Toxic Leadership

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Toxic Leadership Agenda

• Personality and Reputation
• Defining Leadership
• Leadership Styles
• The Toxic Triangle
  – Destructive Leadership
  – Susceptible Followers
  – Conducive Environments
• Identifying the Toxic Triangle
Personality and Reputation

Hogan assesses reputation from two perspectives:

**HPI**

Bright-side personality, or normal personality, describes people when they are at their best. Bright-side personality is measured by the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI), and predicts leadership performance across all organizational levels and industry sectors.

**HDS**

Dark-side personality describes people when they are stressed, bored, or simply not paying sufficient attention to their behavior. Measured by the Hogan Development Survey (HDS), this behavior alienates subordinates and prevents managers from being able to build a team.
What is Leadership?

“Influencing the actions of others towards a common goal.”

- Vision
- Forgoing self-interests
- Not always positive
- Measuring effectiveness
- Followership
Leadership Style

Concern for Self
Concern for Others

Leadership style has implications for:

Method of Influence
Decision-Making Style
Type and Manner of Feedback
ACCOMMODATING

- Permissive
- Influences by currying favor
- Difficulty with confrontation and tough conversations
- Avoids difficult decisions
COLLABORATIVE

- Partnership
- Influences by focusing on shared interests
- Balances positive and negative feedback
- Makes decision in consideration of common good
Leadership Style

**Absent**

- Indifference
- Little influence
- Avoids providing or receiving feedback
- Laissez faire
**NARCISSISTIC**

- Authoritarian
- Influence through compliance
- Feedback through retribution and punishment
- Self-interested decision-making
The Toxic Triangle

**Destructive Leaders**
- Individuals in power acting in their own self-interests

**Susceptible Followers**
- Others that permit the Destructive Leader to operate

**Conducive Environments**
- Contexts that promote Toxic Leadership

The Toxic Triangle facilitates Toxic Leadership
Destructive Leadership

1. Charisma
2. Need for Power
3. Narcissism
4. Negative Life Themes
5. Ideology of Hate

5 Characteristics that frequently present with Destructive Leadership
Destructive Leadership

1. **Charisma**

Destructive Leaders often:

- Are outgoing and charismatic
- Have engaging personalities
- Are socially skilled
- Espouse popular ideologies

2. **Need for Power**

3. **Narcissism**

4. **Negative Life Themes**

5. **Ideology of Hate**
Destructive Leadership

1. Charisma

Destructive Leaders often:

- Are ambitious

2. Need for Power

- Desire positions of power and influence

3. Narcissism

- Demonstrate focus, energy, and stamina towards goals

4. Negative Life Themes

5. Ideology of Hate
Destructive Leadership

1. Charisma
2. Need for Power
3. Narcissism
4. Negative Life Themes
5. Ideology of Hate

Destructive Leaders often:

- Have inflated views of self-importance
- Possess tremendous self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Ignore input from others
Destructive Leadership

1. Charisma
2. Need for Power
3. Narcissism
4. Negative Life Themes
5. Ideology of Hate

Destructive Leaders often:

- Experienced significant challenges or traumatic events during formative periods
- Weave a narrative of overcoming hardship or long odds
Destructive Leadership

1. Charisma
2. Need for Power
3. Narcissism
4. Negative Life Themes
5. Ideology of Hate

Destructive Leaders often:

- Rally support against a common threat
- Create or exaggerate the perception of external threats to justify power
Susceptible Followers

Followers pursue personal well-being by being seen as industrious, enthusiastic, and loyal to leadership.

**Conformers** passively permit Destructive Leadership
- Unmet needs
- Poor self-evaluations
- Immaturity

**Colluders** actively assist Destructive Leadership
- Personal ambitions
- Congruent values/beliefs
- Unsocialized values
Contextual factors can facilitate or hinder the rise of Destructive Leaders to positions of influence.

1. Instability
2. Perceived Threat
3. Cultural Values
4. Absence of Checks & Balances
Conducive Environments

Contextual factors can facilitate or hinder the rise of Destructive Leaders to positions of influence

1. Instability
2. Perceived Threat
3. Cultural Values
4. Absence of Checks & Balances

- Periods of change or uncertainty
- Need for quick, decisive action
Conducive Environments

Contextual factors can facilitate or hinder the rise of Destructive Leaders to positions of influence

1. Instability
2. Perceived Threat
3. Cultural Values
4. Absence of Checks & Balances

- External threats
- Common enemies
- Need for protection
Conducive Environments

Contextual factors can facilitate or hinder the rise of Destructive Leaders to positions of influence

1. Instability
2. Perceived Threat
3. Cultural Values
4. Absence of Checks & Balances

- Collectivist cultures
- High power distance
- Need for stability and security
Conducive Environments

Contextual factors can facilitate or hinder the rise of Destructive Leaders to positions of influence

1. Instability
2. Perceived Threat
3. Cultural Values
4. Absence of Checks & Balances

- Emerging organizations
- Poor institutional oversight
Identifying the Toxic Triangle

The capacity for Toxic Leadership to take hold is a function of measurable, human characteristics.

- **Destructive Leaders**
  - Personality and Values of the leader

- **Susceptible Followers**
  - Personality and Values of the followers

- **Conducive Environments**
  - The shared values of the organization, and the broader cultural context
Identifying the Toxic Triangle

Destructive Leadership

Low concern for others

High concern for self

HPI “Bright Side”

HDS “Dark Side”

MVPI “Inside”
Identifying the Toxic Triangle

Susceptible Followers

Conformers

Colluders

HPI
“Bright Side”

HDS
“Dark Side”

MVPI
“Inside”
# Identifying the Toxic Triangle

## Conducive Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Risks</th>
<th>Governmental Risks</th>
<th>Organizational Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collectivist</td>
<td>• Corruption</td>
<td>• Traditional Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High Power Distance</td>
<td>• Weak Institutions</td>
<td>• Need for Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Existence of Threats</td>
<td>• Rapid Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

- Personality = Reputation
- Leadership is the mobilization of a group towards a common goal
- Toxic Leadership organizes pursuit of goals that may ultimately be against followers’ self-interests
- Toxic Leadership emerges in conducive environments when the Destructive Leader is supported by susceptible followers
- The conditions for Toxic Leadership can be measured based on personality and values