

Leadership in Organizational Transformation and Deterioration: A Case of Study of Two Decades of GIMPA

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I. INTRODUCTION

The tools of getting explosive results in organisations are most studied and the management gurus from Iacocca, Jack Welsh, John Peter Kotter, Stephen Covey, Jim Collins of “Good to Great” fame to J.C. Maxwell to name a few cannot be surveyed in the time given me and I do not intend to attempt it. I will however, like to share simple but most powerful insights I have gathered as to how to get extra-ordinary results as a student and practitioner of transformational leadership and strategic management. I will then share some insights as I apply them to GIMPA’s case.

II. TEN KEYS TO GETTING EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS IN ALMOST EVERY ORGANISATION

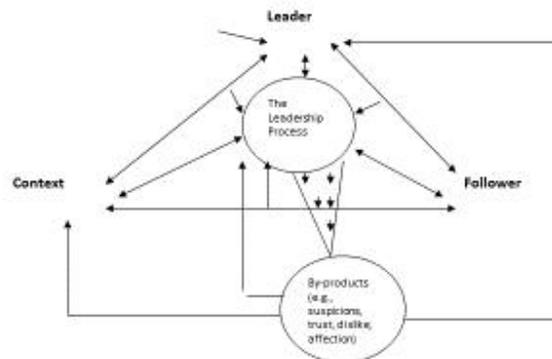
1. The key of vision and long term strategy: Letting long term vision and strategic direction drive present day actions is most important. Invariably that entails challenging prevailing assumptions, changing the incentive system, developing a road map of strategies to achieve the vision. The power of vision in achieving explosive results is enormous.
2. The key of growing leaders around you: That may entail first “Letting some off the bus” and “getting on new blood”. Sometimes you can transform some old hands. But the bottom line is to identify potential leaders and to create the atmosphere for other leaders to grow. Thereby you can increase results even 10 fold in a short time.
3. The key of generating momentum: This flows from the second key but I am talking of organization-wide momentum through motivation and inspiration so that almost ALL staff feel energized to contribute to change. This comes through communication, education, and showing first fruits early without being complacent. Motivated and committed workforce is your best option and the key is creating an empowering atmosphere.
4. The key of managing change and associated resistance without let. This is where the ability to take major decisions which may put your job on the line and solving major problems be it finance, technological or backlash come in. If you fail here people lose trust. The hard part is that once you initiate change you can hardly predict what it may throw up.

5. The key of organizational culture: You have to create a culture of productivity and let productivity paradigm work for you and not against you. This is most important in patrimonial societies like Ghana. Leaders create new culture. That takes time, at least 3 years through leadership behaviour, incentive system that reward expected behaviour, continuous education and communication etc.
6. The key of customer focus and care: Sensitivity to the market, delighting the customer with the right products, price, delivery, and handling complaints beyond the customer's expectation. The customer is not only the king-she is your business, the one who pays everyone and not the CEO!!
7. The key of innovation and creativity: No matter what you do soon others learn to do the same better, faster, cheaper. Your only way to keep ahead is to be creative and innovative continuously
8. In the public sector another key is the ability to navigate the political quagmire: This is especially true for our part of the world where bad governance and political interference is the norm
9. Timing: This is most important in managing change. The ability to know what to do at the right time
10. The master key of quality transformational leadership: This is the key I will like to spend a few minutes on

III. THE MASTER KEY (The 10th): LEADERSHIP

-) "Leadership is cause; everything else is effect" (Adei 2004)
-) "Leaders create the future" (Kanter)
-) The strategic role of leadership:
 - o Leadership vision, passion, energy, motivation and commitment are the prime causes of igniting extra-ordinary results.
 - o It is the key to growing other leaders (selection, motivation, creating atmosphere for them to work, modeling the way and encouraging the heart *a la* Kouzes and Posner)
 - o Leadership behaviour is known to define up to 50% of work climate;
 - o Leadership is at apex of overseeing Herzberg's "Hygiene" and "Motivating" factors and the "all mighty" performance appraisal system
 - o Leadership is the linchpin between internal and external clients

THE LEADERSHIP PROCESS

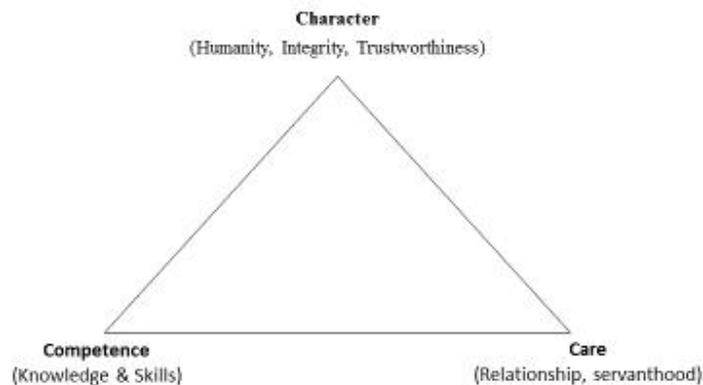


Source: R.B. Dunham and J.L. Pierce, *Management* (Glenview, Ill: Scott, Foresman, 1989), P.556

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-) The prime mover in the leadership process is the leader
-) Leadership however, can be positively transformational as well as tragically dysfunctional to organisations. They transform, plateau or deteriorate organisations. Legacy building leadership is empowering

LEGACY BUILDING LEADERSHIP (CCC) Characteristic, Functional Leaders.



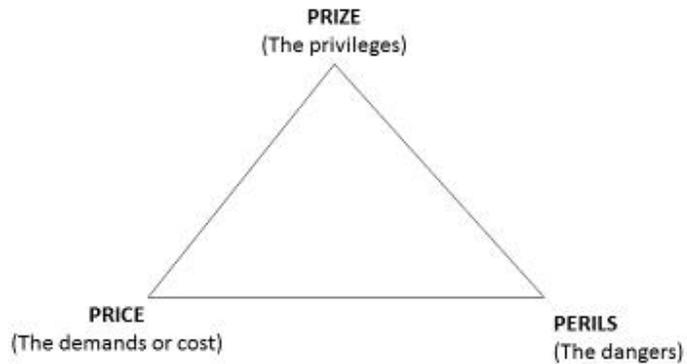
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-) What derails leadership is lack of trust, which often comes from lack of Character, in-Competence and un-Caring attitude- i.e. what being in it for oneself as a leader

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-) One must also manage the Prize, Price and Privilege that come with leadership to enhance leadership or undermine it otherwise

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES



Source: S. Adei, 2004

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-) "The Fish Rots From The Head" (Bob Garratt). The CEO-Board balance is key to effective transformation. They constitute an enabling pair or tooth ache that "spoils the vineyard". A bad board is like a lid on CEO's leadership. In the public sector it can lead to dysfunctionality or organizational paralysis.

IV. THE GIMPA STORY

- i. **Initial Conditions In January 2000:** Positive Factors:
 -) Relatively good buildings though inadequate and excellent location on Greenhill
 -) Aging, small number (about 24) of experienced but traditional teaching faculty.
 -) Partly self-financing though at a low base of meeting half of about US\$1 million budget from internally generated funds
 -) A brand and well-known name – GIMPA, among public servants, a network to tap into.
 -) Some limited products in public administration and hardly patronized Masters in Development Management awarded by the University of Ghana, Legon.
 -) The Institute's greatest asset was their mature and experienced Board (Court of Governors) who were seeking transformation. Why they were sitting on a deteriorating Institute beat imagination
 -) National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) which provided an umbrella for deep change.

ii. **Initial Conditions In January 2000:** Challenges

-) Highly demoralized staff and faculty.
-) Poor conditions of service.
-) Threat of privatization.
-) Financially strapped.
-) Overstaffing especially of non-teaching workers having over 1:10 Faculty: Other Staff ratio.
-) Undisciplined, uncooperative faculty.
-) Virtual conversion of GIMPA for private gain by faculty – so called “Galamsey” as they themselves called it
-) Programmes not seen as responding to clients’ needs especially the Civil Service with the result that the Civil Service, from about 1995, declared that GIMPA’s training was not necessary for advancement in the Civil Service (Yet the Head of Civil Service sat on the Court of Governors and drew board fees and allowances shamelessly)
-) Low patronage of programmes.
-) Lack of creativity and innovation which is a sign of leadership failure. The only significant innovation in 20 years was the Master’s in Development programme. A course run for University of Ghana but enrolment fell to between 2 and 5 students a year.
-) Poor and ineffective executive leadership. In fact the CEO was hardly on talking terms with his deputy and bitter enmity existed between him and the Registrar (Secretary). A sense of bad blood between board and CEO was evident.

What we Set Out To Do

-) To create a world class centres of excellence for training in leadership, public administration and business management; a specialized university out of a civil service training school
-) To be financially self-supporting
-) To introduce innovative and cutting edge programmes in Ghana’s tertiary educational landscape
-) To assemble the best quality of training and teaching staff in our areas of competence
-) To have the best conditions of service in the tertiary sector within Ghana
-) To build infrastructure and facilities for executive training second to none in Ghana

And to do so being next door to Ghana's premier university and my Alma Mata Legon and that from a "dying" Public Service training institution was herculean. Thank God we achieved results beyond our wildest projection.

The Results of GIMPA Transformation 2000-2008

-) About 3,000% (30 fold) increase in turnover in 9 years between 2000 and 2008.
-) Becoming the leading business school in Ghana and only one that met criteria to be a member of Association of African Business Schools then.
-) Ranked among the topmost schools of Public Management in Sub-Sahara Africa and chosen to run ACBF Master's Programme in Public Administration for Anglophone West Africa.
-) Introduction of novel Master's programmes including Executive "Masters in Governance and Leadership" which had 15% of Parliamentarians as students at one time.
-) Having the best conditions of service in public tertiary schools in Ghana before "bekumwaa" (killer) "single spine salary" increase.
-) Becoming the first organisation in Ghana to single-spine salaries with a "real spine"
-) Achieving significant infrastructural development.
 - o Classrooms increased by 300%
 - o Conference facilities capacity by five times
 - o Modern ICT
 - o Air-conditioning of all facilities
 - o Twenty four hour supply of electricity and water
 - o A 131 room 3-star hotel equivalent hostel for Executive training etc.
-) Having the best faculty in public and business administration in Ghana then plus international adjuncts. GIMPA Had over 80 strong faculty when Legon had less than 40; Cape Coast University 5 and KNUST 5. We had more qualified faculty of business and public administration than all the public Universities in Ghana combined and still brought additional adjuncts from leading Universities worldwide.
-) Over-subscription of almost all programmes.
-) Restored image as partner in capacity building of the Civil Service.
-) Greenhill College (undergraduate wing) was instant success with nearly 2,000 adult participants in evening degree programmes over the years.
-) The first ever HND-Top up degree programmes in the country.
-) An institution H.E. John Agyekum Kufuor the President and his whole Cabinet regularly used for their residential retreats as well as the whole Legislature of

Liberia felt comfortable enough to come for orientation for 1 week after their 2006 election.

-) Major increases in participants completing programmes from 592 in 1998/1999 to 1,437 in 2006/2007 and again nearly doubled in two more years.
-) Increase in income from c3.5 billion (US\$1 million) in 1999 of which 50% came from Government subvention to c107 billion around 2008 (or nearly US\$ 12-15 million depending on the exchange rate)
-) The only public university that did not subsist on government support
-) Put in place all that was needed to establish a now well-known GIMPA Law School which is the home of Ghana School of Law second campus in Accra

Major Challenges in GIMPA's Transformation and How we Overcame them

-) Demoralized labour: Clear vision, leadership passion and energy, creativity and innovation, etc. which soon turned the tide though some diehards remained to the end
-) Over-staffing of the wrong kind: We had to separate 40% of staff in an election year in 2000. (If NDC had won the 2000 election there was indication that the Government would have intervened somehow to remove the CEO and recalled them. In fact the CEO was asked to recall them but decided to call the bluff and refused even to tell the Council)
-) Lack of resource: We overcame that through innovative and expanded programmes resulting in increased programme participants and commercial loans to fund capital projects. GIMPA was the first public university in Ghana to borrow from the capital market to fund development
-) Sabotage: NIRP grew cold feet and de facto withdrew support for "losing control". They refused even to approve the release of payment of compensation by World Bank to redundant staff. We found the money (1.08 million cedis) ourselves
-) Political challenges: Attitude of former President Kufuor's first Chief of Staff Jake Obetsebey Lamptey was very supportive but not so in the case of his successor Mr. Kwadwo Mpiani. I have no doubt that political sabotage was part of Egbert Faible of Observer infamous lawsuit aimed at removing the Rector which he lost miserably. I also believed that was inspired from the Castle. The Observer Tabloid attacked the CEO of GIMPA three times a week for months on its front pages till High Court judgment against its Editor. Of course he had other axes to grind as his father-in-law had been one term Deputy Rector and was removed among other issues
-) Backlash: Senior members who did not meet the rigorous performance criteria and were asked to leave under new rules were mad. A lot of them went to court but

none won their case. Those who were in line for separation or aggrieved naturally joined forces with a hostile new Chairman of Council

-) Dysfunctional board: Hostile relation between a new Board Chairman and CEO from 2005 to mid-2008 and conflict of interest of some board members meant that the last 2 years especially late 2007 and 2008 of the transformation of GIMPA was stalled. The outgoing CEO had no doubt that GIMPA would go through 10 years of crises. It has been 8 years since then. The best line was to keep quiet and occasionally encourage few friends who became casualties of “Agyeman Badu-Manu Rectorship” to hold on as “political power has a shelf life” (Prof Wood).
-) Succession challenges: Two succeeding Rectors have been pure academics with virtually no leadership and management skills. Coupled with a Council chaired by a political ideologue as at the end of February 2017 GIMPA had no Rector, Vice Rector or Registrar

Factors Underlying the GIMPA “Success” Story, 2000-2008

-) Government’s reform umbrella of National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) which gave legitimacy to GIMPA’s change management.
-) Court of Governors’ (Council) support. Much of the improved leadership is to the credit of B.K Mensah led Court of Governors (Council) including appointing a “non-traditional” CEO
-) Building of a strong, capable and goal oriented management team notwithstanding two purely academic heads who incidentally became succeeding Rectors just because they bore title of Professor and who resorted to typical Ghanaian dirty politicking to rise to their levels of incompetence at the top.
-) Improvement in range and quality of programmes driven by customer demand.
-) Recruitment of qualified and respected faculty.
-) Cultural change especially in work ethic.
-) Improved conditions of service after the first two years when there were no salary adjustments but people worked because they were inspired.
-) Risk taking especially going for commercial loans to improve infrastructure.
-) Innovation and creativity (e.g. Major programmes made sandwich drawing on a pool of international faculty of adjunct lecturers, initiating Top-up degrees in Ghana etc.).
-) Prudent and innovative financial management – motivated by having to be self-financing.
-) Legislative backing.
-) Zero tolerance for corruption
-) Transformational leadership

Transferable Concepts

GIMPA is, in a sense, unique in background and context as any organisation so not everything that happened there would apply to other organisations. What lessons from the GIMPA's story are transferable and useful for other institutions, for Public Sector Reform and the private sector?

-) Quality leadership. Don't start any serious reform unless the leadership of the institution is committed and competent especially the CEO
-) Clear vision, strategic action plan and targets and sticking to them are equally important.
-) Transformation requires thinking out of the box. In the Public Service that requires tight balance between change and continuity
-) Government and governance support are key in public sector reform to allow innovation
-) A Good board is a jewel; a bad one is like a tooth ache! GIMPA had an experience of both. A good board (Council) that respected the norms of modern corporate governance is most important. Not a big problem in the private sector
-) The critical role of a "guiding coalition" or a committed change management team is key. Bring in a critical mass of new staff if situation demands that and step down, neutralize or manage bad nuts if you cannot sack them. In GIMPA's case sacked professors were reinstated by a new Council and even appointed as high as the position of CEO only for them to confirm their incompetence at great expense to the organisation
-) Communication of vision and strategies clearly to all levels of staff to get buy-in. In GIMPA the transformational CEO met with key senior managers every week; middle level managers every day for one hour in first 180 days and weekly thereafter; and had a durbar with all staff once a month.
-) Defining and limiting the role of external consultants. (Recommends "processes consultants", if any, who challenge management but not seek to do the reform themselves). Reform does not succeed when driven by outsiders. If managers are incompetent, change them.
-) Creative funding: We were probably the first public university to pioneer commercial funding of development
-) The most difficult part of reform is cultural change (attitudes, time management, and performance appraisal). But there can be no lasting transformation without them and that requires time to sustain.
-) Anticipate backlash and put in strategies to deal with it. The CEO of GIMPA did not do too well there. The Board especially must be willing to back the leader up when blackmail, insults and even death threats occur in undertaking transformations as

they will in third world context. In GIMPA's case even backlash came from the second Board itself. Managing resistance and opposition is part of transformation and must be done effectively including dealing "surgically" with saboteurs.

-) The role of effective communication with internal and external clients is vital. (GIMPA CEO often goofed on the latter and politicians never forgive when you snob them or do not do their bidding)
-) Never let go for a moment your vigilance nor celebrate achievement too early. It takes a long time to succeed though one must demonstrate quick wins.
-) Mobilization of action of majority of followers is indispensable. Don't depend on clique
-) Leadership, leadership, leadership in providing model, vision, courage risk taking, taking the heat and believing in vision is key.

V. POSTSCRIPT: "THE MESS GIMPA IS IN TODAY AS A DISTANT OBSERVER"

-) The seed of GIMPA's problem in the last 8 years was evident in my last year under Boohene's Chairmanship. In fact, I spent my last 2 years largely holding off a dysfunctional Board to preserve the gains and to advise against the appointment of an incompetent successor while there were many better candidates
-) Three things were to work against GIMPA's success story post Stephen Adei
 - a. Appointment of a successor Rector who was evidently dysfunctional because the Board saw GIMPA's CEO in purely academic terms and the ability to manipulate him which was possibly not their fault because of their challenges with an outgoing CEO. As a result the terms of the last 2 Rectors have been marked by lack of leadership or management capacities which I am sure they themselves admitted in private conversations. I prophesied that GIMPA would have a 10 year hard time but the foundations of the new GIMPA are strong enough to survive that. We still have more 2 years to go but I don't know if my prophesy will come to pass. It will all depend on who comes on the Board and who is appointed CEO in 2017
 - b. The politicization of the board of GIMPA especially the Chairmanship has been the bane of GIMPA and possibly other public universities without strong traditions like Legon and KNUST. The "fish rots from the head". The death of the Chairman of GIMPA in late 2008 also coincided with a change of government and retirement of the CEO was fatal especially as it coincided with a new national government . Appointment of a Chairman, in the person of Dr. Christine Amoako

Nuama, who saw her role as a political rather than academic leader not only politicized oversight of GIMPA's appointment of its leadership but she has also so much messed up the Institute with acquiescence of a typical other Ghanaian members of the Board that at the time when the Council was dissolved recently by a new Government, GIMPA had no substantive Rector, Vice Rector and Registrar. It was as bad as that.

The Council Dr. Christine Amoako Nuamah chaired not only appointed a Rector who had no leadership or management capacities but conditions were such that they either sent off anyone that helped build GIMPA or immobilized them including the finest specimen of Ghanaian managers such as Dr. Lawrence Kannae (currently Deputy Chairman of Public Services Commission-PSC), Dr. Joe Mensah Ansah (probably the leading expert in hospitality in Ghana), Dr. Lydia Apori Nkansah (The Dean of KNUST Law School), Mr. Owusu Nimakoh (Executive Secretary of PSC) and Mr Tawiah Akyea (once Executive Officer of Export Promotion Council) to mention a few. That was the caliber of people put together to manage GIMPA. The only one of them who survived was Prof Kwamena Ahwoi for obvious reasons. Thus not only did the head of the transformational team off – had to retire at age 60, but the team that would have helped the Council and the new CEO were deliberately destroyed. Instead people dismissed for either incompetence or misconduct were brought back to take charge of GIMPA. That is the fundamental cause of the “GIMPA challenges” today.

- c. GIMPA has lost its mission and vision too. It is fruitlessly trying to be a “Little Legon” which it cannot. It must revert to the vision to be a Centre of Excellence for training in Leadership- political, public and business leadership. The academic programmes were to help pay its way and the roadmap I left behind was to build a separate campus for the undergraduate programmes

VI. THE WAY FORWARD

-) The Government should put in place not an NPP version of NDC board but rather a Council with a Chairman who will put Ghana first
-) The Council must see to the appointment of a Rector as key to GIMPA's success. The person must not just be an academic but most importantly a managerial leader. Anyone with less than 5 years proven leadership in Public Service or Private

Sector preferably with national and international exposure will not do for GIMPA. In that regard a Ph.D. or a Professor is an advantage but not a pre-requisite

) Refocusing GIMPA to concentrate not just on academic degrees –important as that may be- and I had a plan to even expand that without undermining the real purpose of GIMPA. The core business of GIMPA must be:

TRAINING, CALIBERATING AND AUGMENTING QUALITY LEADERSHIP IN
GHANA'S BODY POLITIC, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND BUSINESS

My undeclared aim at GIMPA was to build a miniature institution that combine Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Business School. We were on our way to doing that when Ghana politics stalled it. "Akyea nso emmui". GIMPA's potential remains.

My time with GIMPA is over. I am happily retired and at the personal level I am at least twice better off than a Rector of GIMPA. Heading towards 70 years there is no way I will be directly involved in the governance or leadership of GIMPA, neither will it be appropriate.

The good news is that there are many competent Ghanaians who can do a better job as Chairman of GIMPA provided our politicians will allow them and we are not the "last Moyihians". There are Stephen Adeis out there. But like, KSM, I ask "who invented the politician"?

I hope Nana Akuffo Addo will make that question a dud one and NPP will not mess GIMPA up more. But as I say "Politicians seem to have the same mother". But their different fathers should make a difference for GIMPA henceforth.

I thank you.