

A Leadership Analysis of *Shackleton's Captain*

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Introduction

In *Shackleton's Captain*, the movie goes into great detail about great leadership and teamwork. It tells a tale about an expedition through the Antarctic ice and the struggles the crew faced. In this paper, I will be talking about the crew's tasks, leadership challenges, development, socialization, and trust, as well as loyalty, positive mood, group think, decision-making techniques, and coaching.

Unit 1 – Characteristics of Teams

Through out *Shackleton's Captain*, you can truly see the grueling tasks the crew faces as well as Captain Worsley's struggles to lead. One of the main setbacks to the crew was the ice and harsh cold. The crew had to eat penguin and whale as their main sources of food, but as the expedition got longer, food became more difficult to find. The scarcity of food eroded the crew's morale, and they resorted to killing their four-legged companions to survive. One of the main tasks was to drag their one-ton safety boats across moving ice. They would not move far over the course of a day and sometimes would be pushed back by the ice. With having to move the safety boats, Captain Worsley faced many challenges and struggled to keep up his men's morale. He eventually had to tow the boats, with his crew in the water, giving into the harsh conditions.

Unit 2: Teamwork Processes

As the expedition proceeded, the cohesion of the crew became more apparent. The men worked hard, long days to survive in the worst-possible conditions. The movie provides little on the perspective of the crew, but from the photos and reenactments, you can truly grasp how they trusted one another, and how that in turn fortified their cohesion. An example of this was just before a small contingent of the crew set off for South Georgia, and their cohorts made them wine to left their spirits before they made the long and dangerous trek.

Unit 3: The Emotionally-Intelligent Team

Loyalty is the best way to describe the crew. The leadership that was exhibited was amazing, and comradery even extended to the sled dogs. Although, again, the story doesn't tell us much about the crew but the movie shows how close they were. Having a team that is close and that works together is vital - especially in harsh conditions. The movie also shows the loyalty of the dogs. All of them demonstrated great enthusiasm, despite being underfed and witnessing some of their own being eaten. The crew was very loyal to Captain Worsley and did as they were told to survive.

Unit 4: Issues Teams Face

Of course, with any team, there are issues, some more apparent than others. One of the most significant issues was the ship. It got stuck and had to be abandoned, forcing the team to find another way home. That and many other issues such as a lack of food, sleep, and water, made it difficult for the team to stay positive. However, they kept their heads up, made due with little food, and maintained hope that there was a light at the end of this horrible, cold, and icy tunnel. Through all of this, there was a desire for creativity but Captain Worsley employed groupthink. "Groupthink occurs when group members' desire to maintain good relations becomes more important than reaching a good decision." (Levi). An example of this was when Captain Worsley told his crew to pull the safety boats across the Antarctic ice, even though they weren't going to make it to their destination alive. The crew embraced idea, thinking it was logical and made sense. However, the approach was ill-conceived since ice flows rotate, moving back more than they move forward. As a result, Captain Worsley was forced to reevaluate and subsequently abandon his original plan.

Unit 5: Teams in Modern Organizations

Captain Worsley had to make many decisions that affected his crew, and ultimately, the outcome of his expedition. Having been warned that navigating the Antarctic ice would be difficult, if not impossible, Worsley decided to move forward with the expedition regardless. Captain Worsley had to plan where to go, how to get there, how much food to consume, what to leave behind, which animals were to be killed and eaten. Through all of this, he had to see that not everyone approved of his actions. However, through coaching and prodding, he got his men to move to safety and to stay alive.

Conclusion

Overall, this story tells an amazing tale of perseverance and strength. As a leader, Captain Worsley had to make several tough decisions that would determine whether his crew would live or die. Captain Worsley and his crew truly went through tough tasks, leadership challenges, development, socialization, and trust, as well as loyalty, positive mood, group think, decision making techniques, and coaching.

References

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