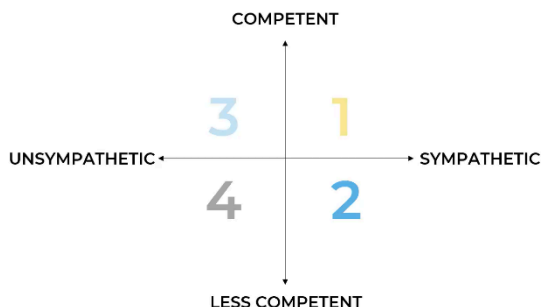


Guest Speaker Reflection

Takeaways from Jeppe Hansgaard:

- If you have been acquired by another company, that can keep two people from connecting.
- Social networks are vital to workplace success.
- People would rather work with a lovable fool than a competent jerk.
- If you don't have a sympathetic competent coworker available, 70% would go to the sympathetic less competent person and only 30% would go to the competent unsympathetic coworker
- Normal people are the influential ones.
- You feel more connected and influenced by people who join the organization at the same time as you.
- Face-to-face is 32 times more impactful than an email
- Contagion happens through relationships
- 25% of remote workers have dropped out of the networks in organizations
- It takes between 2 to 4 years to build a network at an organization
- If you find the most influential 3%, you will impact 90% of the organization
- Managers account for 12% but only truly impact 50% of the organization
- There is no one-size-fits-all for hybrid work schedules. Be clear and intentional about the reason you need people to return to work and then give them a voice in the schedule.
- If someone influential and energizing leaves a job, there is an up to 500% probability that people who are connected to that person, will also leave.

WHAT CONNECTS?





Done BY and done WITH the people ALWAYS BEATS done TO the people!



When the terrain does not resemble the map, follow the terrain!



To persuade the undecided, send in someone THEY trust...

What do you believe are the two most important challenges for leaders in a VUCA world, based on the guest speaker's presentation? Describe these challenges and why you think they are important and what the guest speaker discussed. How were these challenges explained in our course materials (e.g., textbook, videos, articles, blogs)?

The most important challenge for leaders in the VUCA world is the ability to **build trust/meaningful connections** with others and to **influence/manage change** in an organization.

We are dealing with a disconnected workforce, and the younger generation is searching for jobs that provide them with meaning in their life. Workplace loneliness is associated with lower job performance and that can impact the success of the business (Bryan et al., 2023). As the boomer generation retires, we will see more of the workforce demanding positive and meaningful culture. Meaningful culture is a result of psychological empowerment, along with self-determination, self-efficacy, and impact (Yukl & Gardner, 2020, p. 98).

Meaningful culture and positive work relationships will result in more employee engagement. Employee engagement will create impactful social networks. Having influential social networks can drive change in the direction that is most necessary for the business to thrive. Jeppe made some strong points about this in terms of managing change and being strategic about who you choose to lead change within the organization. If you inspire the top 3% of your most influential employees, you will have the ability to reach 90% of your workforce. One of the guidelines for Implementing change, according to Yukl and Gardner (2020, p. 118), is to empower competent people to help plan and implement the change. The book also talks about managing change by reducing restraining forces. You can do this by strategically choosing change leaders that are influential. "To persuade the undecided, send in somebody THEY trust"

Which leadership theories or models did the guest speaker discuss directly or indirectly?

Jeppe's approach to navigating change could be an example of the Stewart Model of Situational Determinants (Yukl & Gardner, 2020, p. 49). Jeppe talks about analyzing the patterns of relationships within the organization. This can influence the manager to make decisions on how to move forward with a project.

Being aware of the socially influential people within your organization and using them to make your leadership situation more favorable is an example of adaptive leadership (Yukl & Gardner, 2020, p. 66). This also encompasses learning about the relevant behaviors of your most influential people and using them to help navigate the change.

Participative leadership was observed when Jeppe was talking about the return-to-work initiative. He mentioned that seeking feedback from subordinates helps to create a positive company culture. Giving employees autonomy on what days they return to the office can help ease the tension around the change. Jeppe also considered passing down the decision making to managers so they can make the decision that best fits their team. This could also be considered empowering leadership because it involves participative leadership and delegation which results in psychological empowerment from subordinates (Yukl & Gardner, 2020, p. 102)

How would you implement some of these suggestions in your organization or even volunteer group? How would you implement some of these suggestions as a manager/supervisor? If none of these suggestions are applicable to you/your field, briefly explain why.

In my organization, I ask for input from the whole group before making large decisions. I conduct surveys and an informal poll on what projects we need to pursue next. Offering choices on the direction of the organization creates buy-in among the team. Jeppe says "Done BY the people and done WITH the people beats done TO the people!"

As a manager attempting to create a culture of connection, I would be intentional about how the staff spends time together. Jeppe mentioned an offsite meeting or gathering. While those are great, they don't yield consistent results. I would establish the norms of "right to pass" and "active listening". When I introduce the norm "active listening" I would remind the team to be aware of how much space they are taking in the conversation and to be aware of the need to step up or to step back in the conversation. Then I would give prompts for people to share about themselves, if they would like to. Everyone has the right to pass. This gives the team a chance to step back if they do not feel up to sharing at the moment. I would give prompts like "What were the highs and lows of your weekend?" and "When you were a kid, what did you want to be

when you grew up? How has that changed?”. I would make this check-in a consistent part of the structure of our meetings. This structure creates a safe environment for people to learn about each other and naturally creates connections between the team.

Based on the guest speaker's presentation, what are the next steps you will need to take to ensure you will succeed as a leader in your chosen career field? Which part of this presentation specifically applied to your professional and educational goals?

As a leader, I will continue to be intentional in how I network and how I grow my network within an organization. I will pay close attention to the formation of social networks and continue to position myself in places where I can create strong relationships with influential people. My next step will be to share this information with my colleagues to help them understand the impact of positive relationships. My hope is that they can reflect on what it takes to build a more sympathetic attitude toward colleagues and how that impacts the business.

This assignment inspired me to look up the Harvard Business Review article, *Competent Jerks, Lovable Fools, and the Formation of Social Networks* by Tiziana Casciaro and Miguel Sousa Lobo (2005). Jeppe referenced this article when he was explaining how people choose to work with someone that is kind and incompetent, versus someone who is unsympathetic and competent. Casciaro and Miguel (2005), make the point that we should leverage the likable and promote familiarity to create the most productive work environments. That article reminded me of a medical study that I had read about the impact of loneliness at work. Jeppe's analyzation of organizations, along with the data around loneliness at work, has inspired me to continue building content and pursuing speaking engagements to give leaders concrete steps on how to build self-awareness and connection within the workplace.

References

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