

Organizations face the brutal fact that they must change and innovate or risk obsolescence and failure (Evans and Ward, 2007, p. 107). Evans (2007) states that "the introduction of change and innovation depends on effective decision making" (p. 121). Effective decision making is an essential characteristic of great organizations and great leadership. In library and information science organizations the power to lead and make decisions tends to be more diffused and less concentrated than in private-sector businesses. Collins (2005) refers to this as "legislative leadership" which "relies more upon persuasion, political currency, and shared interests" to foster correct decision making (p. 11).

M. Fairholm and G. Fairholm (2000) explore the connection between trust and great leadership. Leadership is about the relationship between leader and follower, not the sum of an individual's traits, skills, and decisions (p. 108). Establishing a trusting environment creates unity between leader and follower, "is the key to long-term success and is a leader's prime responsibility" (Fairholm, 2000, p. 102). Fairholm (2000) examines the forces that hinder creating a culture of trust by looking at barriers from within an organization as well as the outward or societal barriers (p. 103-108). Communication, apathy, alienation, risks of trusting others, selfishness and pride, and sensitivity to follower needs are viewed as individual forces that can get in the way of creating trust between leader and follower (Fairholm, 2000, p. 103). An organization's authority structure, the lack of good accountability, a history of experiences that erode trust, and an organization's structure are identified as organizational forces that can impede kindling trust within an organization (Fairholm, 2000, p. 103). The decay of moral values in society, (e.g. honesty, integrity, dependability, commitment), is seen as a social force that can negatively impact creating a culture of trust within an organization (Fairholm, 2000, p. 106).

Identifying the barriers to creating trust between leader and follower leads to the conclusion that "culture, then, more than structure, may be the key to solving organizational (and social) problems" (Fairholm, 2000, p. 102). Fairholm (2000) argues that these weaknesses, if correctly understood, can be turned into strengths that kindle the culture of trust essential to great leadership and decision making (p. 108). The idea that great leadership is about establishing relationships of trust with others can be connected to the decision making power Collins (2005) refers to when looking at great leadership (p. 10). Thus, the power to lead and make appropriate decisions derives from the trust between leader and follower. This trust is kindled when leaders show "personal humility and professional will" characteristic of level 5 leadership (Collins, 2005, p. 11).

References

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