Questback

Questback's Transformational Leadership Model

INTRODUCTION

Search for 'Leadership models' online and you will find hundreds of blogs, business reviews and academic papers espousing different approaches to measuring the different styles of leadership. But which model is right for you and your business? Surely not every 'Top Leadership Model for Business Success' that you found online can be right for you, can it?

In developing Questback's transformational leadership model, we reviewed the most prominent schools of thought and looked for validated leadership models widely adopted both in business and academia.

Focusing predominantly on transformational leadership behaviours, but also measuring the key transactional leadership behaviour of contingent reward, our model measures the following seven constructs:

1. Communicating Vision
2. Fostering Innovative Thinking
3. Inspirational Leadership
4. Leading by Example
5. Support and Development
6. Fostering Collaboration
7. Reward and Recognition

The list below shows the constructs and questions that comprise our transformational leadership Model.

Communicating Vision
[Name] paints an interesting picture of the future
[Name] clearly understands where we are going
[Name] inspires others with his/her plans for the future

Fostering Innovative Thinking
[Name] challenges me to think about things in new ways
[Name] regularly asks questions that prompt me to think
[Name] has ideas that challenge me to re-examine some of the assumptions of my work

Inspirational Leadership
[Name] inspires me by being highly competent
[Name] always insists on the best performance
I am proud to be associated with [Name]
I have absolute confidence in [Name]

Leading by Example
[Name] leads by example
[Name] demonstrates clear values in his/her behavior
[Name] provides a good model for me to follow

Support and Development
[Name] supports and encourages my development
[Name] always shows respect for my personal feelings
[Name] takes the time to learn about my career aspirations
[Name] cares about whether I achieve my career goals
[Name] gives me constructive feedback about my performance

Fostering Collaboration
[Name] develops team spirit among employees
[Name] gets people to work towards the same goal

Reward and Recognition
[Name] gives me encouragement and recognition
[Name] gives me positive feedback when I perform well
[Name] advises me on how to be recognized for my efforts

BUT WHY DID WE FOCUS ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP?

It has been 40 years since the seminal work by leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns (1978) was published, introducing the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership. According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation", whereas transactional leadership is based on a "give and take" relationship between the leader and his or her followers, with transactional leaders making use of reward and coercive power to obtain results.

Whilst Burns proposed that these two leadership styles were mutually exclusive, later work by another researcher, Bernard M. Bass (1985), extended the work of Burns (1978) and suggested that leaders can simultaneously display both transformational and transactional leadership styles, a view widely held in both the academic and business communities today.

Since the highly influential work of Burns (1978), we have had an additional 40 years of research and many meta-analyses studies which have shown that both transformational and transactional leadership behaviours positively predict a wide variety of performance outcomes at the individual, group and organizational level (see Bass & Bass 2008, The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications" 4th edition Free Press). However, whilst transactional behaviours have been shown to improve overall performance, transformational behaviours are widely deemed more desirable and effective in producing positive change and are therefore the primary focus of our leadership model.

WHAT ARE POSITIVE OUTCOMES THAT CAN BE REALISED THROUGH EFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP?

Decades of research have shown that among other things, followers of effective transformational leaders will show:

- Greater career satisfaction
- Lower likelihood to leave
- Greater discretionary effort
- Higher levels of well-being
- Greater organisational commitment
- Greater trust in leadership

In their classic text, Transformational Leadership, authors Bass and Riggio explain:

"Transformational leaders…are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization."

Wouldn't it be great if all your leaders could achieve these outcomes!

HOW DID WE IDENTIFY THE QUESTIONS AND CONSTRUCTS THAT COMPRISE OUR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL?

Our transformational leadership model is based predominantly on four studies of leadership behaviors, which themselves are based on hundreds of pieces of research carried out in the preceding years. These studies are:

- Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter (1990) - "Transformational leader behaviours and their effects on followers'
- Carless, Wearing & Mann (2000) – "A short measure of Transformational Leadership"
- Waldman, Bass, Yammarino (1990) – "Adding to Contingent-Reward Behavior : the augmenting effect of charismatic leadership"
- James J. Jiang & Gary Klein (1999) – "Supervisor Support and Career Anchor Impact on the Career Satisfaction of the Entry-Level Information Systems Professionals"

Podsakoff's large-scale confirmatory factor analysis has been cited 5826 times to date and continues to be one of the most cited leadership studies in 2018. Podsakoff et all conducted an extensive review of literature on transformational leadership and concluded that it could be summarised by six behaviors:

- Identifying and articulating a vision
  Behavior aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her unit/division/company, and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with his or her vision of the future

- Providing an appropriate model
  Behavior that sets an example for employees to follow that is consistent with the values the leader espouses

- Fostering the acceptance of group goals
  Behavior aimed at promoting cooperation among employees and getting them to work together toward a common goal

- High performance expectation
  Behavior that demonstrates the leader's expectations for excellence, quality, and/or high performance on the part of followers.

- Providing individualised support to staff
  Behavior that indicates that the leader respects their followers and is concerned about their personal feelings and needs

- Intellectual stimulation
  Behavior that challenges followers to re-examine some of their assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed

In additional to the six behaviours of transformational leadership, Podsakoff et al also took five items from Podsakoff et al.'s (1984) contingent reward behavior scale and used these to measure transactional leadership behavior. Contingent reward behavior captures the exchange notions fundamental to transactional leadership and is the principal behavior identified by Bass (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985) to represent this style of leadership.

Later work by Carless, Wearing & Mann in 2000 looked to develop a short measure of transformational leadership, based on this work by Podsakoff et al (1990). This measure is called the Global Transformational Leadership Scale (GTL).

In their work Carless et al made a distinction between the leader behaviors of providing support to staff and encouraging their individual development. In doing this they extended Podsakoff's behavior of "providing individualised support to staff" to include "supporting staff development". They then created a seventh behavior of supportive leadership which they described as "includes giving positive feedback to staff and recognising individual achievements".

The changes made by Carless et al resulted in a model of transformational leadership that measured following behaviors:

- Communicates a vision
- Develops staff
- Provides support
- Empowers staff
- Is innovative
- Leads by example
- Is charismatic

As Carless et al extended their model to include encouraging individual development, we looked to the work of Jiang et al for questions that would measure team development.

Finally, Carless et al also took the broader concept of Charisma, in contrast to the narrower concept of "high performance expectations" used by Podsakoff et all. In their work looking at the augmenting effect of charismatic leadership on contingent-reward behaviour, Waldman et al (1990) designed a set of validated questions that measured charisma, some of which have been added to our model to allow us to fully assess charismatic behavior. Much work, including that by Bass (1985) has shown high performance expectations to be a part of charismatic behaviour. In addition, some of Waldmen et al's questions on contingent reward have been used in our model to help measure recognising and rewarding the team.

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The table below show the direct relationships between the behaviours/constructs from the Podsakoff et al model (1990) and the Carless et al model (2000), alongside the final construct names adopted in the Questback Model:

Podsakoff et al Behaviour	Carless et al Behaviour	Questback's Leadership Model Construct name
Identifying & articulating a vision	Communicates a vision	Communicating Vision
Providing an appropriate model	Leads by example	Leading by Example
Fostering the acceptance of group goals	Empowerment	Fostering Collaboration
High performance expectations	Charisma	Inspirational Leadership
Providing individualised support to staff	Staff development	Support and Development
Intellectual stimulation	Innovative thinking	Fostering Innovative Thinking
Transactional leadership	Supportive leadership	Reward and Recognition

HOW VALID IS QUESTBACK'S TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL?

Questback's Transformational Leadership Model combines previously developed leadership scales. For each of these, extensive statistical analyses have been conducted to ensure their reliability and validity. Reliability was tested with Cronbach's alpha (which yielded values in excess of .87) or by comparing coefficient alphas (which were larger than the recommended level of .7). Thus, the internal consistency of the constructs within the scales was assessed. With regards to construct validity, the composition of the construct was examined with either factor analysis and subsequent rotation or confirmatory factor analysis. Factor analyses favoured a single-factor solution with one underlying leadership dimension, while confirmatory factor analyses were followed by in-depth tests of the goodness-of-fit.

Moreover, convergent and discriminant validity between dimensions and factors were assessed by following best practice and consulting the matrix of covariance. Convergent validity between measures was assessed in the same way. Carless et al. utilised the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) as established scales to validate their scale against, with correlations between .76 and .88. between comparable constructs. Lastly, discriminant validity may also describe a measures capability to differentiate between groups that differ in their expression of the dimension to be assessed or between the individual constructs of a scale. Carless et al. assessed the first by using a different measure to separate high and low performing leaders. Next, they used a t-test and found a significant difference between the means of these two groups. This renders the scale a useful tool.

Overall findings from these pieces of research support the reliability as well as the construct, convergent and discriminant validity of the questions in Questback's Transformational Leadership model.