

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION: A BOOK REVIEW ON L.H. GARNER'S "LEADERSHIP IN HUMAN SERVICES"

by Roger Stevens

Leadership and empowerment of management is one way to attract and retain people in your company. In Leslie H. Garner, Jr. (1989) *Leadership in Human Services* he discusses a results-oriented management style that involves six steps:

1. Identify the clients to be served and the problems to be addressed.
 2. Specify the client outcomes to be achieved.
 3. Select the agency activities to produce those outcomes.
 4. Acquire, allocate, and manage agency resources.
 5. Monitor agency activities.
 6. Evaluate client outcomes.
- (Garner, 1989, pp. 26-43)

There are a multitude of case studies that try and demonstrate the positive outcomes from this result-oriented management style. The main weakness of the book is the inability of human service organizations to retain their employees who are managed by the result-oriented management tool. Although Garner provides the six steps for the result-oriented management tool the reader's time is spent on how the tool is successful rather than provided specific examples of techniques on how to use the result-oriented paradigm. One positive function of the book is that all levels of staff are included in the management plan—the

negative being that no client representatives are acknowledged—this negative aspect is a big faux-pas in regards to mental health planning.

It isn't until the end of the text that Garner utilizes two whole pages about the communication from staff in effective human service organizations who state that their clients are important and what they think counts. It is also important to note that in the last two pages is when Garner says that the same effective human service organizations has management teams that say their staff is important and that they matter. It is this lack of interest in effective organizations communication processes that makes Garner's book *Leadership in Human Services* not worth using as an example of how to effectively lead an organization. The lack of emphasis on good leadership through communication is a major flaw in this text and represents the inability of human service organizations to figure out why they cannot retain employees. Communication and positive reinforcement to people—it's not that hard.

Dilemmas in *Human Services Management* by Mayers, Souflee, and Schoech (1994) discusses in its first paragraph a variety of different management tools that are geared toward promoting leadership in human service management teams. The management style chosen for deconstruction is the

modified model of Lewis, Lewis and Souflee. This modified model “is based on a systems perspective of management, and contains a set of interacting and interdependent components operating synergistically to produce program efficiency and effectiveness” (Mayers, Souflee, & Schoech, 1994, p. 1). Unlike Garner the cornerstone of this model is leadership through the interdependent relationship of manager and employee—each needs the other to feel the positive effects of empowered leadership. The elements of the Human Service Management Model developed by Lewis, Lewis and Souflee (1994) are:

- Functions
- Processes
- Tasks
- Activities

These four components are sequential steps that are implemented in the development of new projects, new employees and seasoned employees. Each component requires communication between management and employee. Often with this type of leadership style employees who wished they made more money choose to stay at their current job any way because of the dynamic leadership and management in their office.

Garner’s book has its positives, but clearly lacks in its ability to provide specific techniques to retain employees. The importance of leadership, communication and positive reinforcement is key to employee retention and the ways in which to accomplish this feat is not discussed in Garner’s book although the personal stories of employees and managers is helpful in turning around the isolation of a failed result-oriented management style.

The positive effects of a consistent staff create public trust in human service organizations. Empowered leadership is the easiest and best way to gain public trust. If perception is reality then human service management needs to look at their organization through the eyes of the employee and client.

References

Garner, L. H., Jr. (1989). *Leadership in human services*. Publisher: San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mayers, R., Souflee, D., Jr., & Schoech, F. (1994). *Dilemmas in human services management*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.