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Managerial and leadership skills required in the South African power industry

Tovhowani Adolph Nedohe, Zeleke Worku and Mammo Muchie
Tshwane School for Business and Society
159 Nana Sita Street, Pretoria 0001

Abstract: This paper provides a summary of managerial and leadership skills that are required in the South African power industry. Studies conducted by Nedohe (2020, 2022) have shown that the South African power industry is in dire need of suitably qualified electrical engineers whose services are required in the power transformer manufacturing industry. The author has pointed out that it is essential to provide incentives and an enabling working environment to suitably qualified electrical engineers so that they can make valuable contributions to the industry. This paper provides a summary of managerial and leadership skills that are highly beneficial for the power industry.

Keywords: South African power industry, Power transformers, Leadership and managerial skills

Introduction and background to study

The South African power industry is in dire need of suitably qualified electrical engineers whose services are required in the transformer manufacturing industry. Researchers have shown that it is essential to create an enabling working environment to suitably qualified experts and technicians. The aim of this article is to provide a summary of managerial and leadership skills that are required in the South African power industry. Nedohe (2020, 2022) has conducted a study in the transformer manufacturing industry of South Africa, and has found that the industry requires the services and expertise of highly qualified and talented engineers in order to meet the demand for electrical power adequately. The power transformer manufacturing industry is a critical element of the power industry in which there is an acute shortage of suitably skilled engineers and technicians. Bakshi (2021) has shown that the Japanese power industry is highly efficient due to the emphasis placed on quality leadership in the power industry. There is a need to learn valuable lessons from the Japanese power industry in terms of providing incentives to highly skilled electrical engineers and technicians.

Breyer, Bogdanov, Aghahosseini, Gulagi, Child, Oyewo and Vainikka (2018) have suggested that it is highly beneficial for power generating enterprises to diversify their sources of power in order to be sustainable. For example, it is beneficial to promote the use solar, renewable and wind energy by providing tax incentives and skills based training to artisans and technicians working in the industry. Such assistance should be directed at poorly resourced entities. Eshun and Amoako-Tuffour (2016) have shown that the needs of developing nations can be met sufficiently by addressing issues that are related to legislation, training, tax and the provision of economic incentives to local and foreign enterprises who are prepared to generate and distribute power at an affordable rate to business, industry and commerce. According to the authors, training is essential to ensure sustainability in the power industry.

Gao, Deng, Zheng, Ding, Ye, Cai and Wang (2022: 159-176) have shown that it is essential to provide work-related incentives to vocational experts, artisans, engineers and technicians working in the power generation sector. The need for skills is relatively much higher in developing nations. The authors have shown that it is essential to create an enabling working environment to suitably qualified electrical engineers so that they can make valuable contributions to the industry. Goldthau and Sitter (2019: 27-47) have provided a summary of managerial and leadership skills that are highly beneficial for the power industry. The authors have shown that good leadership behaviours include ensuring that tasks are completed following expectations and requirements, involving employees in decision-making, and maintaining the project team. Involving the project team in decision-making is also critical for project success because it motivates employees by making them feel valued by involving them in project decision-making.

Hussain, Abbass, Usman, Rehan and Asif (2022) have shown that good leaders and managers consider all inputs made by members of the team for making assessments and evaluations. The ability to make objective assessment is a requirement for ensuring harmony among members of the team. Doing so is highly helpful for ensuring organisational success. Furthermore, team building is critical in project management, making the behavior of the marinating group critical in project management. Thus, leaders who ensure that project personnel coexists harmoniously by ensuring their satisfaction and ensuring that they have positive feelings among themselves are more likely to increase team productivity, leading to project success (Jensen, 2018: 93-98).

Kobani (2022: 166-172) has shown that good leadership styles are beneficial for enhancing overall harmony and productivity. Transformational leaders enable poorly skilled employees to grow and acquire more skills by creating opportunities for training and the enhancement of skills. Good leadership means the ability to meet situational needs, followers' needs, market needs, organisational needs, etc. Depending on the leadership style, leadership plays an essential role in project management. Among the various leadership styles are autocratic leadership, transactional leadership, bureaucratic leadership, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, democratic leadership, and laissez-faire leadership (Mang-Benza & Hunsberger, 2020: 516-529).

Menzel and Teubner (2021: 456-475) have pointed out that democratic leadership enables employees to have a say on how specific tasks should be handled. This enables employees to have confidence in managing technical details. Good managers and leaders allow project team members to participate in decision-making processes, discussion, and project matters. Despite the benefits of democratic leadership, what if most of the project team is newly graduated and has little experience? In this case, the bias toward the democratic leadership style will be detrimental to the project, and the importance of the autocratic leadership style will become much more critical in such situations. On the other hand, some authors such as Muller, Geraldi and Turner (2012) argue that taking decisions alone if not helpful, and that the leader must make the effort to accept input from team members. Failure to do so often leads to difficulty in implementation.

In a laissez-faire leadership style, project managers encourage independence among project team members with little or no control over subordinates. Mishra, Rajkumar and Mishra (2022: 63-70) identify the theory to be used in administration rather than leadership. Project teams in transactional leadership styles agree to obey project managers, and the leadership tends to reward team members based on their compliance with regulations and standards, as well as their performance at the workplace. Atransactional leader is concerned mostly about a specific task that needs to be performed based on instructions provided to employees. A transactional leader has no room for new ideas and innovative suggestions. Such a leader punishes a project team member for poor performance (Ohemeng, Obuobisa Darko&Amoako-Asiedu, 2020). On the other hand, charismatic or transformational leadership is defined by a leader's ability to instill enthusiasm in the project team. A bureaucratic leadership style is one in which project managers strictly adhere to rules and ensure that project personnel adheres to rules and procedures precisely. When employees perform routine tasks that involve safety risks or large sums of money, a bureaucratic style is considered appropriate.

Qiu and Dooley (2022: 350-369) have pointed out that it is important for project leaders to consider and respect the cultural backgrounds of team members and the environment in which projects are carried out. In order for project teams to operate in harmony, it is essential to factors in determining inspiration drivers for team performance. As a result, further investigation of the prominent culture and values of individuals and the characteristics of working conditions is recommended before applying appropriate motivational theories or activating action-specific management tactics. Scarlat, Dallemand and Fahl (2018: 457-472) have argued that good leaders allow and encourage their fellow workers and colleagues to share innovative ideas and methods openly and freely. Failure to do so often results in resentment and loss of productivity. Another significant challenge for organisation s is to become a preferred employer. To get to this point, project managers must assist the organisation in creating an environment in which employees want to be a part of the crew and work for the team's best interests while they are there and stay long enough to make a difference. Human resource management in dealing with human capital is thus a challenge, as evidenced by the rate of investments (ROI) not only in terms of money but also in terms of performance, efficiencies, and organisation al best practices. On a global scale, complexity is expected to rise. Because project teams will be more diverse and virtual, the project manager's primary focus will be on effective communication and the free flow of ideas among team members (Sood, Dey&Saha, 2019). Good leaders allow stakeholders to comment and suggest on the quality of workmanship and overall productivity. They study all such comments and suggestions with interest and apply self-introspection. They also believe in an independent assessment and evaluation of the work they carry out. They are open to creative ideas and constructive suggestions. They encourage team members to share valuable expertise and knowledge freely. They openly reward talented and hardworking employees. These are leadership skills that are highly needed in the South African power generation industry. New tools, technological models, and risks will emerge, and new methods, particularly lean and agile, will be more fully implemented. Future project managers will be expected to have a wide range of skills. Soft skills, social, communication, and leadership abilities, as well as broad knowledge of the economy, law, industry, tools, and methods, are essential. Finally, technological skills will become increasingly crucial in completing projects.

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