Ways to formulate managerial identity

The main theorists, who have dealt with the topic of identity, stressed the importance of overcoming a crisis before you can formulate a coherent identity. According to Eric Erikson, the main crisis a person goes through in life occurs during their adolescent years. A good solution to the crisis allows the person to mature into adulthood with a clear identity. During the course of life, a person will go through many more different types of crises where they will ask themselves "who am I". But, if this person successfully emerged from their major adolescent identity crisis then they will be able to solve the following crises to occur in their life with the feeling of personal balance and coherence.

Marcia, who followed in Erikson's footsteps, discussed four identity positions that depend on two axes - commitment and crises. In this case, crisis is the sense of active searching and deciding between occupations, beliefs and values. Commitment is the amount of effort put into the beliefs and values that were chosen and the connection of the person to the formulated identity. You can present Marcia's model as follows:

	Crisis does not happen	Crisis is occurring/occurred
Commitment does not exist	Identity Diffusion	Moratorium
Commitment does exist	Foreclosure	Identity Achievement

The person who has achieved identity is the one that experienced personal crises and went through the process of examining and searching and solved it on their own. As a result of solving the crises, a personal commitment towards the general process as well as beliefs and a personal value system was formed. The basic assumption regarding developing a managerial identity is that the more formulated the identity of the manager (on a personal level as well as the leader of an organization) the larger the chance that he will have consistent and stable opinions and will be very committed to his position as well as committed to the organization. With this winning combination of personal loyalty as well as loyalty towards the organization, the manager will be able to make the right choices, lead the employees, represent the system etc.

How can the organizational environment promote the formulation of a managerial identity:

Encourage self-exploration and exposing alternatives

creating an atmosphere that encourages asking questions related to identity and presenting alternative answers to previous misconceptions, will cause managers to want to deal with these questions. This can be done by providing a variety of answers to personal and complex questions and finding alternative solutions to related issues. Presenting the pros and cons of each of the possibilities, increases the employees need to find as many options as possible before reaching a solution to questions regarding their personal or professional life. A good thing an organization can do is encourage (as much as they can allow) exploration and research instead of demanding fast decision making.

Exposing role models that went through/ going through an identity crisis

this type of exposure advances dialogue of this specific search in others. It grants the managers permission to acknowledge the doubts that exists in themselves and in others in regards to personal and professional identity. Relating to the role models promotes weighing alternatives to take action. Meetings where role models present the way they took action regarding identity questions, and share with others the exact steps they took, can give great ideas to others that are not in the same stage in the process of identity formulation. This can be done by sharing in a group of colleagues, or as a lecture followed by a discussion.

Encourage trial and error

As the manager is exposed to more opportunities to handle different and diverse situations that require finding a solution, he will learn all the ways to take action and which work or don't work for him. When an organization encourages trial an error, they are in fact encouraging their managers to think outside the box and try different methods, bolder methods that they normally wouldn't do on account of making a mistake. The more strategies and coping mechanisms a manager has, the more formulated his identity will be.

Practicing social skills

formulating a seamless identity takes emotional and cognitive skills. When the manager has the ability to understand people, groups and societies in order to understand the view point of others, he can let go of personal perception achieve an integrative feeling of identity. Managing groups of colleagues allows giving and receiving feedback on different methods of taking action, developing dialogue norms and learning about the colleagues.

Implementing introspective capabilities

The ability to self-observe is the key to formulating an identity. Questions about the history of the individual such as: who was I as a child, who am I now? Who am I going to become? - increase the feeling of stability over time, by finding the connections between the "self" through who I am today and who I want to become. These types of questions promote the manager's psychological growth. Other ways to promote self-observation is personal and focused writing, bringing the attention to the "self" and the process of making decisions. As well as close mentoring of a supervisor in the organization (direct manager or other) or exterior mentoring. In addition, the individual can use collogues on their quest for the answer to the big question "Who am I?" A group of equals increased the ability to understand the "self" through someone else's perspective.

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