Using Organizational Data to Enhance Leadership Development

Description:
Organizations are most likely to invest in improvement efforts that have a measurable business impact (Wellins, Selkovits, & McGrath, 2013). Literature suggests that the future work state revolves around organization-wide sharing and usage of big data. Exposing larger numbers of employees to organizational data offers the opportunity for fresh insights, transparency and greater latitude in decision making on workplace challenges. Specifically, employers focusing on employee engagement can create a more efficient, inclusive and retained workforce (Markos & Sridevi, 2010, Heitner, Kahn, & Sherman, 2013). Transitioning managers and supervisors into leaders that are taught how to coach, develop, and provide feedback to others increases overall organizational effectiveness (Henderson, 2018). Executive coaching for performance enhancement has become a method for leadership development because of its unique position in helping modify perspectives and behavior. Literature suggests that focusing on the development of individuals, versus solely on training, creates a healthier, more productive workplace culture. Growth is inevitable and focused strategic interventions can help leaders and organizations learn and adapt to their changing environments. Organizational psychological consultation provides leaders with relevant feedback on ways to develop individuals/teams through an inclusive lens, assist with talent management, and selection of appropriate personnel, which ultimately provides a sustainable and high performing workforce (Staal and Harvey, 2019, Bourke & Bernadette, 2006).

Presented interventions are targeted at strategies that drive consultants towards utilizing a data driven approach in their individual and systematic work. Each of the three panelists will deliver short presentations showcasing the application of best practices in how workforce data can be utilized in a range of public, private and active duty settings to inform the consultation process in areas of employee engagement, executive coaching, and diversity/inclusion and equity. A data demonstration of a data analysis tool will be used to inform the application.

The three presentations are:

1. Assessing and Coaching High Performing Leaders
Ashley N. LaBarre, PsyD

U.S Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) is comprised of highly trained men and women tasked with conducting a variety of diverse worldwide missions (USASOC, 2018a). Individuals assigned to these elite units undergo an extensive assessment and selection process that assesses a number of characteristics and attributes. Once selected, they must continue to develop and adapt their knowledge, skills, attributes, and other factors to match the demands of their mission and perform as effectively as possible.

Many resources are spent to develop physical attributes of these individuals. In more recent years, the United States Army Special Operations Command has begun to turn

its focus on leadership development. In the ARSOF community, leadership is arguably one of the most significant factors in an individual's ability to succeed within the ambiguous and often dangerous environments in which he or she works (Lieber, 2016). More recently, the organization is also recognizing the importance personality plays in the success of its leaders (Lieber, 2016).

Coaching has been has become a popular method utilized in the ARSOF community for organizational and leadership development. Coaching is a collaborative partnership that inspires thought-provoking and creative processes that are geared toward maximizing personal and professional potential (International Coaching Federation [ICF], 2018; Staal and Harvey, 2019). Recognizing the value of coaching, many operational psychologists working in the national security and defense sectors have become certified coaches (Staal, 2019). Operational psychologists working in these units have a unique opportunity to leverage their skillsets in a coaching role to provide individuals feedback that focuses awareness on strengths and vulnerabilities. This awareness often serves as a catalyst for improvement in leadership behaviors and performance ratings (Staal and Harvey, 2019).

2. Building Effective Teams/Leaders Through Diversity and Inclusion
Mykel Selph, MPA, MA, PhDc

As organizations are connecting their values of diversity and inclusion to their overall strategies, perceptions of inclusion are increasingly becoming a topic of central concern. The State of Inclusion Survey conducted by Deloitte included 3,000 U.S. professionals. 64% of respondents reported experiencing or witnessing bias in their workplace within the last year (Cooper & Horn, 2019). While most, 92%, believe they are allies and inclusion is of central concern to them, only 29% feel comfortable confronting bias when they witness it. Couple that with 70% of respondents feel witnessing bias has a negative impact on their workplace engagement, with similar results impacting workplace productivity.

In order for teams to build cohesion, increase productivity, professionals need to feel a level of safety to confront bias in the workplace. While confronting bias can take on many forms, incorporating strategies included in Deloitte's Six Traits of Inclusive Leadership provide concrete tools to employ at any level of leadership, (Bourke & Dillon, 2016); cognizance, curiosity, courage, commitment, cultural Intelligence and collaboration. Using the Six Traits of Inclusive Leadership everyday creates the space to respectfully and safely confront bias, learn from each other, and build cohesion while increasing engagement and productivity.

3. Using Organizational Data to Grow Engagement
Courtney Barrett Smith, PsyD

Literature suggests that the employee engagement is a stronger predictor of positive organizational performance, highlighting the necessity of a two-way relationship between employees and employers (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Approaching employee

engagement from a data driven framework, has helped develop a process that enables leaders to identify what changes they can make to enhance operational and process improvement success (Wellins, Selkovits & McGrath, 2013).   Focusing on employee engagement data allows leaders to be strategic and time efficient in targeting interventions in areas that provide the greatest impact.   Evolving literature supports managers focusing on employee engagement can create a more efficient and productive workforce (Markos & Sridevi, 2010, Brazzel & Jones, 2006). Developing technically competent managers and supervisors into thriving leaders of employees, provides a greater return on investment in achieving short- and long-term organizational goals. Initiatives taken up by management will only be as successful as the willful involvement and investment of their employees.

Since 2001, the National Center for Organization Development, (NCOD) has led data collection and analysis of the Veterans Administration All Employee Survey (VA-AES). These annual, confidential and voluntary survey results are used by senior leaders, supervisors and staff to understand and discuss workplace strengths and opportunities for improvement.   Since 2016, the data framework has provided an interconnected view of organizational health concerning employee attitudes, workplace climate and supervisor and workgroup actions (Bologna, Carameli, Furst-Halloway, Howe, Weiskircher & Cominksy 2015). Consistent with organizational literature, the approach and framework provide support for organizationally guided best practices and created a data driven culture from leaders and employees across the VA system.

Learning Objectives:
1. Participants will be able to describe 3 best practices in using organizational data to inform leadership development in employee engagement, executive coaching, and/or diversity/inclusion.
2. Participants will be able to compare 1 or more best practices when using organizational data to inform leadership development in the areas of employee engagement, executive coaching, and/or diversity/inclusion.

Target Audience: Post-Doc/Early Career and Mid-Level Psychologists

How to Access:

- At APA 2020 Portal
- For 1.0 CE* at SCP OnDemand
- Live CE Session through Co-Sponsoring Div. 19 on Sat. 8/8 at 9:00am EDT

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Presenters:

Courtney Barrett Smith, PsyD

Dr. Courtney Barrett-Smith is a Senior Organization Development Psychologist at the VHA National Center for Organization Development (NCOD). Prior to NCOD, she served in executive and mid-level management positions at Lovell Federal Health Care Center, a merged VA and DOD facility, in North Chicago, IL. Her background also includes leadership positions in secure and community-based corrections. Dr. Barrett has worked extensively in the promotion of diversity and inclusive practices in creating individual and institutional changes.

Ashley N. LaBarre, PsyD

MAJ Ashley N. LaBarre is the Command Operational Psychologist at The U.S. Army's 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Ft. Bragg, NC. She has also served as an operational psychologist at the U.S. John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, and a psychologist on a combat operational stress control (COSC) team in Afghanistan. She is experienced in personnel assessment and selection, survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) concepts, coaching, and advanced assessment techniques.

Mykel Selph, MPA, MA, PhDc

Mykel is a seasoned social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and change management professional with 15+ years of experience in the public and private sectors. She is recognized for demonstrating a natural aptitude for leading teams and organizational development programs via strategic planning, goal setting, and coaching, as well as for translating strategic plans into concrete deliverables.

Mykel's personal and professional mission is to create safe spaces for ongoing dialogue about social justice issues that are nonjudgmental and empathic. She believes that dialogue is an opportunity for us to acknowledge the context in which we exist and begin learning to peacefully coexist.