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Patrick Pheasant

hi my name's Patrick pheasant I'm the CEO of NEAS and I'm here today interviewing some leadership experts with me today on the panel I have Heidi Reed principal at times Academy and I have Jason West, Director of Studies at UTS in search welcome experts so Jason my question is is how do you manage and motivate your team can you share some of you know the important elements for you of your team management framework

Jason West

Thanks Patrick well I definitely think the first thing is to really just have a very clear goal and in a frame-work in mind in terms of how you're going to manage your team so it's very important that you walk the talk so being clear in your own line that what good and effective management and leadership looks like. Start with that as the framework but one of the key elements really is communication it's absolutely essential. I know we talk about communication all the time and particularly with the move the move recently too remote teaching for example, it's highlighted even more so how important it is for that communication channel to happen and that communication channel of course is it's two-way so it needs to be both being clear about setting the agenda being clear about the goals of the organization the vision of the organization and how those goals translate into ELT work on a daily basis so being able to translate that and explain it in clear simple terms that people can understand but also about having the two-way communication so things that I do one of the things that I do is to have a staff meeting on a regular basis we have a start meeting every term which for us is every five weeks and that's a both as I mentioned it's a way for us to communicate what changes and what

challenges and they need coming down the pipeline and what are what are our approaches and how we might be addressing that but also to give teachers a chance to have a voice and to be to be able to express what's going on to them and that there's a forum for that discussion to happen because the richness of that discussion is very really important I think another thing that's important is the ability to really listen carefully so deep active listening to what is it that are the needs of your staff if you don't listen you really can't understand where people are coming from and that's when these communications can happen so understanding what's going on and being able to listen to the concerns or ideas that are coming up through the diversity of your staff and listening to that and being able to respond to that is really important I think also showing that as a leader you open and willing and encourage diversity diversity of opinion that it's not just about there's not there's no experts anymore in terms of one expert the Guru that knows everything there's now you just we just think about technology for example and all the technology challenges that we've been addressing with this move recently if you can see that actually there's no one individual expert that it's a collaborative kind of environment and that's where we get our success so tapping into the diversity of the group listening to the differences of opinion and having a two-way communication tied even with professional development as well.

Patrick Pheasant

Yes, something that comes to mind just kind of listening to your response is how much of a parallel that is to what it means to be doing good teaching in English language teaching doesn't it because you know in your classroom if you're the sage on the stage and you're the you know the expert being partner of all the knowledge and you're not engaging students and kind of creating a two-way communication model with your

students you're going to miss picking up on those cues and those you important messages that you know students can give you about you know how your teaching is going so I think I love this some strong parallels there between you know great leadership and good kind of management or you know excellent teaching

Jason West

There's some really good points there Patrick I think that there are a lot of parallels and it's really important just looking back to the sort of the idea being really student centric in your decision-making and that is that's you've got to remember that as you become as you take on leadership roles you're becoming more and more removed from students on a day-to-day basis so the experts in terms of students are going to be teachers because they're going to have that expertise of day-to-day interaction and you're a bit more removed from that so listening to your teachers is really important.

Heidi Reid

I just wanted to add in terms of the whole team the management framework when I first started in the business of going into academic management it was kind of explained to me that in your management structure you've got the PEO and they divide into two teams and those two teams are the academic and the business and since then I've learned that that actually doesn't work so you cannot have people marketing and doing admissions for courses that they don't understand likewise you can't be teaching in a classroom a course that has been marketed as something different and having students who have different expectations of what you are about to deliver so I think it is better to have a more flat management structure where you are a facilitator but that all parts of the organization are working together and understand what the goal and strategic plans are I understand where you're headed as a company as a school in

your classroom and with education I just think it is as Jason said communication was key and it absolutely is it's so key that you can't you can't just divide your business like that it won't work it won't be successful yeah

Patrick Pheasant

and so regards to communication what do you do if communication breaks down so like how do you deal with difficult team members

Jason West

The key thing here is early intervention so in the same way Patrick you mentioned a few minutes ago about some parallels with managing students it's the same with teacher experiences as well that if there are issues they need to be addressed head-on you've got to actually deal with them and early intervention always delivers better results so I think there is sometimes a resistance from new academic managers in those four coordinators roles to deal with the more difficult conversations that sometimes you need to have and really the early intervention is the best strategy there that to be clear about the facts so not to embellish with emotive responses but to actually just focus on what are the facts what if what is the issue that we need to address I'm being clear about it and as Heidi pointed out earlier it's also about doing that behind closed doors so people don't want to be publicly embarrassed that's really core management and shouldn't happen so it's a learning process if you can also see it from a professional development viewpoint they're providing that feedback even if it's tough feedback is also a professional development opportunity for that individual to reflect and have the chance to improve so it's but it's important and not not addressing it can cause a lot of problems it also you indicate a sort of implicit support for that behavior and when in fact you're not you don't want that behavior to continue any longer

Heidi Reid

mm-hmm I think it's really awkward to put your empathy hat on sometimes first of all and work out why it is that that staff may be reacting the way they are a lot of people do have difficulty with change and you have to wear that if you are the manager you have to wear the change management is part of your job so making them a part of that process may be in that instance as I mentioned before it's good benevolent dictator sometimes but sometimes it's not and you haven't you know know when that is my mother used to say that somebody was set in their ways if they didn't like to change and I think we need to look at the idea of why they're set in their ways is it because they don't know another way isn't because they're scared of another way and how can you help facilitate that and I used to like to make the example of a post when I first started at my last job there was a poster on the wall for a Brazilian party boat for a party that happened six months ago and I wondered to myself why a staff member hadn't moved that and taken it down and then you have to get the mirror out and ask yourself well why haven't you taken it down why are you asking why other people haven't taken it down you need to take that down you need to be responsible so I think that just comes back to leading by example so whatever it is you want your staff to be like - to react with each other to interact with each other you have to you have to facilitate that and you have to show that it's possible and I take ownership everything from you know if if you go in as it's frequent in an international school you go in and the women's toilet is filthy you boys wouldn't know that but it's true always true I'm sure the boys is worse you know what if you got to go get a sponge you go get a sponge and you and you clean up what needs to be cleaned up and I think that that's leadership

Patrick Pheasant

mmm yeah I agree with their kind of walking to talk I think that's really important and something I've kind of picked up from listening to you both is you know I think as as leaders we need to have empathy and also be very curious about people and problems I think that kind of is a key thing and also one way to look at all how do you engage with people if you're curious in them and interested in them and curious in their problems and interested in their problems then you can solve those things together so I think that's kind of a good approach but I'm also hearing that not one approach is better than the other we've got to have multiple approaches as leaders because we're dealing with people different contexts different situations so for me it's more about trying to identify different parts of the leadership toolkit you know and and it's like you know in one situation you might get out your spanner and it might not fit so you put your spanner back in and then you get out you know another tool to use from your leadership kind of toolkit and I think you can't use one you know I love that question what is your leadership style I think it's kind of fake question in interviews for jobs because if you identify with one style and you know you're only gonna be good in one situations on that leadership style like what's your favorite leadership style?

Jason West

one thing that works for me Patrick I think he's very much I'm quite Lisa fear so I said I like the idea of setting things up for success providing a clear framework so that there are really core principles and clear vision and clear goals that everybody's aware of and is working towards communicate that well then step out of the way and just let me we'll get on with it so for me that that I find that model works quite well but I also think that as a leader you do need what you just said a few moments ago that this flexibility of being able to access

different types of tools and resources and also that includes I don't style people I suppose if it also includes things like situational leadership where you can kind of access different levels of intervention depending on what stuff what your staff need so he'd imagine teachers going through their cycle of I'm new to teaching I've only just locked myself I don't have any experience to draw from but I mean now I'm now qualified to start teaching but I'm I don't have any experience yet versus I've been teaching for five years maybe I'm looking at a high level qualification maybe a bachelor's or master's but I'm only just I'm halfway through that sort of sequence and then I've got another person that maybe he's been teaching for 15 years as CELTA are really experienced and really doesn't need as much intervention so being really really clear about those and maybe Delta delegating you know with people that are really capable already very experienced just delegate those teachers that are new to teaching think about having a really structured program and progressively remove this support and let them get on with it over time so having different I think a different situational leadership approach is in

Patrick Pheasant

Heidi what about you would you kind of identify with a particular leadership style?

Heidi Reid

I don't think so I mean I went ahead I'll talk about it a bit later I think but I have the studies in the background and I and I see there's lots of different titles of your leadership style but like you Patrick it depends who's in front of me what leader I am them or

who's behind me or who's under me like anywhere they are it depends it's situational as Jason said so there isn't a particular style that works better than others I do think that I call on my classroom management skills a lot particularly in meetings or particularly when dealing with difficult students as you mentioned it is like teaching in that every learner has a different way to learn or a different way to achieve their own potential and success and we can never give up on that I do I think that in today's day and age something is very different though then you know even ten years ago and that is the job security is a fallacy there's no such thing even the most coveted government civil servant is not secure in their job even if they believe they are I mean certainly now as well yes I think we need to give our employees and what speaks to our leadership style is we give them employability security so if we make sure that they are professionally developed and that they are the best if they're a marketer it's a marketing if there's student services whatever it is if you can support them provide them with the professional development that the background the training everything they need to be the best at what they do and they feel challenged and motivated then they've got employability and if something happens to your institution and they can't stay there they can go somewhere else and they're having to do so and take that basket they may also leave you they may leave you for someplace that will pay them more or that will give them better benefits or better working hours those are the risks that you take because you benefit while they're there being the best version of themselves and a lot of them will stay because they feel that positivity they feel that investment in them and they don't want to go anywhere else so I really do think that as a management style that that's what what works is making every single woman one of your employ employees somebody that somebody else will want

Patrick Pheasant

yeah I think that's really I think there

Jason West

I was just going to say Patrick that I think Heidi's comment there about the employability and about skills is really important so skills knowledge and behavior building up those so that you're so that your teachers have the transfer ability to move across and work in different organizations over time I think is a good thing it's a healthy thing for the sector and if what we can do is if this as education organizations if we can help to support our teachers to do that it's a very healthy thing so supporting professional development teachers is probably one of our key drivers to make sure that they do have the skills and knowledge that that they'll need to be successful in this environment.

Patrick Pheasant

Great thank you thank you so much for your insights

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