational, service orientated and organisational competencies are required. He is likely to be determined and persistent in completing projects which is likely to generate trust from others. However, he may struggle to make decisions quickly and may be somewhat resistant to change. He is likely to work best in organisations with a democratic and consultative culture.

His leadership potential will also depend on aspects of his emotional awareness and level of fluid intelligence.

Likely Leadership Strengths

- Achieves results in an organised and thorough manner
- Builds relationships slowly and on trust
- Willing to assume responsibility and authority
- Seeks challenging assignments
- Has the ability to calm people and situations
- Listens to and acts upon the views others

Potential Leadership Limitations

- May not always be effective in achieving results quickly
- May not be particularly creative and innovative
- May be too lenient with close associates and poor performers
- May not always respond to the need for change
- May become inflexible if pressurised into changing direction

General Communication

Thomas's profile suggests that he has a friendly approach and generally has a positive approach. He is likely to be a thorough communicator who prefers to stay focused on the purpose of the meeting and may tend to emphasise the process in which work is to be carried out. This can be valuable to the planning stage of a project, but it may at times frustrate his colleagues, especially in those areas where strategy is being communicated.

Presentation Style

Thomas's profile suggests that he is generally seen to be an effective presenter. His presentation style is thorough, amiable, conversational and informative and he tends to adopt a procedural approach and work his way steadily through all the positive aspects of the subject. He is equally likely to inform others of the constraints of the subject which may gain the trust of his audience. He may be somewhat resistant to demands to quicken his pace which may result in some members of his audience losing interest.

Decision Making Style

Thomas is likely to be comfortable making decisions in those areas where he feels he has specific knowledge and, particularly, where he has had previous experience. He will generally follow through on his decisions which may influence others to see him as reliable and dependable. However, others may feel that Thomas takes too long in committing to a course of action in areas outside of his remit. He may also prefer to maintain tried and tested methods, which may demotivate others who wish to try a new direction and facilitate change.

Meeting Deadlines and Time Management

Thomas is likely to apply himself with great tenacity and will tend to follow through with his plans until work is completed. However, he may prefer not to be rushed if deadlines shift, and may require guidance on what aspects of his work to prioritise in order to meet a tight deadline. It may be beneficial to assess Thomas's level of fluid intelligence to determine his ability to pick up and work with new information at a fast pace.

Due to his accommodating nature, he may take on more than he can manage and, as a result, may find himself working overtime in order to meet deadlines and achieve the desired end result. However, if Thomas has a level of assertiveness, they may be comfortable saying 'no' to others.

Goal Focus

Thomas is likely to seek to establish order out of chaos to achieve a predetermined and measurable end result. In doing so he tends to make effective use of his communication and interpersonal skills coupled with inherent drive and persistence.

Administration

Thomas is likely to be an efficient organiser in administrative terms as he will tend to be persistent, thorough and procedural by nature. Provided he has input into timescales, he will have no problems in allowing time to complete administrative tasks and in tying up all the loose ends.

There may be a tendency for Thomas to be too dependent on his administrative systems, to the point that he may resist some time pressures that are placed on him to shortcut such systems.

Planning and Problem Solving

Thomas's profile suggests that planning and solving problems is likely to be one of his strongest areas. He has characteristics which should allow him to research information in a structured and persistent manner and then to translate such information into both short and long-term planning situations.

With regard to problem solving, he is likely to be thorough and patient in his approach.

Ensuring Quality and Accuracy

Thomas is likely to work steadily to ensure accuracy and a high degree of quality. He tends to prefer to work to a precedent and be left alone to get on with the task without too much outside interference once the structures are in place.

Persistence and perseverance, together with a desire to achieve the end result should result in accuracy and quality of work. Thomas will also tend to want to take control of quality and accuracy within others and will certainly set high standards.

Handling Criticism and Aggression

This accommodating and supportive person has the tendency to defuse antagonistic situations in a calm and friendly manner but, in the first instance, will tend to avoid any form of confrontation. He may at times become opinionated or stubborn when dealing with an aggressive person, but being generally diplomatic and sensitive to others' feelings and values it is likely that he will not intentionally offend them.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

If Thomas is an existing leader within the organisation and the above-mentioned development areas are evident, it may be beneficial to provide him with the training recommended below.

Achieving Effective Results and Innovating

Thomas is hard working and well disciplined with a high need for security. This may sometimes get in the way of him achieving effective results.

Competent achievers are usually assertive self-starters who are confident by nature. They possess natural persuasive and influencing skills and are active, mobile, alert and independent. Although they may not be natural organisers, they know the importance of self-discipline and organisation for achieving results and objectives in a set timescale and within an agreed budget.

Good innovators create enthusiasm in others and question existing systems, equipment and skills. They regularly come up with new and productive ideas. They are rarely satisfied with things as they are and will invariably question the status quo in the search for improvement.

He may, therefore, benefit from the following training:

- Setting objectives;
- Taking corrective action when necessary;
- Challenging - Questioning the status quo;
- Innovating - Thinking of and implementing new ideas;
- Monitoring and Controlling - Ensuring progress is made;
- Communicating - Keeping in touch with those who have overall control or are part of the project;
- Motivating - Inspiring all those concerned. Giving momentum to the project.

Delegation

Competent delegators will fully communicate their requirements to others; initially spending time assisting them, so that not only are standards established, but also effectiveness is assured for any such future delegation. Once objectives are understood and timescales agreed upon, the competent delegator will monitor progress regularly to ensure that the work is on schedule and performance objectives are being met.

There are clear indicators that Thomas may prefer to do things himself rather than to delegate to others. He may, therefore, benefit from training in the following:

- The delegation process - setting and effectively achieving objectives;

- Monitoring and controlling - realising that if progress is not monitored his responsibility may be quashed;
- Avoiding failure - The necessity for explanation; checking for understanding;
- Training - Learning to train and trust others so that efficiency is not diminished.