



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
INVESTEC BUSINESS SCHOOL

TR08-147  
618097820

**MBA**  
**DISSERTATION COVER SHEET**

**NAME:** Tania Stoltz

**STUDENT NO.:** 606C6501

**MODULE:** Dissertation

**DISSERTATION TITLE:** Action Research on Leadership Style, and Relationships in an East London Law Firm.

## **Abstract**

*"Good leadership springs from a genuine passion for the work and a genuine concern for other people. Great Leaders are people who love what they do and want to share that love with others."* (Daft, 2005:20).

During an informal discussion with my husband Hugo Daniels, the leader in this Action Research Case Study, it became apparent that lawyers do not attend a single module or complete a single subject during their formal training at university to obtain their law degree that is related to the field of leadership and how to lead, inspire and motivate followers. The discussion centered on the problems the leader was experiencing in his East London law firm, problems he believed to be as a result of his lack of knowledge in the field of leadership. And so this research project began.

It was obvious from the start that to intervene in the firm in order to bring about change would need the participation of everyone in the firm. The first step towards facilitating change would be to change the leadership style of the director of the firm. He would be required to gain knowledge in the field of leadership and the effects that different leadership styles have on followers. At the same time staff's perception of the current leadership style would have to be determined, as well as the desired style for their leader. The research process could then begin, based on the needs expressed by the staff and with participation from all levels in the firm.

The case involved 27 members of staff made up of three heads of departments, twenty three general staff members and the leader. Data was gathered through formal interviews with the leader and the heads of departments, as well as from personal journals kept by two heads of departments and the leader. General staff members were first asked to complete The Productive Practice Survey (Hall 1987) to determine their perceptions of the current leadership style in the firm and what they thought they needed from their leader if the firm is to move forward. The Productive Practice Survey (Hall 1987) was not used with the intention of gathering quantitative data, but rather as a means of gathering information of staff's perception in general while ensuring anonymity, so as to facilitate a

discussion during a feedback session. The Productive Survey's (Hall 1987) content and working is explained in further detail in Chapter 3 on page 44.

Initially participants were skeptical of the process and used the survey as a medium to lash out against the firm and Hugo Daniels as a leader, leaving no room for suggestions for improvement, an "it is what it is" approach. During the feedback session general staff members became more open when they realized that change would benefit them, as changes would be suggested by them and implemented with their participation. They became less reluctant about change and provided valuable input during the session. All participants understood that this Participatory Action Research intervention was only the beginning of change in the firm and the sustainability of the changes rests on the firm as a whole, and working towards it would be a continuous process not ending with the Participatory Action Research process.

## **Acknowledgements:**

To God all the glory for the strength, love and wisdom he gave me during my studies and the time in which I wrote this dissertation.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Clive Smith my supervisor. Without his invaluable support, knowledge and constant motivation through encouraging feedback and comments it would not have been possible to complete this dissertation. He was always willing, available and a true inspiration.

To my husband I am indebted for all his hard work and constant efforts during this process. Nothing was ever too much to ask and he was never reluctant to participate and try anything I suggested. He put all his energy into this process, working late nights during the leadership module at Rhodes Investec Business School and sacrificed every moment of his time and previous perceptions on how to lead his staff in order to ensure the success of the research, and for this I am truly grateful.

To my mother Annatjie Cochrane that left behind her house and grandchildren in Johannesburg for an entire month to help and support me during the writing of my dissertation. A mere 'thank you' is enough but is sincerely meant.

I am also indebted to the staff members of the law firm and would like to thank them for their openness, honesty and participation, without which it would not have been possible to facilitate this Action Research Process.

I would lastly like to also thank Professor Staude and Ros Parker from the Rhodes Investec Business School for their support and patience with their students, and always going beyond the call of duty to provide assistance on whatever was asked from them.



## DECLARATION FORM

Declaration submitted by a candidate presenting a thesis for examination

Surname:                   Cochrane

First names:             Tania

Title of thesis: Action research on Leadership Style, and relationships in an East London Law Firm.

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Chapter 1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Context of the Research.....	9
1.2 Research Question.....	12
1.3 Goals of the Research.....	13
1.4 Methodology.....	13
1.4.1 Intervention.....	14
1.4.2 Data Gathering.....	14
1.5 Thesis Outline.....	15
<b>Chapter 2. Literature Review.....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 The Importance of the Leadership Role in an Organisation.....	16
2.3 Leadership Styles.....	17
2.3.1 Transactional Leadership.....	18
2.3.2 Current Thoughts on Leadership.....	19
2.3.2.1 Participative Leadership.....	19
2.3.2.2 Charismatic Leadership.....	20
2.3.2.3 Transformational Leadership.....	22
2.3.2.4 Servant Leadership.....	23
2.4 Leadership Traits, Behaviours and Characteristics Identified for Success and Sound Human Relationships.....	25
2.4.1 Trust.....	26
2.4.2 Emotional Intelligence.....	26
2.4.3 Vision.....	28
2.4.4 Leadership Development.....	30
2.4.5 Characteristics Identified in Lawyers that Improved Performance.....	34

2.5 The Leader and Organisation Change Process.....	34
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology.....</b>	<b>40</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	39
3.2 Paradigm.....	39
3.2.1 Critical Paradigm.....	39
3.2.2 Interpretive Paradigm.....	40
3.3 Research Methods.....	40
3.3.1 Case Study.....	40
3.3.2 Participatory Action Research.....	41
3.4 Data Gathering.....	41
3.4.1 Interviews.....	43
3.4.2 Questionnaires.....	44
3.4.3 Workshop-Feedback Session .....	46
3.4.4 Leadership Module.....	48
3.4.5 Personal Documents.....	50
3.5 Data Analysis.....	51
3.6 Quality Assurance.....	51
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	52
3.8 Potential Limitations.....	53
<b>Chapter 4. Data Presentation and Discussion.....</b>	<b>54</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	54
4.1.1 Pre-Intervention.....	54
4.1.2 During and Post-Intervention.....	54
4.2 Steps in the Research Process.....	55
4.3 Pre- Intervention.....	57
4.3.1 Uncertainty.....	57
4.3.2 Lessons Learned.....	60

4.3.3 Closed Door.....	63
4.3.4 Lack of Participation.....	66
4.3.5 Absence of Trust and Relationships.....	71
4.3.6 The Need for Fairness Recognition and Rewards.....	76
4.3.7 Ineffective Social Context, Relationships and Teamwork.....	80
4.3.8 Unclear Vision.....	85
<b>Chapter 5. Intervention and Change.....</b>	<b>90</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	90
5.2 Feedback and Change.....	92
5.3 Open Communication.....	92
5.4. Joint Decision Making and the Meetings where it all happened.....	94
5.5 Deserved Recognition and Earned Rewards.....	98
5.6 Building Relationships and Mutual Trust.....	100
5.7 Effective Change and the Road Ahead.....	104
<b>Chapter 6. Conclusion and Recommendations.....</b>	<b>109</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	109
6.2 Summary.....	109
6.3 Significance of the Research for the Future.....	113
6.4 Reflections.....	113
6.4.1 Reflection on Research Method.....	114
6.4.2 Limitations.....	116
6.4.3 Personal Reflection.....	117
References.....	118
Appendices.....	132
Appendix A. The Productive Practice Survey (Hall, J. 1987).....	132

Appendix B. The Productive Practice Survey (Hall, J. 1987)	
Results.....	144
Appendix C. Interview Questions.....	148
Appendix D. Feedback forms for feedback session discussion.....	149
Appendix E. Samples of staff members suggested solutions to achieve desired outcome.....	151
Appendix F. Samples from suggestion box.....	170
Appendix G. Communication from Mrs. Nesbit to Hugo regarding the social.....	179
Appendix H. Sample of Personal Journal.....	180
Appendix I. Micro Design for Workshop Feedback Session.....	181

## Chapter 1

*"It is in the depths of your life that you will discover the invisible necessity which has brought you here. When you begin to decipher this, your gift and giftedness come alive. Your heart quickens and the urgency of living rekindles your creativity". (O'Donohue 1997:114).*

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Context of the Research

The purpose of this action research and the literature reviewed was to document the effect that facilitating change in a law firm through the development of the lawyer with no formal knowledge of, or training in leadership, and staff participation in the leadership change process would have. There is little in the literature on lawyers and leadership, and research on the topic is scarce. Most of the journals on the subject of lawyers and leadership refer to a study done by the Hay Group as cited in Krufka (2005). According to Krufka (2005) law firms are now realizing the importance of knowledge in addition to law subjects that are necessary to lead a firm, and are therefore focusing attention on the development of lawyers as leaders.

The style of leadership in an organisation has an impact on sound human relations and is thus an important consideration for an organisation's success. Lawyers are intelligent people with specialized skills and often lead a firm and manage its people, but few of them ever have any formal leadership or business training, and invest little or no time and effort in developing themselves as leaders. Amongst the skills identified during the study, that lawyers lack, are the leading of others and working successfully as part of a team (Krufka, 2005).

This lack of knowledge and formal training in the field of leadership, and the impact of leadership styles on staff are placing lawyers on unfamiliar ground when effective

leadership becomes essential for a firm's success. Krufka (2005) says that leadership skills of lawyers should be developed, and opportunities created to implement these skills while receiving feedback from staff on the leader's performance.

My interest in this was stimulated when I became aware that lawyers receive no preparation for their roles as leaders. The goal of my research was to conduct action research on leadership development and the ensuing relationships in a law firm.

My reading focused on current leadership research and writing. The word 'participation' often emerges in current thinking about leadership. Thus, Participative Leadership is based on a leader's inclusion of followers in the decision-making process, and through such participation encourages followers to believe in the leader's vision and goals, and align their own vision with that of the organisation.

In a recent *Management Today* article headlined with the sentence "The new leadership: fellowship, not follower-ship" Bester et al. (2006) state that, especially in South Africa, leaders need to change their leadership styles to more Participative Leadership styles. The benefits according to Yukl (1998) are numerous: in joint decision-making a group with diverse knowledge and information has better opportunities for problem solving than a leader making all the decisions with only the information and knowledge available to him. Involving staff in decision-making increases their commitment to the decisions that are made and creates a feeling of ownership for the decision.

Transformational Leadership, Charismatic Leadership and concepts are often used interchangeably in literature or are linked in a chapter, as the characteristics that these leaders are said to possess are more or less the same. Both instill a great sense of loyalty in followers: they believe in the vision of the leader and make it their own. According to Robbins (2005) followers' alignment of values are made possible because of the concern the Transformational Leaders has for his/her staff's individual needs. She/He is able to excite and inspire staff towards achieving group goals. Gibson et al. (2003) describe the rewards for followers of Transformational Leaders as internal. Because they are

motivated by the leader to achieve high standards and perform at their peak, staff feels self-rewarded and the reward is therefore internal. Dubrin (2001) states that studies demonstrate that staff performance is higher when led by a Transformational Leader, compared to performance of staff led by a Transactional Leader.

Servant Leadership takes being people-orientated a step further by seeing serving as a first priority and leading as the second. Blanchard (1998) explains that the Servant Leader is encouraged to move away from the traditional way of leading that focuses on control and constant direct supervision, to a facilitative role partnered with encouragement, motivation and good listening skills. Batten (1998) states that although Servant Leaders are aware that they and others have weaknesses they choose to focus and build on strengths. Lussier and Achua (2001) add to this by stating that a Servant Leader does away with the concept of self-interest in order to serve others and help them grow emotionally and professionally.

Bringing about changes in the style the leader in the case practiced, played an important role in the development of the leader and in building relationships with staff. Research provides evidence that leaders can adapt their behaviours and traits to match those of effective leaders in order to bring about certain changes to their leadership style. According to Koestenbaum (2002) leadership is teachable; it can either be facilitated or challenged into existence. Koestenbaum believes that all leadership skills can be acquired, and if already present in a leader can be improved to achieve even greater success. According to London (2002) leadership development is seen from both an individual and organisational perspective. From an individual perspective the leader needs to identify his strengths and weaknesses and strategise on how to improve on weaknesses and draw on his strengths. Development can then take place through various means such as learning, gaining knowledge, training and also self development.

Research done by Bernthal and Wellis (2006) on development showed that although many ways of developing a leader exist, it is important that leadership development is taught through practical experience in a controlled environment: learning through doing

is something that cannot be excluded from any leadership development programmes. This method of leadership development is called Applied Learning, where the leader gets the opportunity to learn and even make mistakes through applying the skills learned in, for instance formal training, in a real life situation. Heifetz and Laurie (1998) state that leadership development requires a learning strategy in which all levels in the organisation is challenged to re-assess their values and to learn new habits. In order to develop, the leader needs to move away from the notion that he is the only one capable of solving difficult problems. This will also ease the load the leader has to carry as the main source of answers to the challenges facing an organisation.

Because of the paucity of literature on lawyers and leadership, and little research on the topic, it was anticipated that the research would be of interest to other managers and leaders in professions with no formal education on leadership to prepare them for their roles.

## **1.2 Research Question**

The research question was formulated when I became aware that law firm management receives no preparation for their positions as the leaders within their firms. The aim of the research was to determine whether leadership development through partaking in a leadership module, and possible changes in the leadership style could bring about organisational change in this single case study. Yin (1994) a case inquiry relies on multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in a real- life situation. According to Hedrick, Bickman and Rog (1993) the researcher should identify the sources that will answer and address the research question.

The following areas of knowledge, both theory and research informed my study in order to answer the research question:

- Leadership
- Leadership style including, co-worker response to the style and the way it affected amongst others, relationships, motivation and productivity
- Leadership Development
- Change through the facilitation of an action research process

I anticipated that the research question could best be answered by using a case study and Participatory Action Research.

### **1.3 Research Goal**

The goal of my research was to facilitate a process of change in leadership style in an East London law firm and to then investigate staff perceptions of relationship changes in the firm. This included:

- Documenting staff perceptions of the leader's leadership style before intervention;
- Identifying the staff's preferred leadership style;
- Facilitating a process of change to the preferred leadership style through participative means that included the leader partaking in a leadership development programme, and responding to suggestions for change made by staff members.
- Investigating staff perceptions of the influence of the intervention on relationships in the firm.

All role-players participated in the Action Research process laid out above. According to Williams et al. (2002), to allow direct participation in the decision making process about change is the best way of creating learning abilities and good communication with staff and will help to minimize the uncertainty that usually surrounds change. Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) add that if a leader and staff believe they are in control of their own destiny and that their actions influence what happens in their organisation, they will be positive about change and embrace the need for change.

### **1.4 Methodology**

An interpretive case study was conducted in which Participative Action Research was undertaken to facilitate change in the leadership style in an East London law firm. According to Bruce and Wyman (1998) the word 'action' implies that participants consent to a process of change with expectations for success through limited initial implementation to assess the organisation's reaction to these changes. The perceptions and

experiences of participants during the process of change plays an important role to understanding the impact the change has on the human element and relationships within the firm. My research also lay within the critical paradigm as changes in behaviour were necessary to change the leadership style to staff members' preferred leadership style.

#### **1.4.1 Intervention**

All participants to the research were involved in all phases of the change process, including the decision-making about the implementation of changes that would include the participants' desired outcome. According to Babbie and Mouton (2006) interventions are decisions and actions that are planned to have a specific and desired outcome when implemented successfully.

In this research project the Participatory Action Research involved the leader of the firm, three heads of departments and twenty three general staff members, and followed all phases of Action Research. Babbie and Mouton (2006) state that Participative Action Research is a version of Action Research and the word 'participatory' implies participation, although not necessarily, as action research cannot be conducted without participation. However, these authors also note that it is important to only use the word participatory when the studied population was actively involved in the research as was the case with my research.

#### **1.4.2 Data Gathering and Analysis**

A number of data gathering tools were used. Firstly I used The Productive Practice Survey (Hall 1987) to gather general perception of staff members on the current leadership style and the desired style.

Formal interviews were conducted with the heads of departments and the leader. All general staff members participated in a feedback session on the surveys. Personal journals were kept by two heads of departments and the leader, in which they documented their personal thoughts and experiences during the programme.

I analysed my data using interpretational analysis. “A process of close examination of case study data in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns” (Gall, cited in Winegardner 2001).

## **1.5 Thesis Outline**

In Chapter 2 the traditional and current thoughts on leadership are reviewed and presented. I remind the reader that there is a dearth of literature on lawyers and leadership; I do cover the research that was done by the Hay Group cited in Krufka (2005). Literature on leadership development and change is also reviewed as Action Research is coupled with intervention and change.

Chapter 3 describes my research Methodology and the paradigms within which my research falls. I also describe the methods of gathering my data and the Action Research process in more detail. Ethical considerations are also mentioned in this chapter.

The data gathered pre-intervention is presented and discussed in Chapter 4, and during and post-intervention in Chapter 5. Due to the richness of the data, presentation and discussion was conducted simultaneously to enable me to present literature on the data gathered without conforming to the literature or taking away from the originality of the data.

Chapter 6 contains my main research findings, recommendations and discusses the limitations of my research. A section on my personal reflection concludes this chapter.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1 Introduction

*“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't save the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking the world so far that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us. It is not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people the permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”* (Mandela, cited in Kirby, 2003).

In this chapter the importance of the leadership role in the organisation is explored. Different leadership styles are then investigated through the literature, with the view of describing the influences these different styles have on staff and their relationships with the leader. Of importance to this research was to investigate whether the key characteristics and values of successful leaders could be adopted and whether these changes would have a positive effect.

### 2.2 The importance of the leadership role in an organisation

Leadership is a critical component in the success of an organisation and the motivation of staff. According to Whetten et al. (2000: 290) “poor motivation is a lack of skilled leadership not a lack of desire within people”. Pinchot says (1996) leadership can be seen as an intervention to energize people towards a common goal, be it through the most direct method of leadership where staff are coerced, or indirectly by focusing on communication and inspiration. Lussier and Achua (2001) add that the leader has three roles: *interpersonal*, where he is seen as the figurehead that represents the organisation, the performer of management functions such as performance evaluation and liaison, interacting with people outside the organisation; the *informal* role where the leader

monitors and gathers information, disseminates information by sending it to parties outside the organisation and being a spokesperson, and last, the *decisional* role where the leader is the entrepreneur, allocates resources and negotiates transactions. Dubrin (2001), in addition to the roles Lussier and Achua (2001) found, further identified the *coach* to team members, building the team through appreciation, and by the display of trustworthy personal conduct become a team player.

A leader is empowered by his followers to be just that, a leader, and this empowerment is earned by the leader through the respect and trust that his followers has for him and his abilities. Followers also need to share and believe in the goals of the leader, and be inspired by him.

“Leadership is about getting people to do what you want them to do, because they want to do it for you and themselves” (Whickens, 1999: 52). The leader of an organisation achieves the completion of tasks through the good relationships developed over time with staff. Using the combined resources of staff and the leader’s skills, success is achieved (Kirby, 2003: 169).

### **2.3 Leadership Styles**

*“A synthesis of a number of studies indicates that effective leaders score highly on concern for both people and production” (Dubrin, 2002: 130).*

In this section I will look briefly at Transactional Leadership as a summary example of the more traditional approach to leadership, and then current leadership styles and organisation participants’ responses to these styles. Thereafter I will discuss a selection of literature on the behaviours and traits identified in successful leaders and then review literature on leadership development and the possibilities for leaders to change their styles. Finally I will discuss literature on organisational change processes.

A survey of the literature on leadership styles shows that current thinking identifies four basic styles: Participative Leadership, Charismatic Leadership, Transformational

Leadership and Servant Leadership. Byrne (2005) suggests that most effective leaders do not choose a specific leadership style, but rather adapt their leadership style to what is required by the situation at hand. She proposes that instead of leaders always focusing on using their dominant leadership style, they should equip themselves with the knowledge of other effective leadership styles in order to reinvent themselves, should it be required. All effective leadership styles that prove to have a positive impact can and should be practiced and used in different situations.

### **2.3.1 Transactional Leadership:**

The more traditional approach to leadership is the Transactional Leadership style. According to Bratton et al. (2005). Transactional Leadership can be identified as a leader/follower relationship. Transactional Leadership is rooted in the leader offering material rewards to staff in relation to the amount of effort he receives from them. A Transactional Leader and staff have a relationship based on exchange: the effort and reward for the effort is negotiable but usually mutually beneficial (Burns 1978).

Transactional Leaders generally focus on maintaining stability within their organisations compared to Transformational and Charismatic Leaders who seek to bring about change in their organisations. A Transactional Leader enters into contractual arrangements with staff arranging for benefits once goals have been achieved (Lussier and Achua, 2005:384). Robbins (2005) describes the Transactional Leader as active in searching for any deviation from the rules and will take corrective action immediately if standards aren't adhered to. The Transactional Leader is however still capable of recognising the accomplishments of staff.

### **2.3.2 Current Thoughts on Leadership:**

As my interest is in current concepts of leadership, especially as it relates to participant response, I will focus more on the character of these types of leadership.

### **2.3.2.1 Participative Leadership:**

Participative Leadership is based on a leader including followers in the decision-making process, and through this participation encourages followers to believe in the leader's vision and goals, and align their own vision with that of the organisation. The underlying principles of Participative Leadership include empowering others to take responsibility for decisions they make, and which would previously have been made by the leader, and establish open communication channels where joint decision making is encouraged.

According to Dubrin (2001) there are many behaviours that can be attributed to a Participative Leader, but consultative, consensus seeking and democratic are concepts that best describe this type of leader. A leader needs to create a learning environment to empower his staff in such a way that they feel part of a community and are able to form close working relationships with other members of staff, and engender feelings of belonging and competence. For sound working relationships the leader needs to ensure that staff feels needed by him and others in the working environment (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1994: 7).

Leaders need to create an organisation culture that includes followers in decision making and provide equal opportunity for all to be heard, respected and to grow. "If employees perceive the company as an extension of their own values, standards and identities, it creates an undefined loyalty to the organisation. Leaders at this level often create self-directed work teams with strong values. They empower them, and involve them actively in structuring and implementing processes." (Bester, et al. 2006: 6). According to Yukl (1998) the empowerment of staff also develops their problem solving skills and promotes conflict resolution and team building.

"The leader becomes a context setter, the designer of a learning experience, not an authority figure with all the solutions". When staff own the problem they have to deal with, they are a lot more aggressive in their approach to finding a solution to the problem. "Staff takes ownership for the problem and therefore also takes ownership to become part of the solution." (Williams et al. 2002: 246). According to Robbins (2005) there is a reward to participation for staff, it makes their tasks more interesting and meaningful.

Richardson (2002) emphasize that staff have a need to be led not just to be told what to do, they want to be involved in creating the organisation they work for, and seek acknowledgement for their contributions and achievements.

The leadership style of the top performing leaders and partners in law firms identified by the Hay Group is Affiliative Leadership. This style of leading embodies most of the core concepts of Participative Leadership and I therefore group it under this heading.

Leaders practicing this style proved do be a lot more attentive to the needs and feelings of staff and show a genuine interest in others, opposed to those that were perfectionists, demanding and focused on results at all costs. It was also found that they were open to participation of staff in all decision making processes, and were visionaries that had the ability to share these visions with staff, aligning them to a common goal. The heads of law firms practicing the Affiliative Leadership style also proved to be more focused on long term performance, and able to alternate leadership styles according to the need of the situation. They are mentors and coaches, realizing the need and aspirations of employees, and working towards creating a participative culture (Patterson, 2005:59). Charismatic leadership also shows the leader to have a great concern for followers, and the literature emphasizes the importance of a clear vision to this type of leader.

### **2.3.2.2 Charismatic leadership**

Conger and Kanungo (1988) describe the following four stages of Charismatic Leadership:

1. “Detecting unexploited opportunities and deficiencies in the present situation. Sensitivity to constituents needs. Formulating an idealized strategic vision.
2. Communicating the vision. Articulating the status quo as unacceptable and the vision as the most attractive alternative. Articulating motivation to lead followers.
3. Building trust through technical expertise, personal risk-taking, self-sacrifice, and unconventional behaviour.
4. Demonstrating the means to achieve the vision through role modeling, empowerment and unconventional tactics.” (p.27).

In addition to what Conger and Kanungo (1988) found, Robbins (2005) also identifies risk taking and sensitivity to both the environment and staff needs as characteristics possessed by a Charismatic Leader. Gibson et al. (2003) state that these characteristics in a Charismatic Leader inspire staff, and as a result they show a great deal of affection for the leader. The Charismatic Leader motivates staff and serves as a role model, is able to steer staff towards achieving his vision through the praise and recognition that he gives them.

Dubrin (2001) also identifies the Charismatic Leader as a master at communication, using colourful communication skills to translate his vision to staff. The Charismatic Leader is also expressive and warm and willing to express feelings openly. Charismatic Leaders also have the tendency to romanticise risk because of their love of risk taking. Another characteristic of a Charismatic Leader is a self-promoting personality; Lussier and Achua (2001) note that Charismatic Leaders are always out promoting themselves and believing in themselves even if no one else is taking up their cause. These authors also suggest that several of the characteristics of Charismatic Leaders can be enhanced in leaders so that they may become more charismatic.

According to Robbins (2005) the Charismatic Leader sets high performance targets for staff, which they are able to achieve because of the confidence the leader displays in their abilities. Dubrin (2001) adds to this by stating that the Socialized Charismatic Leader formulates and pursues only goals that address the needs of the entire group, and is therefore not a self-serving individual. He provides staff with intellectual stimulation and they are therefore empowered individuals that take responsibility for their tasks and growth. Robbins (2005) describes the Charismatic Leader as attracting others through a bond he creates by analyzing and tapping in to their emotions.

### **2.3.2.3 Transformational Leadership**

Transformational Leadership, Charismatic Leadership and Strategic Leadership concepts are often used interchangeably or together in the literature, as the characteristics that these leaders are said to possess are more or less the same. All instill a great sense of

loyalty in followers, who believe in the vision of their leader and make it their own. Robbins (2005) also states that Transformational and Transactional Leadership should not be viewed as opposites, as Transformational Leadership is built on Transactional Leadership but goes further in the levels of effort and performance it is able to achieve from followers.

According to Bratton, Grint and Nelson (2005) it is Transformational Leaders' ability to align their visions with followers' values that make them successful. Transformational Leadership differs from Charismatic Leadership because Transformational Leaders show only a weak charisma, and this allows followers to relate better to the leader and form an emotional bond. Robbins (2005) state that the Transformational Leader is about more than just the charisma. While Charismatic Leaders try only to get staff to adopt the charismatic world, a Transformational Leader encourages staff to challenge established views even if they are the views of the leader. Lussier and Achua (2001) add to this by stating that Transformational Leaders takes the charisma one step further by not only making their vision clear, but also by actively pursuing the implementation of the vision. A Transformational Leader is more likely to take action in order for the implementation of the vision to succeed.

Burns (cited by Bratton, Grint and Nelson 2005), calls the alignment of followers' values to the Transformational Leader's vision the "reframing process". Followers find the values and vision of the leader appealing and, because of the trust and respect they have for the leader and his higher morality, the leader is able to convince them to change their values in order to align them to his own. According to Robbins (2005) the alignment of followers' values are made possible because of the concern that the Transformational Leaders has for staff member's individual needs. He is able to excite and inspire staff towards achieving group goals.

Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konnopaske (2003) describe the rewards for followers of Transformational Leaders as internal. Because they are motivated by the leader to achieve high standards and perform at their peak, staff feel self-rewarded and the reward

is therefore internal. Robbins (2005) builds on this by stating that the Transformational Leader promotes intellectual stimulation, intelligence and rationality in followers through creative and careful problem solving. Each member of staff is treated as an individual and is given advice, attention and coaching. According to Dubrin (2001), studies demonstrate that staff performance is higher when led by a Transformational Leader compared to the performance of staff led by a Transactional Leader.

#### **2.3.2.4 Servant Leadership**

Greenleaf (1998) describe the Servant Leaders as an individual whose primary intuition is to serve and then to lead. Servant Leaders are individuals who do not find the power and monetary value associated with the term leader important and therefore leading comes second to serving. Blanchard (1998) explains that the Servant Leader is encouraged to move away from the traditional way of leading that focuses on control and constant direct supervision, to a facilitator role partnered with encouragement, motivation and good listening skills.

According to Wis (2002), Servant Leaders use their talents and abilities to lead only to make a difference to others. This differs from other leadership styles where leadership abilities are on display as a means of getting others to do what the leaders want. Servant Leaders aren't focused on exerting power or control over others, but rather on empowering others and making a positive change in their lives. Batten (1998) states that although Servant Leaders are aware that they and others have weaknesses they choose to focus and build on strengths. Lussier and Achua (2001) add to this by stating that a Servant Leader does away with the concept of self-interest in order to serve others and help them grow emotionally and professionally. The Servant Leader also inspires staff to find their own ability to make a difference in lives of others. This type of leader is also not afraid to show their vulnerability and empathy for the circumstances of their followers. Bowman (2005) describe this shift in focus from self that takes place in a Servant Leader as a conscious decision to be accountable for the growth and well being of staff.

According to Nehr (2004), Servant Leadership is about influence and not about power, it focuses on attracting people with “honey instead of vinegar”, it is about growth and freedom opposed to criticizing and controlling. Wis (2002) also found that Servant Leaders have the ability to listen attentively and take responsibility intuitively when presented with a problem by staff, never looking for the cause of the problem in any one but themselves. Blanchard (1998) builds on this, stating that the moment staff believe that they are working for the leader above them, opposed to for themselves, they see the leader as responsible for problems. Vicalvi (2005) believes this to be the difference between Servant Leadership and other leadership styles: the Servant Leader believes that he is serving his organisation and staff as a leader, opposed to staff serving him as a leader.

According to Wis (2002), trust is an important factor for the servant leader and because of these trust relationships they never take credit for success, but rather trust in the abilities of the team and those around them that contribute to success. Lowe (1998) believes that the trust staff members have in the Servant Leader and relationships with staff members is an invaluable asset, and requires a certain character and competence to achieve. Encouragement and support along with trust achieves this valuable relationship between the Servant Leader and staff.

Wis (2002) again: the Servant Leader also does not believe in practicing coercive power, but rather sets clear goals, responds to staff expectations, and aligns consequences based on the understanding of these staff expectations. The Servant Leader distinguishes between individuals and does not hold the group accountable for the misdemeanors or insubordination of any particular individual.

Servant Leaders constantly work to improve themselves and focus on always remaining positive. Dubrin (2001) states that although the Servant Leader is idealistic, he can identify that one person is not able to achieve all goals, and therefore pays careful attention to feedback ensuring that focus remains on achievable problem solving. McGee-Cooper (1998) also point out that the Servant Leader asks for honest feedback on himself

from staff and uses this as a positive tool to better himself, while giving staff the same kind of honest feedback on their performance. Vicalvi (2005) takes this a step further stating that being a Servant Leader does not mean that staff always like what the leader does and that Servant Leaders often expect more from staff than just getting by.

Bausch (1998) believes that Servant Leadership is the answer to effective leadership and an important concept in the new virtual organisation where knowledge workers and a sense of community are at the order of the day. The devotion of resources to recruitment and training of staff and taking ownership for problems are some of the reasons for the Servant Leader's success. "Employees work best within a nurturing, valuing environment because that environment allows them to trust, risk, create, and measure up to the expectations of others, and thus become more valuable people" (Melrose 1998: 283).

## **2.4 Leadership traits, behaviours and characteristics identified for success and sound human relations**

There has been ample research on leadership behaviour, traits and characteristics that set a leader apart from those around him. Amongst these the most emphasis has been placed on behaviour and values that are directed at being people orientated. Research on leadership over the years has been characterized by identifying a wide array of different qualities believed to be present in successful leaders, some ingrained so that a leader has no control in acquiring them, and others seen as achievable through learning and nurturing (Kakabadse and Kakabadse 1999). Leadership is as much about what you do as who you are; they cannot be divorced from one another in the process of becoming a successful leader.

According to Tracy (2002), the starting point to becoming a successful leader is to realize that a leader serves as an example to others by being a role model. In the light of the Action Research which focuses on a lawyer I will first present a selection of literature on the most commonly identified characteristics of successful leaders, and then look at

characteristics identified in successful lawyers as leaders through studies done by the Hay Group

### **2.4.1 Trust**

When staff place their trust in a leader they expect he will not act in a manner, through decisions or words, that will be harmful to them (Robbins 2005). “The key dimensions that underlie the concept of trust are integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty and openness ... The trust that staff has in a leader influences the leader’s ability to motivate staff to invest their efforts into the organisation” (p.357). Bardwick (1996) describes trustworthy leaders as those who are transparent and don’t leave staff guessing about whether their leader’s words and actions will be the same. Lowe (1998) adds to this by saying that to be a trustworthy leader requires character and competence, and the leader must have the ability, as an individual, to complete the tasks entrusted to him. Dubrin (2001) emphasizes that trust moves in both directions: while the leader is trustworthy he must also be able to trust his staff. This author sees trust as being evident when leaders show consistent behaviour and withhold themselves from blame-shifting. Robbins (2005) emphasizes the importance of trust by stating that although it cannot be said that trust increases productivity, research proves that a lack of trust can decrease productivity.

### **2.4.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI):**

Daniel Goleman established the concept of emotional intelligence in 1995 with his book *Emotional Intelligence*. Some 10 years later he wrote that of the more traditional qualities associated with leadership, success was important but not sufficient on its own, and that there was a direct link between emotional intelligence and business success. “Truly effective leaders are also distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence, which includes self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social-skills”. (Goleman 2004:1).

- **Self awareness.** Dubrin (2001) defines self-awareness as the ability to be aware and understand one's own needs, moods and emotions. Self-awareness also allows a leader to correctly assess the feedback he receives from staff and recognizes their feelings about his leadership style. According to Weiss and

Kolberg (2003) self-awareness helps a leader to identify his strengths and weaknesses and how his actions influence what happens around him. The leader not only recognizes how others perceive him but also knows how he sees himself. Robbins (2005) describes self-awareness as one of the key components of emotional intelligence, and identifies self-control, self-assessment and a sense of humor as ways in which self-awareness is exhibited by a leader. Bratton, Grint and Nelson (2005) state that self-confidence, identified by Robbins (2005) as a way in which self-awareness is exhibited, as high self-esteem that is positively correlated to the effectiveness of a leader.

- **Motivation** is the one trait that almost every leader has (Goleman 2004). Opposed to most working individuals that are motivated by salaries and other external factors, leaders are self-motivators and an embedded need for achievement above expectation serves as their biggest motivator. Dubrin (2001) emphasizes that a leader must not only develop and motivate himself but must also be capable of motivating followers. Leaders are able to use the need for power as a motivator, but use it in a socially accepted way, by channeling it for constructive purposes, this is called “socialized power orientation” (Gibson et al. 2003: 302).
- **Empathy** is the ability of the leader to understand the viewpoints and emotions of staff by putting himself in their role (Gibson et al. 2003). Goleman (2004) however emphasizes that empathy for a leader does not mean adopting the emotions of staff but rather carefully considering their feelings and emotions during the decision-making process. Empathetic leaders are also able to read the body language of staff to determine their feelings. Empathy is also exhibited in leaders’ service to clients and ability to retain staff (Robbins 2005: 369).
- **Self-regulation.** Authors use the terms self-regulation and self-management interchangeably. According to Robbins (2005) this quality is exhibited in the trust and integrity of a leader as well as his acceptance of change. Dubrin (2001) describes self-regulation as the ability of the leader to control himself,

to be calm, not to be impulsive and to react in the right way in situations of conflict. Goleman (2004) build on this by stating that self-regulation means that the leader is able to manage his emotions and to not be a prisoner of his moods and feelings, but rather to be able to channel them in a positive direction.

- **Social Skills** is the competence of a leader to build and manage positive relationship with staff (Dubrin 2002). Robbins (2005) describes the ways in which social skills are exhibited in a leader as his ability to practise change leadership and powers of persuasion as well as building effective teams. Goleman (2004) states that having good social skills is not only the ability to build positive relationships through, for instance, being friendly, but rather being friendly with a purpose, a purpose to move people in the direction you need them to go. Leaders will be able to build these relationships if they have mastered the other aspects of EI such as being in control of their own emotions. Bennis (1999) emphasize that interpersonal skills are of utmost importance, and recognized by staff in the way that their leader communicates with them. Communication needs to be done face to face and the leader needs to be capable of listening with interest to the needs and feelings of staff. When a leader listens and understands what staff are trying to convey about their feelings during communication it creates a sense of belonging and human interaction that makes them loyal to the company.

Goleman (2004) states that people can develop their EI by using the right development methods and approach. "Emotional intelligence has shown to be positively related to job performance at all levels...The recent evidence makes a strong case for concluding that EI is an essential element in leadership effectiveness" (Robbins 2005: 368).

### **2.4.3 Vision**

Lussier and Achua (2001) emphasise the importance of leaders as visionaries; a clear vision attracts others because of a leader's ability of seeing a better future and how to achieve it. According to Fassel (1998) a leader who has a clear vision for his organisation

is one who has a vision that is sustainable and will hold up during uncertain circumstances of change. Conger and Kanungo (1998) describe a leader as “sensitive, not averse to risks and change and willing to make sacrifices for their vision whilst not forgetting to align this vision with the needs, capabilities and goals of followers” (p.94). Gibson, Donnelly, Ivancevich and Konnopaske state that great leaders make things happen by having a clear vision that they are able to communicate to staff. Dubrin (2001) adds that the leader’s vision, if easy to understand, makes the goals of the organisation clear to staff and inspires them to help the leader to achieve his vision. A leader should be able to “manage the journey to effectiveness”, by having a clear vision that will align the entire organisation to a common goal and through this creating an organisation that knows where it is going and how to get there (Blanchard 1996: 82).

For effective leadership and healthy working relationships, a leader needs to bring about changes in his leadership style. In order to create lasting positive relationships, a leader needs to not only know himself but also have a clear understanding of the wants and needs of his staff. There needs to be mutual trust, staff have to believe in the leader’s capabilities and the leader has to believe in the capabilities of his staff. Through leading with empathy, and by inspiring staff whilst harboring the mutual trust relationship, an environment will be created where staff can feel that they have the room to be effective and to grow (Bennis, 1998:111). I will deal with this as described in the literature in the following section.

## **2.5 Leadership Development**

Bringing about certain changes in leadership style will play an important role in the development of the leader and relationship building with staff. Research provides evidence that leaders can adapt their behaviour and traits to match those of effective leaders in order to bring about change in their leadership style. According to Koestenbaum (2002) leadership is teachable; it can either be facilitated or challenged into existence. Koestenbaum believes that all leadership skills can be acquired, and if already present in a leader can be improved to achieve even greater success. “Learning to lead is a lot easier than most of us think it is, because each of us possess the capacity

for leadership” (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1994: 7). According to Bennis, Spreitzer and Cummings (2001) leadership qualities aren’t in a person’s genes, it is something that can be understood by ordinary people. It is possible for anyone to develop themselves to become a leader, instead of always waiting for someone else to lead.

Robbins (2005) believes that high “self-monitors” that have the ability to be flexible about change will be more successful at leadership training than low “self-monitors” (p.379). According to Bester, Du Plessis and Pienaar (2006) leadership is a continuous learning experience and leaders should recognize the fact and prepare to develop themselves in order to cope with influences from the internal and external environment.

According to Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) the development of leaders was a frowned upon practice two decades ago, and moved from that to “a nice to have” situation in the decade thereafter. Today leadership development is seen as vital to the success of an organisation, mainly due to the increased value placed on customer response and the greater emphasis organisations are placing on the importance of its human resources. London (2002) agrees by stating that organisations are realizing the importance of developing leaders in response to the constant changes taking place in the business environment.

The greatest challenge an organisation faces in a development process—according to Phillips and Schmidt (2004)—is putting the development process into action and not waiting with leadership development until it is too late and costly to be effective. The next challenge is to select the appropriate development methods. The authors’ research shows that both on and off the job coaching, training and learning is essential. Bernthal and Wellis (2006) express the importance of applying different methods in the development process because leaders have different ways and styles of learning that work for them. Wind and Main’s (1998) research shows that changing a person’s leadership style is not an overnight process, because for many leaders the change of leadership style will be a traumatic experience. Still, developing a new set of values in a leader is possible through learning. A lot of effort needs to be put into the development

of leaders to equip them with the skills needed to handle the many challenges they will have to face.

Leadership development is seen from both an individual and organisational perspective (London 2002). From an individual's perspective the leader needs to identify his strengths and weaknesses and strategize on how to improve on weaknesses and draw on his strengths. Development can then take place through various means such as learning, gaining knowledge, training and also self development. Bennis, Spreitzer and Cummings (2001) also state that to develop as a leader, self-development should be the first goal, as self-awareness is identified as the key to being a successful leader.

It is therefore important to consider that although learning, coaching and experience are means of developing leaders, leadership development also involves a process of self-awareness on the part of a leader. A leader is able to achieve this through Double-loop learning that involves staff giving feedback to the leader on their perceptions and experiences of the effectiveness of his leadership style. During this development process it is important that the leader does not become defensive but rather sees the feedback as a means of countering and correcting any negative effects his leadership style may have caused. Kakabadse and Kakabasde (1999) build on this by stating that not only must an environment of feedback be created but that positive and negative feedback from staff must be received well, an atmosphere in which staff is encouraged to speak their minds, and that this diversity of feedback will assist in both leadership and team development. Phillips and Schmidt (2006) believe that it is the multiple perspectives that feedback provides that become the driving force of the leadership development. Keeling and Owen (2005) on Owen's experience as a CEO of a prominent agricultural company describes the feedback on his leadership style from staff as incremental for his success as a leader, and took the suggestions made in the feedback serious to make changes immediately.

Research done by Bernthal and Wellis (2006) on development showed that although many ways of developing a leader exists, it is important that leadership development

also takes place through practical experience in a controlled environment and that learning through doing is a method that cannot be excluded from other leadership development methods. This method of leadership development is called Applied Learning, where a leader gets the opportunity to learn and even make mistakes through applying the skills learned in, for instance, formal training in a real life situation.

Phillips and Schmidt (2004) believe this experience helps the leader to reflect on himself and view the organisation from a different perspective. Woods (2006) takes it further and emphasizes the importance of putting academic experience into practical experience, therein not only passing on the knowledge of different leadership styles, but allowing the leader to apply these styles depending on the requirements of the situation. Bolman and Deal (1994) describe the importance of practical experience as learning through positive and negative experiences, through failure and success.

According to Dubrin (2001) education should however not fall away as a method of leadership development in light of all the other development methods discussed above. Education is a means of gaining knowledge and is positively correlated to leadership development. The knowledge that leaders gain through formal education on the subject of leadership will assist in creative problem solving and influencing of staff members through persuasion. Phillips and Schmidt (2006, 21) also emphasize the importance of “classroom-based” training, as this is where specific skills and knowledge are acquired. Leadership training should go hand in hand with other development methods to increase its effectiveness.

Heifetz and Laurie (1998) state that leadership development requires a learning strategy in which all levels in the organisation is challenged to re-evaluate their values and to learn new habits. In order to develop, a leader needs to move away from the notion that he is the only one capable of solving difficult problems. This will also ease the load the leader has to carry as the main source of answers to the challenges facing the organisation. Gordon (2003) built on this by saying that humans can control their personal and working environment and adapt to circumstances as the need arises. This

means that leaders can adapt themselves to become more effective in what they do. It is therefore also assumed that leaders can in fact persuade or lead followers to change their values and goals to align them with those of the organisation, through their belief in him and his abilities. The adapting process takes place once leaders change their behaviour patterns to the desired behaviour exhibited by effective leaders.

In the article “7 Transformations of Leadership” the authors state that what differentiates leaders is not so much the way in which they lead or their personalities, but rather their reactions when their power and safety is challenged. Leaders that undertake the challenge to change and develop themselves will influence and strengthen the capability of the organisation as a whole. Research done by the authors using a survey tool that has been used for 25 years called the Leadership Development Profile, helped them the authors to identify seven development action logics in leaders namely, the Opportunist, Expert, Diplomat, Achiever, Individualist, Alchemist and Strategist. Participants that were identified as Alchemists, Individualists and Strategists were found to be most effective and showed characteristics such as strong communication skills, a shared vision and its implementation, the ability to build trust relationships, a focus on transformation, change and development, an ability to reinvent themselves and the organisation, and active involvement in problem solving. The research showed that leaders can transform themselves from one action logic to the next through self-development and staff feedback relationships (Rooke and Torbet, 2005: 74).

“The leadership development methods of feedback, challenging experiences, formal developmental relationships, and leadership training appear to have the ability to effectively develop leaders” (Phillips and Schmidt, 2006:26).

## **2.6 Characteristics identified in lawyers that improved performance.**

Research on the characteristics that successful lawyers as leaders in their firms displayed are:

- They have the ability to provide a clear vision to staff and guide them towards accepting ownership of the core values of the firm as their own.

- They believe in involving staff in the decision-making processes and promote participation in discussions.
- They are coaches and focus on mentoring staff in the long term.
- They are able to give clear direction and coach staff into immediate action.
- They find it easy to let go of tasks and would rather empower staff to take responsibility for these tasks.
- They are able to incorporate different leadership styles and reinvent themselves according to the demands of the situation (Compensation and benefits for Law Offices, 2005: 3).

## 2.7 The Leader and Organisation Change

*“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.”* Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

The nature of my research and the changes the leader had to undergo and implement makes it important to look at change, the general adversity to change, and how this applies to leadership.

Harper (2001) anticipates that change in leadership behaviours will become even more important in the years to come, and even the most gifted leaders will find the change process challenging, so that the need for the effective management of change will become a necessity for every organisation. Creating an agenda for change involves creating a vision that all parties to the change believe in, and a strong strategy to support the implementation of change (Kotter 1988). Building an implementation network needs strong relationships with the staff involved in the change, so as to promote teamwork. The core group involved in the change needs to be highly motivated and committed to the leader’s vision. “Human beings respond not only to traditional carrot and stick used by the driver of a donkey but also to ambition, patriotism, love of the good and the beautiful, boredom, self-doubt, and many more dimensions and patterns of thought and feeling that

make them men". Each individual for this reason will have different motivators and circumstances in which they experience job satisfaction. For this reason a successful leader should know his staff as individuals, and respond to their diverse needs during change (Prentice: 2005:150).

Various authors start their writing about change with a chapter on organisational culture, and emphasise the importance of culture in the change process. Although my interest for this action research does not lie with an organisation's culture, it is important to briefly mention culture as part of the change process. According to Caldeira and Van der Does (2006) organisational culture is a sharing of values, beliefs and behaviours at all levels of the organisation. The understanding of an organisation's corporate culture is reflected in its policies, visions and goals.

The law firm, the case study in this research, was started in 2001 and is thus still a young firm. Schein (1992) describes the change process for such a young organisation as difficult because of a young culture, the reason being that the established culture will be strictly adhered to because the founders of the culture would probably still be the leaders of the organisation, such as in the case of this law firm. The possibilities for change in a firm will therefore be influenced by the developmental stage of its culture. Harper (2001) adds to this by stating that corporate culture is essential for accelerating change, as it serves as a guide to employees to the values and goals the organisation wishes to achieve.

Staff tend to view repetitive actions by the leader as a reinforcement of the goals of the organisation and the importance of the people or a lack of their importance to the leader (Robbins 2005). Schein (1996), in an essay in *The Leader of the Future*, states that the culture of an organisation can evolve to embrace the process of change even though established culture cannot be changed by simply eliminating those aspects which are not accepting of change.

Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) write that there are two basic beliefs about change, one being that we have no influence on what happens and that what we do makes no difference as outside forces determine the outcome, and the second that we control our own destinies, and that we have an internal locus of control. If a leader and his subordinates believe the latter, that they are in control of their own destiny and that their actions influence what happens in the organisation, they will be positive about change and embrace the need for change. Once there is a belief that they can influence their environment they will be compelled to act, and these actions will have positive outcomes because of the self-confidence that goes hand in hand with the belief that we are the masters of our own destiny. A positive attitude towards change from both the leader and staff's viewpoint is important according to Conger et al. (1999) because the change process is often large scale and involves change in all components of the organisation, from its structure to its people.

Kotter and Cowen (2002: 3) describe eight stages for successful change in an organisation as:

1. Creating a sense of urgency among key players for change. Creating a sense of urgency gets people moving out of their comfort zones.
2. Assembling a guiding team with the capabilities to successfully provide change leadership.
3. The guiding team creates a clear vision that is easy to understand with implementation strategies to make it sustainable.
4. Open and clear communication channels need to be established where information is shared in a clear and repetitive manner in order to ensure across the board understanding and participation in the changes.
5. People need to be empowered to participate in the change and take ownership for their role in the change process.
6. The importance of empowerment is shown in the sixth step when short-term wins need to be evident to create a feeling of achievement that will ensure effort and excitement about the further change.

7. After the short-term wins the organisation needs to keep going and not let up in order for the implemented changes to be sustainable.
8. Finally, the changes that were implemented need to become a part of the organisational culture.

The case in this research project, with a leader in a professional service environment, might not require the implementation of all eight steps of the change process. Every organisation is different and that the steps towards change will differ from case to case, and that inevitably mistakes will be made along the path of implementing change (Kotter 1999). Change also poses challenges for a leader because of his role in the organisation. He is seen as providing stability to the organisation, and yet the importance to bring about change cannot be divorced from providing stability, therefore the challenge for the leader would be to balance both roles (Bolman and Deal 1994).

Shell's Steve Miller (quoted in Conger et al. 1999) believes that a successful company depends on its leadership. Leadership has moved away from the past beliefs that the leader has all the answers, to a new approach where staff, working closest to the problem are the people best equipped to deal with the problem. Miller states that if the approach of leadership within a company is changed the way in which the company is run will be revolutionized. The difficult part in this change for the leader is letting go of the control he had before. But, realizing this, open communication and information sharing relationships with staff that will be gained and will ease the fear of letting go of control. According to Kotter (1988) the best example of an effective leader in business would be Lee Iacocca. Under Iacocca's leadership in the 1970's Chrysler made a turnaround. Iacocca's success is ascribed to his ability to create effective teamwork, having a well thought-out vision and strategic plan for bringing about change at Chrysler, and the energizing of the human resources under his leadership. Effective leadership has two main agendas, the first being to create an agenda for change and the second setting up a strong implementation network.

For change to take place it needs to be a participative effort and all levels in the organisation need to be ready and willing to change. It is however the leader that will have to introduce the change and encourage staff to embrace and take active part in it. According to Lussier and Achua (2001) it is the discomfort and stress associated with change that causes the aversion to change. The leader's role here is not to downplay the aversion to change but rather to acknowledge his staff's concerns for their self-interest during the change process.

If individuals know what changes are about to take place, when they will take place and how they will take place, they will be more positive about it because they will feel that they are better equipped to predict the outcome of the change. According to Williams et al. (2002), by allowing direct participation in the decision making process about changes that should take place, is the best way of creating learning capabilities and good communication with staff, and will help to minimize the uncertainty that usually surrounds change.

Staff will weigh the cost of change against the rewards that will result from the change, and this will decide their acceptability of the change. To effectively implement change, relationship-building with staff is incremental (Rodriguez, quoted in Rowlands 2005). In the change process a leader must meet individuals at the place they are currently at and pull them across a bridge, and in the same manner staff will be there for the leader when he needs help during change. "To the real Change Leader, performance is simply delivering results (values) that matter to shareholders, customers, and employees". Real Change Leaders are those leaders that attempt major changes throughout the organisation. They are successful at implementing change by focusing and energizing staff at lower levels. It is also about focusing on change that will have the desired short and long term impact on performance in the organisation (Katzenbach et al. 1996: 27).

## Chapter 3

### Research Methodology

*“Participatory change is premised on a genuine sharing of power and responsibility for change between employees and management. Change approaches members of the closely related family of action research, organisational development and action training and research”.* (Bruce and Wyman, 1998: 10)

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present a discussion of the critical and interpretive paradigms of my research, and take a closer look at how they inform the philosophy on which my study is based. I then describe my research method of participatory action research for a single case study. I also explain my data gathering tools of questionnaires, interviews and personal documents and the analysis of this information. I conclude the chapter by briefly explaining the ethical issues and limitations of the research.

### 3.2 Paradigms

#### 3.2.1 Critical Paradigm

A change in participants’ conditions from the undesirable state it is in to a more desired state should be the outcome of a critical theory process (Hosch 2002). The process involves understanding and interpretation (Kincheloe and McLaren 2000).

My research is located within the critical paradigm because it was undertaken with the intention to change behaviours and thoughts that in the research participants’ view hindered relationships within the law firm. According to Carr (1995) behaviours and misunderstandings stem from inherited traditions, ideology and habits. My research intended to identify, understand (hence the interpretive dimension in my research) and change these habits.

### **3.2.2 Interpretive Paradigm**

Babbie and Mouton (2006) state that within the Interpretive Paradigm, the researcher seeks to understand and interpret human behaviour opposed to predicting human behaviour or explaining it. Stake (1995) defines interpretation in the research as seeking to understand the phenomenon of certain expected and unexpected relationships that present themselves from patterns during the research process. He explains that the researcher does not attempt to extract complex meanings but rather looks for “thick descriptions” and “experiential understanding” of “multiple realities”. Schwandt (2000) builds on this by stating that the researcher tries to find a meaning in the actions and to understand these actions by interpreting the way in which they are performed. This brings us to the research methods I chose, within which to understand and behaviour.

My research also includes an interpretive aspect, as I was also interested in gaining understanding of the participants’ experience of the change intervention. According to Cohen et al. (2000), the interpretive paradigm focuses on the individual in order to understand the subjectivity of human experience. Lincoln and Guba (2000) note that the inquirer’s main interest lies with the “construction and co-creation” of social knowledge by the human element, and how it was produced by them.

## **3.3 Research Methods**

The method used for my research was Participatory Action Research with a single Case Study.

### **3.3.1 Case Study**

A case study approach allows a researcher to gather many specific details through the intensive analysis that an individual case allows for, these details can often be overlooked by other approaches (Kumar 1999). Stake (1995) emphasises the importance of setting all previous assumptions aside and having a sincere interest in learning from the case without pursuing a specific outcome. He also says that with a single case the researcher should attempt to connect the information gathered to knowledge gained in other areas, in order to find a way to make the information comprehensible. Each researcher’s style is

unique and deliberate and will determine the way in which decisions are made on the undertaking of the research and the understanding of the case.

Because this was an intrinsic single case study my findings could not be statistically analysed. A case study of this nature is not undertaken because it represents similar cases but rather because of the researcher's interest in a specific case (Stake 2000). The case itself becomes a "living case" through the researcher's use of theories and information to bring the story of the case to life. To give the story this life it was necessary to engage the entire organisation in the process of changing the leadership style of the director in the firm to a leadership style desired by staff members, this change was facilitated through the Participatory Action Research Process.

### **3.3.2 Participatory Action Research**

The distinctive feature of Participatory Action Research is that it involves participation between the researcher as the change agent, and the people within the organisation (Babbie and Mouton 2006). My research entailed Participatory Action Research by facilitating change in the leadership style in the organisation through participation of the entire firm. The research entailed participation of staff from all levels of the organisation in order to gain understanding of the case. Staff members actively participated with the researcher in the quest for information to drive future actions, opposed to being passive subjects of research (Whyte, Greenwood and Lazes 1991).

Santos (1991) describes the following phases of Participatory Action Research.

1. Initial Contact. During this phase initial barriers are broken down and relationships are built between the researcher and participants. General information on the current organisational environment is gathered and analysed, and feedback is given to participants for discussion and reflection.
2. Application. During this phase the research is expanded to interviews, eliciting participants' views and further debate, and clear evidence of the problems to be addressed should become evident. Participants should begin to suggest ideas for

dealing with the issues that have come up. Participation is critical and the ideal would be that consensus between participants is reached.

3. Specific Interventions. During the last phase the issues raised during the previous phases are addressed by implementing the suggestions on which consensus has been reached by participants. Specific interventions that took place during the Participatory Action Research in the case study of the East London law firm included Hugo making changes in his leadership style as suggested by participants during the feedback sessions and interviews, as well as by applying the knowledge and experience he gained during the leadership module at Rhodes Investec Business School. This phase marks the end of the process of identifying problems, gathering information from participants and implementing change.

An additional step presented itself after the intervention in the Action research process namely feedback and reflection on the intervention. Feedback from participants, both from an organisational and personal perspective, as well as my personal reflection on the Action Research process is discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

Elden and Levin (1991) emphasise the importance of participation in this type of Action Research. They state that the participants cannot only be used as sources of data and seen as subjects of a research, but rather as equals of the researcher in the learning process. Information can only be gathered from those who have in-depth knowledge of the situation, and it is only the participants in the research programme who have the knowledge. An Action Researcher studies problems that grew within an organisation as a community, and can therefore not expect to impose his/her own knowledge to solve problems (Oja and Smulyan 1989). Solutions to issues are the result of consensus decisions that are the result of the individuals working collaboratively as a community.

The information for the interpretation of the case and facilitating change was obtained using different data gathering tools during different stages of the research.

### **3.4 Data Gathering**

A case inquiry relies on multiple sources of evidence to investigate contemporary phenomena in a real-life situation (Yin 1994), and a researcher should identify sources that will answer and address the research question (Hedrick et al. 1993)

#### **3.4.1 Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with participants to gather descriptions and interpretations of their experiences and feelings before, during and after the intervention. Stake (1995) suggests that questions should not generate yes or no answers but rather explanations. Open-ended questions facilitate freedom of expression and allow the interviewer to probe participants for clear answers to avoid misunderstandings (Cohen et al. 2000: 275). Babbie and Mouton (2005) describe “thick descriptions” as those that would provide the researcher with sufficiently detailed descriptions on which to make judgments. My open-ended interview questions relied on gathering thick descriptions of participants’ unique experiences in the organisation (Appendix C).

Before a researcher initiates a programme, he/ she must identify the criteria for including or excluding particular respondents (Babbie and Mouton 2006). In this case respondents were chosen on their ability to provide rich information while remaining representative of the workforce. Interviews were conducted with four members of the firm, of which one was the leader of the firm and the other three department heads.

The interviews were held with each individual separately in Hugo Daniels’s office. Although I thought in the beginning that using his office for the interviews was not a good idea, as the department heads might find it intimidating, the opposite turned out to be true. It seemed as though conducting the interviews in leader’s office served as a constant reminder to the participants of Mr. Daniels’s leadership style and the incidents that had played out in that office.

When describing the lack of communication within the office, participants would point to the door they are used to seeing closed when they were interviewed (see section 4.3.3),

which give me particularly valuable information. After the first hour-long interview I recognised the potential that conducting the interviews in Hugo's office had, and I asked the other two departments heads to take a seat in Hugo's chair during their interviews, while I took a seat opposite them. It proved to be a good strategy in getting participants' views on what they desired from Hugo as a leader, by putting them in the leader's chair.

### **3.4.2 Questionnaires**

Twenty three members of staff, representing all departments, were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire used was taken from Productive Practices Survey (Hall 1987). The purpose of the questionnaire was to give me an understanding of the participant's perception of the effectiveness of the current leadership style.

According to Hall (1987) the purpose of the questionnaire is to determine whether the leadership practices within an organisation is productive. Hall (1987) explains that the behaviour of the leader has an influence on the productivity and the success of an organisation as a whole. A productive leader is able to influence followers to do their best work and to achieve their purpose within the organisation and the questionnaire was designed to tap into the factors that might influence those being managed.

The twenty three staff members that completed the questionnaire was asked to evaluate Hugo on the behaviours described in each separate section in the survey to determine how characteristic the behaviour described was to him. The survey provides two ratings to be listed by subordinates namely actual and desired. The score marked in the actual column would indicate Hugo's current practice of the behaviour described, and the desired column would represent how frequently staff members would like Hugo to practice the behaviour described. Staff members where asked to score Hugo based on a scale provided within the questionairre ranging from one to nine. One represents the lowest score indicating that Hugo never practices the behaviour described in the question, and nine represents the highest score indicating that Hugo always practices the behaviour described in the question.

Hall (1987) lists three dimensions that contribute to a leader's competence in being a productive leader namely collaboration, commitment and creativity. Hall divided the questionnaire into nine components that he describes as the conditions that support competence namely:

- Management Values: Items 1-8 in the survey presents a leadership and organisational attitude of fairness, respect and an overall appreciation for the knowledge, skills and talent within the organisation.
- Support Structure: Items 9-16 in the survey are concerned with the behaviours that allow for access to information and pertinent people within the organisation that allows for collaboration.
- Managerial Credibility: Items 17-24 of the survey concern behaviour from the past and the present that promotes feelings of trust in the leader, as well as promotes confidence in the leader.
- Impact: Items 25-32 evaluates the practices of the leader that allow staff members to feel empowered. The section results in an indication of the leader's willingness to allow participation in decision making, and the amount of freedom he gives staff members to determine their own fate by having personal influence when implementing work related decisions.
- Relevance: Items 33-40 assesses how meaningful staff members' tasks are to them, and the ability of the leader to structure tasks in such a way that it promotes the objectives of the organisation as well as individual goals and objectives for personal fulfillment of the individuals performing the tasks.
- Community: Items 41-48 of the survey determines the leader's ability to inspire a sense of teamwork, interdependence and mutual reliance between the members of the organisation.
- Task Environment: Items 49-56 measures the leader's ability to inspire innovation and creativity by allowing job freedom and personal initiative in the tasks that individuals perform.
- Social Context: Items 57-64 determines whether the leader has created an environment within the organisation that is characterized by openness, fun, adventure, new experiences, spontaneity and interpersonal trust.

- Problem Solving: Items 65-72 focuses on the practices of the leader when problem solving within the organisation becomes necessary and evaluates the leader's ability to create an environment that allows for consensus, participation and a conscious search for better alternatives when solving problems.

The Survey scores of the twenty three staff members were tallied and from the results I generated a feedback form reflecting the outcome. The feedback form was given to staff members during the feedback session in order to allow them to make written suggestions anonymously should they wish not to discuss them openly during the feedback session.

Because of my relationship with the leader as his wife, there were concerns that openness and trust would be compromised. Those who filled in the questionnaire thus remained anonymous and I used the information gathered from them only to facilitate discussion in the feedback session. According to the Survey Research Centre information from questionnaires can only be effectively used when the questions elicits responses that are in line with the objectives of the project, are understood and stimulate cooperation.

A task mutually taken on can create a positive group experience in which actions and attitudes are more easily and readily changed than in an individual (Weisbord 1987). The data from the individual questionnaires were thus fed back to the staff members as a group, in order to gather additional information and facilitate a workshop in which suggestions for change could be discussed and decided upon.

### **3.4.3 Workshop-Data Feedback Session**

The workshop session was held to feed information gathered from individual's questionnaires back to staff members for discussion as a group. Staff members were asked not only to discuss the information presented to them, but also to suggest possible solutions and changes in Hugo's leadership style that would have a desired outcome for the firm.

According to Oja and Smulyan (1989) the group dynamics during such an interaction allows the group to establish relationships and collaborate on the decisions that they take. These authors state that it also becomes a process of negotiation within the group that will influence earlier perceptions and determine the goals the group wishes to attain at the end of the interaction. Fontana and Frey (2000) describe gathering data from participants in a group setting, such as the workshop feedback session, as an opportunity to gather rich data by presenting a topic and allowing the group to elaborate on it. The topics for discussion were presented to staff members in a structured way by means of a feedback form generated from the score results obtained from The Productive Practices Survey (Hall 1987), but with open-ended questions to facilitate open and free discussions.

The feedback session was held in the firm's boardroom. The head and department heads were not asked to participate in this session because I anticipated that staff members would be reluctant to have open and honest discussion in their presence. At first my fears that staff members would be reluctant were confirmed, even in the absence of Hugo and the department heads. Participants seemed to prefer to write their comments and suggestions for change in the feedback form provided and would not discuss them openly (Appendix D).

I decided to break the ice by telling the staff members more about Hugo's experience during the leadership module to engage them in conversation about the research giving them this feedback on his effort and commitment during the week-long training session started them on the discussion of relationships (see section 4.3.7), as they heard things from my feedback that they did not know about Hugo. From that point onwards conversations seemed to flow easily from one discussion to the next. Once discussion on a topic was over, suggestions for change and possible solutions flew around the room almost like in a brainstorming session, as staff members pooled their suggestions to gain consensus on what they as a group felt were workable changes and solutions. Smith (2003) noted that feedback is an integral part of organisational learning, and provides a mirror in which to see the organisation in a non-judgmental way and that feedback on a survey is a popular device for decision-making about criteria for intervention.

I planned an hour long session, and approximately an hour and forty five minutes later staff left the room with what I perceived in them as satisfaction with the outcome of the session. Smith (2003) also stated that a workshop was an excellent tool to turn skeptics in willing participants, once they realize that they were in a position to influence and change their organisations for the future by implementing the changes suggested and decided on by them.

### **3.4.4 Leadership Module**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2007 Hugo and I left for Grahamstown where we attended the week long leadership module presented as part of the Rhodes Investec Business Schools MBA programme. The leadership module was an important part of the data gathering process and the knowledge gained during the module gave Hugo an insight into the mistakes he had made in the past, and provided knowledge and valuable experience that facilitated the decision making when it came time to make changes in his leadership style according to the expressed needs of staff members.

Attending the module with Hugo gave me the opportunity to observe his practices as a leader, as he was chosen as the leader of his syndicate group. It also gave me the opportunity to conduct informal interviews with him for the duration of the module. This experience assisted me when interpreting staff members perceptions during the feedback session, as I had an opportunity to discuss and observe Hugo's leadership style during the leadership module and could therefore better understand the statements staff members were making during the feedback sessions. A lot of the data gathered from Hugo's journal also has its origin from his experience during the leadership module.

According to Trevor Amos who presented the module learners on completion of the module would amongst others be able to:

- Have a critical understanding of the definition and meaning of leadership
- Be able to discuss the relevance of leadership within an organisation
- Describe the changing reality in the world and the influence it has on leadership

- Describe the kind of organisation that would be suited to the changing business environment
- Make a comparison between the “old” and “new” business environment and its implications for leadership
- Evaluate the changing role of leadership in the contemporary business environment
- Evaluate the relevance of the traditional thoughts on leadership and determine the applicability to the new paradigm required of leadership
- Evaluate the relevance and value of the current thoughts on leadership approaches and how it applies to the new paradigm required of leadership
- Be more self aware of your own leadership

The topics that were presented by Amos (2007) included:

- Business organisations
- Why leadership
- What is leadership
- What about me
- The new reality, organisations and leadership
- Traditional approaches to leadership
- Strategic leadership
- Contemporary leadership approaches
  - Emotional Intelligence
  - Leadership for results
  - Level 5 leadership
  - Mobilising potential in the workplace
  - Transformational leadership
  - Full Range leadership
- Leadership in practice
- Developing leadership and leaders

Without Hugo having had any previous experience in and MBA classroom setting, working as a leader of a syndicate group or any formal classroom based training on leading others, valuable data was gathered by both Hugo and I during the leadership module. Hugo's experience and lessons learned during the leadership module attendance is described in his own words during the data presentation. (Chapter 4)

### **3.4.5 Personal Documents**

A journal is an excellent data gathering tool, as only the events and feelings that leave an impression on the participant will be documented therein (Babbie and Mouton 2005). I thus also gathered information about the experiences and thoughts of the head of the firm and two departmental heads from journals kept by them throughout the intervention. It contained not only their own reflections but also contained information that they received from staff members. This gave me a better understanding of the impact that the intervention had on the participants (Appendix H).

The leader recorded his experience of the formal training exercise on leadership, and the two department heads on the basis of their positions within the firm, one being the office manager and the other the administration manager. This placed them close to the process and the people involved. The journals were used to gain an insight into the impressions that the process left on them as individuals.

The participants that kept the journals were each given a manuscript book and told to make it their own. The books were intended to be diaries with daily entries, but became journals. The participants did not write every day but rather commented periodically on events that had an impact or left an impression on them.

Both the department heads' journals contained not only their feelings and perceptions of the Action Research Process, but they also elicited these from other staff members (see section 4.3.2). This was not originally asked from the department heads and it signified to me that they wanted to confirm that staff members' feelings and perceptions supported their own. Hugo's journal was a lot more structured but also only written periodically.

Where the department heads spoke openly and freely in their journals, Hugo's was more reserved and described the events factually as they occurred without using emotionally charged words. This seemed to change when he became more involved with the staff members in meetings held as part of the intervention process (see section 4.4.3).

### **3.5 Data analysis**

I analyzed my data through direct interpretation. Interpretive data analysis depends mostly on the researcher's style of thinking, combined with careful consideration of alternative interpretations and then sufficiently presenting the evidence (Yin 1994).

Data gathered from interviews, workshops and diaries were carefully examined to get an impression of perceptions of participants as a whole. To get a global impression of the content the data/information must first be examined and coded. After such an analysis, the core ideas can be presented and discussed by the researcher. The aim was to gather data on participants' actual experiences of the intervention to generate "thick descriptions" (Henning 2004).

### **3.6 Quality Assurance**

Quality was assured by providing participants with feedback on the information gathered from them during the interviews and questionnaires, to ensure that responses from the participants had been accurately recorded. Validation of Participatory Action Research is an exercise that includes all participants in the process. Participants can reflect on the data and in this way the information can be verified or modified/corrected by those who provided the information in the first place (Babbie and Mouton 2006). Stake (1994) compares the process to a play in which the actors are asked to review the material for the play and then to evaluate the accuracy thereof.

By collecting data during various stages of the process, and by using multiple data gathering tools, the trustworthiness of the data was assured. By asking different questions

and viewing data from different points of view while using different methods is the best way to elicit the various divergent constructs of reality (Babbie and Mouton 2006).

The data represents the voices of participants from all levels within the organisation, and it is therefore multiple voices presented in the data to ensure that participants were not forced into coherence. Gergen and Gergen (2000) define using multiple voicing as a tool to extract a rich variety of opinions and interpretations directly from participants, such as the personal journals from which I gathered data. Although this data was interpreted by me and I presented it in my own literary styling, it represents the words of a variety of participants with differing opinions.

It was often difficult for me as the researcher to not interpret the data in a way that would enable me to invent a participant's point of view. I therefore kept a case record so that I could continually refer back to the data to confirm that I had correctly interpreted and presented the voices of the participants.

Being Participatory Action Research the participants were also assured of Social Validation. Babbie and Mouton (2006), state that the entire process of Participatory Action Research entails co-management by the researcher and the participants, and co-ownerships of the research enterprise in general which is reflected in terms of Social Validation.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

The purpose and goal of the research was explained to all participants and the privacy of participants was taken into consideration. The interview process was explained to interviewees and they were informed that they retained the right not to answer questions they did not feel comfortable with. Respondents also retained the right to remain anonymous in answering the questionnaire. Babbie and Mouton (2006) explain that any

given response should not be linked to any given respondent and in this way respondent well-being and interests are protected. These authors also note that although the researcher can link a respondent to particular data he/she undertakes not to do so publicly.

During the workshop feedback session participants were given the option to participate actively in the discussion of the topics extracted from the Productive Practice Survey (Hall 1987) as presented to them, or to write their opinions and suggestions on the feedback form provided, if they chose not to be linked to any particular comment during the session.

### **3.8 Potential Limitations**

A possible limitation to the research was the fact that the leader of the firm is my spouse. The nature of our relationship could therefore have hindered the possibility for trust relationships to form between the participants and myself. However, being a participative action study much of the data was generated in open fora. This potential limitation was also overcome by assuring participants of their anonymity.

Another possible limitation was the fact that I was well known to many of the participants, specifically to the department heads. I however found this to be a positive contribution to the research, opposed to limiting it because of the relaxed atmosphere between myself and them as participants, as well as it eliminating the need for breaking down barriers before being able to collect sufficient data from the interviews I had with them.

## Chapter 4

### Data Presentation and Discussion

*“The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor. That sums up the progress of an artful leader” (DePREE, 1998)*

#### 4.1 Introduction:

In this chapter the data that I gathered through the questionnaire results, interviews, personal journals and input obtained through a feedback session after the questionnaire is presented and discussed. A Number of themes were identified and in this section they are presented in terms of my research question and research goals namely facilitating the change in leadership style within a law firm through participation and documentation of the respondents’ experience and perceptions of the process and the outcome of the intervention. Data is discussed throughout the presentation thereof due to the richness of the data gathered.

##### 4.1.1 Pre-Intervention:

The leader in the case Hugo Daniels attended a Leadership Module at Rhodes Investec Business School and data here was obtained from his personal journal of the experience and marks obtained for passing the module. Hereafter general staff members completed a survey that revealed their perception of the current leadership style used and feedback was given during a feedback session to obtain further data on what staff would value in a leader and changes they would see as solutions to the dissatisfaction that they had with the current leadership style in the firm. Interviews were conducted with three heads of department to obtain their view of Hugo’s leadership style.

##### 4.1.2 During and Post- Intervention:

Two of the heads of department and the leader in the case Hugo kept personal journals of their experiences during the action research. This data is presented and discussed in chapter five.

The sequence of events in the data gathering process is first clarified, and thereafter the data is presented under themes constructed from the data analysis:

#### **4.2 Steps of the Research Process:**

It was important that Hugo received training as part of the leadership development programme, in order to allow him to gain knowledge into the subject of leadership and to prepare him for the possible changes that would have to take place.

Simultaneously The Productive Practice Survey (Hall 1987) was used as the first step to determine the perceptions that staff had about the current leadership style, and what the desired leadership was. The data gathered from this was mainly used to find points for discussions during the feedback session. The feedback session was then held where the data gathered was fed back to staff members and they were given the opportunity to both discuss the data and suggest possible solutions (Appendix I). Staff members were also given the option to write suggestions directly onto the feedback form handed out to them during the feedback session should they have chosen to remain anonymous in their suggestions.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2006) a feedback session can be used to gather information by observing the interaction on a topic from a large group. The opinions of staff members gathered from The Productive Practice Survey (Hall, J. 1987) was used to facilitate conversation in the group for data gathering as well as to gather suggestions from staff members on the changes they thought would result in a positive outcome to the intervention. Babbie and Mouton (2006) state that during these conversations a process of shaping and reshaping of opinions is made possible by a group that creates meaning together rather than as individuals.

Although the possible solutions that staff members suggested such as open communication channels, participation in decision making, and healthy working relationships with the leader were small wins, they represented the needs of the staff members. Daft (2005) state that short-term wins are important during the change process,

as a transformation process can easily lose momentum when staff members cannot see improvements that they can celebrate. According to Santos (1991) participants to the Participatory Action Research should be involved in the identification of the problems, analyzing it, and finding the solutions that they feel are workable and needed.

Hugo then received feedback on the feedback session with the suggestions for changes that staff members made. The changes that were implemented are the following:

1. Hugo allowed staff members to approach him at any time during the day to discuss work or personal problems. He also encouraged staff members to make suggestions for their own individual as well as departmental tasks.
2. Several meetings with staff members were set up on weekly basis. This included a general staff meeting where all members of the firm were present and could discuss problems and progress of the organisation as a whole, as well as make suggestions freely. The staff members described these meetings as characterised by openness and fun and was expressed in the same way by Hugo during the interviews and from personal documents. Weekly departmental meetings were also introduced, where staff members got the opportunity to discuss departmental targets and problems and to collectively find solutions. Hugo participated in these meetings, which also gave him the opportunity to better understand the way each department functioned.
3. A suggestion box was provided at the request of staff members in which they could place suggestions and voice opinions that were then read and discussed during the meetings described above.
4. Hugo also introduced a one-on-one meeting with each staff member, with the intention of having these meetings on a monthly basis. This was done to fulfill the need that staff members had to be recognized individually, to build relationships with Hugo, and to give them the opportunity to discuss matters with Hugo that they did not wish to discuss openly during general or departmental staff meetings.
5. Rewards were introduced for achieving targets, and staff members were recognised individually during meetings, as a reward for achieving personal goals.

6. A social gathering was held to build the relationships within the firm further and was also seen as a celebration of the changes that had been achieved.

The richest data on the changes came from the personal journals of Miss Malan and Mrs. Nesbit, the two Department Heads, as they were able to observe the changes in staff members' perception of Hugo and the changes in the morale and attitudes, after each change had been implemented during the intervention process. Their journals also contained the general feelings of staff members after the intervention process.

## **4.3 Pre-Intervention**

### **4.3.1 Uncertainty**

It was evident from the data that staff members were uncertain about the changes that were about to take place when the research process was explained to them and Hugo announced that he would be attending a leadership course. Mrs. Nesbit explained her feelings of uncertainty in her personal journal.

Yesterday Hugo addressed the staff regarding his "efforts" for improvement. While listening to him I kept thinking to myself I hope that this process is really going to change things. I have been skeptical from the start because I think that some things are at "the point of no return", but his commitment seems genuine and when I heard that he would be taking a whole week off from work to receive proper leadership training I became more open to the idea.

Kotter (1999) notes that even positive changes that will have a good outcome for the people involved can cause uncertainty and resistance. It is the feeling of loss of the known and moving into the unknown that causes this resistance. It is of course not really the organisation that changes but the people within the organisation that need to change (Bruce and Wyman, 1998). It was necessary for Hugo to change, but it was as important that the rest of the staff members undergo certain changes in their perceptions of him as a leader and be as committed as he was to the process.

Hugo returned to work today for the first time since his training. He greeted the staff in general this morning, and a number of staff commented on it positively. Our interviews to discuss our perception of Hugo and the firm are scheduled for later this afternoon, and other members of staff have completed a questionnaire that apparently had the same purpose, and I am not sure that a simple greeting this morning would be enough to change their minds.

Probing questions are questions presented with a certain outcome or result already in the mind of the researcher (Bruce and Wyman 1998). Mrs. Nesbit was correct in her assessment of staff members' feelings on completion of the questionnaire, as a very negative perception of Hugo and the firm. Bruce and Wyman (1998) state that the information gathered through questionnaires or interviews is important for understanding the current situation in an organisation, and to determine the actions that needed to be taken during the action research intervention process.

Mrs. Nesbit also explain in her journal that, even after having the opportunity to make suggestions and give feedback in the questionnaires and feedback session, staff members still felt uncertain about the outcome of the Action Research Process.

The staff had their session this afternoon and when they returned I asked them what suggestions they had made and what was the general office feelings that came out of the questionnaire. They all said that they were honest and it was nice to be able to make suggestions for changes but that they aren't going to get too excited that their suggestions will be used.

- One staff member felt that the change sounded good but either way she was scared of Hugo and tries to avoid him at all cost.

The survey and the feedback session were held at a time when staff members still felt despondent and de-motivated. According to Robbins (2005), the emotions of staff members when receiving any kind of communication would influence how they

interpreted it, and it was therefore understandable that, in this instance, staff members did not immediately jump for joy when given the news of the intended changes.

Miss Malan also mentioned the uncertainty her staff members had that the outcome of the Participatory Action Research Process would be successful.

When I was asked to keep this journal I decided that I would also keep it for my staff members' attitudes and feelings through this. Today Hugo made an announcement saying that he would be going to Grahamstown for a week to attend a leadership course and that he is doing this to try and change the way in which he is managing the office. He mentioned that he wanted to try and make the working environment a better place and to improve his leadership skills. I am going to have a meeting with my department to ask what they think of the announcement.

After the Miss Nesbit held the meeting with her staff members she described their feelings as follows.

A meeting was held with my department yesterday regarding Hugo's announcement and they all have very mixed feelings about this.

- One staff member said that it did not affect her at all as she never spoke to Hugo and changes would not mean anything to her.
- A second staff member felt that if the course he is attending can really help the situation in the office it would be a good thing.
- All the staff members agreed that Hugo had no appreciation for their work and that Hugo had no idea how hard they work to achieve their goals, they feel one-on-one appreciation is required.

I really hope that this whole thing doesn't "blow up in our faces" because there is now an expectation after his announcement yesterday that things are going to change. The staff got an opportunity later yesterday afternoon to voice their

opinions of Hugo's leadership style in a questionnaire and they all agreed afterwards that it made them feel good to just get their opinion out.

It was important that Hugo expressed his intention to change to staff members and to communicate the possible outcomes of the change to them. This however did not create immediate excitement or a change in attitude in staff as is evident from the comments made to Miss Malan recorded above. Kotter (1999) says that individuals might have negative feelings towards change because they realize that change would mean that new behaviours and relationships would have to be built. It could also mean having to give up certain activities and relationships that they were familiar and comfortable with. The author continues that people also do not like to admit that their previous beliefs and perceptions and the decisions made based on these, were wrong.

#### **4.3.2 Lessons learned**

Hugo gained a lot of knowledge and understanding during his attendance of the leadership course. He describes this experience in the journal he kept.

When Tania first told me the theme of her thesis I was excited as I knew that my firm was in desperate need of help. Although I thought I was doing everything right in terms of leading this firm, I was also aware that staff had become demotivated over the past year. I became more dedicated to the staff that actually did what they were told and achieved the results I was after and on the other hand I was uninterested in staff that were not motivated and that did not produce the results I was after.

My excitement soon made way for a feeling of disillusionment once I attended the MBA course on Leadership. My impression was that students doing an MBA are all committed, in the same way that I believed that a staff salary automatically "buys" commitment. My disillusionment soon made way for feelings of frustration and anger during the week long course. I was in a group with 3 other students and it became apparent at the first syndicate meeting that working in a

group was something I wasn't good at, especially in accepting that all teams don't function perfectly and some members' self-motivation is better and they work harder than others, causing a very frustrating situation for those that work hard and have to carry those that aren't committed.

The training, although frustrating, created a simulated organisation in which Hugo was not the leader, but had to work as a part of a team. This provided him with a better understanding of what subordinates feels when being led, and how they would prefer to be led. According to Phillips and Schmidt (2004), development that includes feedback, challenging experiences, formal developmental relationships and leadership education or training, are all effective ways in which to develop a leader. All these learning experiences have the ability to change the behaviour of a leader. While attending the leadership and working as part of a syndicate, Hugo experienced the entire range of these development exercises.

My background, from being a director in a large firm telling staff members what to do and when to have it done did not help, as these syndicate group members did not work for me and were not paid to do as I told them. Through this experience I did get an opportunity to understand some of the dynamics of a group working on equal level and the frustrations that my staff has to deal with working with de-motivated colleagues. I also started to realize during this week that people work harder when motivated and inspired opposed to being forced and told what to do.

The start of the process was frustrating for Hugo because his perception had been that he was "doing everything right". The realisation that he hadn't been doing everything right only came after he had completed the leadership course, when he was able to reflect on the current thoughts on leadership in contrast to the style he had been practicing. Studying leadership can equip a leader with new skills and help him better understand how to practice leadership in everyday life (Daft 2005). He states that many people never deviate in the way they lead because they have no understanding of leadership. Phillips

and Schmidt (2004) state that the more traditional classroom-based development is important and successful when partnered with action learning. From Hugo's diary again:

Although I experienced a lot of frustration during this week, I also learned a lot about leadership and maybe more importantly, learned a lot about the practicalities of leadership and the results that can be achieved by effective leadership. Leaving the module I believed that my leadership style did not have to be set in stone, but that I could draw from all the different leadership styles depending on the needs of staff and the situation.

Mrs. Nesbit was concerned that staff would expect changes in Hugo's leadership style he would not be able to make. She expressed this in her journal thus:

Today was the staff's session to receive feedback on the questionnaires they completed. They all seemed excited for it to start and I heard a lot of talk on what suggestions they would make for improvement. I hope that they realize that Hugo changing doesn't give them free reins to become demanding and that they will still be expected to work hard if not harder. I believe that Hugo has learned a lot and that he has realised that he needs to make some changes, because he mentioned it to me in his office yesterday, but I don't think that he will ever drop his standards. The heads of departments were not "invited" to the sessions as Tania feared that staff would not feel that they can be open and honest with us around, so we will only find out later what is going to happen next. Strangely enough I am excited about it.

The general perceptions of staff members articulated in questionnaires were fleshed in the feedback session. According to Bruce and Wyman (1998) feedback creates an opportunity for learning and increasing effectiveness of an operation through evaluation of staff member's feelings and comments.

Hugo's participation in the leadership module was, however, only the start to the process. The following themes (categories of concern) were drawn from the interviews with the department heads, the questionnaires, the feedback session and the interviews that followed, together with journals of the two department heads. These made it clear that staff members were not content with the current leadership style that Hugo was practicing. The first theme relates to communication and was mostly referred to by staff members as "the open door policy".

### **4.3.3 Closed door for communication**

In the interviews with the department heads this was a reoccurring theme. All three department heads felt that Hugo always said that he had an open door policy but that they felt it wasn't true. When one of the participants was asked what she thought about Hugo's leadership, she made her disbelief of the open door policy very clear.

Hugo's open door policy was a good idea as a concept, but it hasn't been practiced, and therefore feels as though it was just said to make staff feel welcome to discuss problems with him. "Hugo's door is very much closed" It is often very difficult to even get an appointment to get to talk to him about important issues and therefore we do not even consider trying to make use of his so-called open door policy to discuss the everyday running of the office. "Just the fact that I had to use the word appointment should highlight the fact that this open door policy is a myth".

]

Puth (2002) emphasizes the importance of open communication channels between a leader and staff members because communication is also linked to trust. When followers aren't allowed into the thoughts and feelings of their leader they feel or sense that there are things that aren't being communicated, which will lead to distrust. The fact that staff members had to make an appointment—that was sometimes ignored—or having to wait for some time before being able to see Hugo at the end of the day, made staff feel unimportant.

She was not the only head of department that mentioned that Hugo didn't practice an open door policy. Another head of department also mentioned this when presented with an open-ended question on Hugo's leadership style.

It is a general problem that Hugo is never available, even though "he insists that his door is always open". We have to make an appointment, which gets postponed most times and "is even occasionally ignored". I am struggling to believe that this would ever change, even through the process that you are planning, because Hugo has had specific hours "which was a measly hour at the very end of the day" in which we could see him before this so called open door policy was introduced. This has been a problem for the last three years and I feel that even though the "so-called open door policy is a step up from being allocated an hour of a day to speak to him, it is only a mask for being more available and not a reality".

Charan (2002) states that when a leader says anything that is not entirely true, it makes staff believe that they are dealing with someone whose words and actions aren't aligned. Charan also explains that, in contrast to this, decisive and open dialogue between a leader and staff members encourages creativity and coherence and brings possible conflict and tensions to the surface, which allows for immediate and direct solutions.

At a later stage of the process this head of department explained to me that the use of the word 'mask' is one of her favourites, when referring to any of the things that Hugo supposedly implements to solve the problems that staff has, because it is often just masking the problem, not solving it. This was the case with Hugo's open door policy.

As with both the heads of department, the third also expressed her grievances with Hugo's open door policy. She asked me to use capital letters when I present their feelings that Hugo had no open door policy at all.

Hugo's door is never open at all: "it is not physically open and the concept of the policy to be available at all times is non-existent"! I find the fact that we have to make an appointment every time we want to see him a problem as it is frustrating and "we sometimes have to wait quite a length of time before we are allowed to go in". If his door is physically open all the time and only physically closed occasionally we would learn that a closed door means that privacy is required.

Daft (2005) again: face to face communication is the best channel of communication that a leader can choose, as it allows direct experience to come to play, provides easy discussion cues, rich information and immediate feedback, with the focus on the other person. It also enables a leader to read the non-verbal communication indicators that might allude to the feelings of the other person. Before the process of intervention Hugo rarely communicated with his staff on face-to-face bases. Information was communicated to staff through the heads of departments. This led to frustration and a lack of communication between him and his staff.

The questionnaire completed by the general staff members also revealed staff's discontent with the open door policy (Appendix E). Seventeen of the 23 general staff members felt that Hugo's door was not open to staff to discuss work related problems.

"Hugo can be in your face twenty four seven about what you are doing wrong, but only call you into his office once in five months and ask you how your work is going or what problems you are experiencing", one respondent said. "Hugo's door is rarely open for work-related problems, and shut closed for personal ones" another felt. "Staff do not feel free to go to Hugo to discuss anything; he says he does, but he doesn't really have an open door policy" yet another respondent stated. "I have only seen the inside of Hugo's office once" a respondent added "Hugo doesn't seem to have the time to listen to our problems or our suggestions for solutions because his office door is always closed" a staff member wrote.

By creating a perception of superiority by closing communication channels with staff members, a leader invalidates them and creates the feeling that they are inadequate, incompetent or impotent, and therefore their suggestions or problems aren't worthy of the leader's time (Puth 2002). The lack of communication between Hugo and staff members also meant that there was a lack of participation within the firm. Staff members expressed their discontentment with decisions made by Hugo, communicated to general staff members through the department heads, without allowing for any suggestions from staff members in the decision making process.

#### **4.3.4 Lack of participation**

Participation was another of the very clear themes that came out of both the interviews and surveys, and was regularly brought up by staff during the feedback session. From the interviews it was evident that the heads of departments felt that participation was absent.

The one thing that fits into my definition of a leader and is one of the main things that I feel is lacking in the office, is active participation in the running of the office. "I feel that Hugo comes a bit short in his leadership style because he is more authoritative rather than participative". The problem with participation is that it is a double-edged sword. Hugo doesn't allow staff to participate in decision-making but in turn does not participate in enforcing the decisions that he has made. Not allowing for participation in decision-making is a problem because "grounded participative" staff sometimes see important things that could help with decision-making that Hugo didn't because he did not allow them to participate in any decision-making.

This particular participant later explained that her definition of "grounded participative staff" would be all staff members participating on a daily basis towards reaching the goals that Hugo had set, the word grounded referring to the fact that decisions come from the top and have to be implemented without questions at the bottom or ground level of the firm. Another head of department supported these statements in her interview.

Hugo needs to be more available and partake in the daily running of the business “and not just wait for month-end reports to use for decision-making”. The month end reports do provide a good basis for decision-making from one month to the next, but staff should be allowed to participate by explaining how they arrived at the figures on the reports and why certain things reflect in either a negative or positive way, which would allow for even better decision-making. In turn Hugo should then also try to better understand how staff members are involved in each task which generates the month-end reports. “That is essentially what participation is about in my mind: we participate in management functions such as decision-making and they participate with us in the general running of the office”.

Hickman (1998) emphasizes that allowing participation is directly linked to empowering staff members. By increasing workers’ participation in decision-making will increase their ownership of the tasks before them, and in this way empower them. Charlton (1993) states that it is the responsibility of the leader to liberate followers so that their tasks become meaningful, and their position changes from merely working for their salaries to living for their work.

The interview held with the third department head showed how strongly she felt about participation: she used the word “craving” to describe how desperately participation was needed.

Hugo does not get involved with staff at all and prefers them not to attempt to get involved in what he deems is his territory as decision maker. “I feel that he tries to work through us as the heads of departments to reach staff and in his mind this is more than enough participation”.

According to Guest (cited in Cooper 2003), employee relationships with each other and the leader will benefit from practicing a more participative leadership style. Kelly (also cited in Cooper 2003) adds that this is due to follower commitment that increases when employees are allowed a choice to participate. Staff members at the firm had no choice in

any of the decisions made that affected them and felt like mere “pen pushers” as one participant stated and therefore their commitment to their work and the firm with Hugo as the leader had waned.

But getting staff motivated is difficult when they feel no involvement in decisions that affect them, and when they don’t feel that Hugo is part of enforcing the “action plans that he solely decides on”.

Puth (2002) describe the benefits of group participation during decision making as the ability that a diverse group has to effectively solve problems with additional knowledge and skills that they bring to the process. When individuals are involved in making decisions they are also generally more committed to these decisions than when they are handed down from the top, without any participation from staff.

“What is needed is to make everyone part of the bigger picture and giving us each a crayon to help colour in and make it our masterpiece, and not someone else’s picture we look at on the wall”.

Daft (2005) states that empowering employees facilitates physiological commitment because employee’s actions are then more like those of co-owners rather than employees. The need for this kind of empowerment in the law firm in this study is powerfully illustrated by a head of department asking to “be given a crayon to help colour in”.

The questionnaire and the feedback discussion also revealed the general staff’s feelings on the theme of participation.

One staff member mentioned that Hugo should be supportive of the suggestions that staff members have, especially around decision-making, but because he never seems to have time to participate with them in meetings he never gets to hear their suggestions. Another staff member stated, “It would be a new day in our lives to see Hugo participating in our staff meeting”. This was supported by a colleague

who said, "Staff should be allowed to make more suggestions and be part of the decision-making that affects us".

It is important that a leader be led by the needs of his staff when making decisions (Useem 2001). This author describes it as a process of letting go of all self-interest when making decisions that would ultimately affect all members of staff.

"Hugo should not make decisions that he simply discusses with heads of departments and then just expect implementation, we should be asked to participate", a staff member felt. "Staff are always kept in the dark", yet another respondent said. .

According to Daft (1999) leadership is shared by the leader and staff members, and all needs to be involved and share responsibility.

It was also felt by a staff member that they would at times know of better ways in which their work could be performed more effectively, and if Hugo would just allow some participation and listen to these suggestions the relationship between staff and management would become much less stressful.

Bernick (2002) emphasizes the importance of participation in creating a sense of urgency in achieving the goals of the organisation. He says that people need to feel a sense of ownership before urgency is realized, and staff members become willing to be creative and take risks. Staff members in the firm confirmed in expressing the need for their suggestions to be heard, and not wanting to only be implementers of decisions from the top

It became evident that the general staff interpreted participation mainly as being allowed to be part of decision-making, and Hugo being part of staff meetings. This would be a first step towards implementing a more participative culture and leadership style.

“He must be like a part of us in everything we do” was one staff member’s suggestion. Another staff member expressed her dissatisfaction with the lack of participation allowed by saying, “what is the use of working here when we are never asked our opinion or whether we are happy with our work, the firm’s directions or on any decisions made, we are then merely pen pushers and pawns”.

Unlike the fear that Mrs. Nesbit had that staff members would expect that standards be dropped and less pressure would be placed on them, staff members expressed their hope to become more involved. It is important that staff members change their attitudes and work behavior once change has been decided on, in order for the change process to be successful (Puth 2002). Puth also explains the importance of leading the change initially to obtain short term gains. All staff members in the law firm were excited about the change process and willing to participate. Hugo as the leader of the firm, realizing that he had to change the way in which he lead the organisation, was also committed to the process. Kotter (1999) says that when a leader needs commitment, information or knowledge and skills in the process of implementing decisions, involving staff in that process makes good sense. The author emphasizes that participation always leads to commitment opposed to only compliance. From the feedback session again:

One participant stated that she had never seen Hugo speaking to a staff member except her head of department. This was supported by a colleague who said that the only time general staff members were involved was when they were reprimanded for not properly implementing decisions made by management.

Another respondent felt that the lack of personal contact between Hugo and staff and the lack of trust resulting from this was cause of the lack of participation:

“I think that if he could make the time to get to know staff by meeting with them just once a week there would be more trust in us and our suggestions would be taken more seriously. Without us knowing him or him knowing us we can never

wish to be allowed to participate in the running of the office because our abilities aren't known".

The comment above leads to the discussion about the next theme that came out of the data. This staff member was not the only one that mentioned the lack of mutual trust in the firm.

#### **4.3.5 Absence of trust and good relationships**

I also came to understand that staff felt that lack of trust was another of the problems they experienced with the firm's current leadership style. All respondents believed trust to be important and valued it in a leader. One of the heads of department also stated that the continuous changes that Hugo decided on without asking for staff input was causing a lack of trust: staff never knew which decisions to take seriously when they would almost certainly be changed a day later.

The staff has recently started wanting to hear about decisions made directly from Hugo, because they don't trust their heads of departments anymore, as a direct result of their lack of trust in Hugo.

In the next interview, with another head of department, it became clear that honesty and trust were being used interchangeably to describe the impact that the lack of trust had.

"Hugo tries sometimes to tell people what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear, just to silence them". I think that an open honest response would be better for changing staff's perception of him, rather than telling them what they want to hear with the wrong intentions that will just further hurt their trust. We all realize that when he allows us as the heads of departments to make suggestions it is only to make us feel that "our" suggestions have been heard and that "our" suggestions will be considered in decision making "we are bright enough however to know that this will not happen and it causes distrust between the heads of department and Hugo".

The third head of department thought that Hugo was sincere in his enthusiasm towards suggestions from other sources, but his enthusiasm was short lived and was then misinterpreted as him never planning on using the suggestions in the first place which in turn caused distrust.

He tends to start on a “project” suggested by the heads of department with enthusiasm and a genuine interest in implementation but loses interest along the way and makes us feel that he cannot be trusted with our good ideas, opinions and suggestions as they will never be more than that. An important reason given by most members of staff including the heads of departments for their distrust in Hugo was a lack of actions on plans and promises.

Charlton (1993), states that one of the most difficult challenges that faces a leader is following intentions with sustainable actions.

“ I value a leader with integrity and honesty that provides genuine feedback and can be trusted to do what he says he will, and if Hugo wants to become such a leader he will have to start following through with the implementation of plans”.

According to Madi (2000) it is important that a leader faces his staff members personally when problems arise and to not hide behind e-mails or memos. It will cause distrust when followers feel that you speak words only, that aren't backed with actions.

It seemed that this head of department felt strongly about Hugo never saying something was a good idea and promising to use it. Unless there was a genuine commitment to support it and follow it through, a lack of trust would be a direct result.

When asked to clarify she said that for her actions spoke louder than words, and when a person is not able to put spoken promises into actions they cannot be trusted.

The same theme presented itself in the Productive Practice Survey (1987) (questionnaire), in the feedback session as well as in a journal entry from Miss Malan's diary after Hugo's return from Grahamstown. She wrote how she tried to encourage staff members to give Hugo a chance, as staff members did not seem to believe that the changes he was trying to make during the Participatory Action Research process would last.

After Hugo returned he spoke to staff himself which was already better than the usual heads of departments meeting that is followed by us having to tell staff what Hugo said. He told them that they could be honest with him about suggestions for changes, or be honest during the feedback session for them as general staff members at the end of the week. Everybody was quiet and nobody made any suggestion. I feel that they don't trust this to be real or that they aren't use to it, so therefore everyone might have been too shocked to say anything. I told them that they need to give Hugo a chance to see what happens and realise that people learn as they go.

The results of the survey, and discussions in the feedback session that followed, revealed how deeply staff members' feelings of distrust ran.

One staff member said during the feedback session "How can we learn to trust him if he barely greets staff, the heads of departments uses him as a monster to get us to listen to them and since childhood I was taught never to trust monsters".

Daft (1999) emphasises that leadership is not automatic and that untrustworthiness is one of the top seven reasons why leaders fail.

Another member of general staff wrote on the feedback form that he needed to be open with staff on how the company is doing and that his promises about increases and bonuses just to silence staff are causing distrust. A colleague added during the feedback session that if Hugo was more involved with staff and answered their questions directly, the perception that promises made from the top

are never kept would change, as staff would better understand the reasons.

Follow-up was also mentioned by another staff member in this session as a reason for distrust, stating that if Hugo never followed up with staff on promises made and personally explain the reasons for delays, the distrust would continue.

It became clear in the feedback session that Hugo had made promises of bonuses and increases that did not happen in the timeframe that staff had hoped for, and that this resulted in the reoccurring theme of promises not kept as a definition of general staffs' reasons for distrust.

“It maybe should not be called trust, it is just that he makes promises that he doesn't keep. Now that I think about it, it is trust; we can't trust somebody that can't keep a promise” a staff member said during the feedback session. A colleague added “this is true” he must keep his word and try his very best to provide staff with feedback when he realizes that a promise made won't materialize.

Robbins (2005) defines trust as a positive expectation that another will not act in self-interest in his actions, words or decisions. The positive expectation element in the definition also assumes that the person whom you trust is known and familiar to you. This supports staff members' comments that they couldn't begin to build a trust relationship with Hugo without knowing anything about him. Robbins also states that there is risk involved and in trusting someone a person become vulnerable if a leader then acts opportunistically and in self-interest. Hugo's staff wanted to believe that he wasn't acting opportunistically when promises made to them weren't kept, but because they didn't know him and he didn't give them personal feedback on the progress towards putting the promises into actions, they didn't trust this instinct but rather opted for distrust.

A staff member said that empty promises can cause a lack of commitment and the building of trust should be taken serious by management. Another staff

member felt strongly about keeping promises as a way in which one earns trust and said during the feedback session, “Hugo can never expect to be a great leader if he cannot be trusted by staff to keep promises he makes to them”.

Kotter (1999) states that when staff members feel that they are not being treated fairly or think that they are being lied to, they will respond in a negative way and not opt to remain positive, despite the fact that they cannot prove that they are being lied to.

General staff members that were able to move beyond the theme of promises to be kept as a requirement for trust felt that one had to know someone in order to trust them.

“Well we can’t trust him or have confidence in him because we never really see him or he us. He is always behind the closed door in his office and mostly heads of departments get to go into his office” a staff member said. She also stated that it seems as though the heads of department trust Hugo more than the general staff do, and she believed it to be because they know him better. Another staff member added that Hugo getting to know them as individuals was also important to staff, as she believes that trust is mutual and management and staff should be able to trust each other. “If Hugo can’t trust us to complete our tasks in a way that will make the firm profitable and we can’t trust him to do what he tells the heads of departments he will, there can never be a mutual trust relationship, and getting to know each other better will allow for this”.

Staff members also mentioned that they have not been able to prove to Hugo that they can be trusted and therefore there is also a lack of mutual trust in the firm with Hugo finding it hard to let go of authority as he feels he cannot trust certain decision and tasks to be handled effectively by his members of staff.

Kotter (1999) states that few things are more disabling, than a leader not being able to depend on his members of staff because he cannot trust their work. Bernick (2002) is of the opinion that once the issue of trust is out of the way and management stops holding

all the cards to their chests instead put them on the table, people will become more involved and excited about challenges, which will in turn ensure work quality.

There was truth to this statement for another staff member that responded by saying “I believe you are right” if we really got to know Hugo better we would perhaps realize that what we sometimes perceive as excuses are actually reasons and that our distrust is not deserved.

Creating a partnership with followers will ask absolute honesty from a leader (Dubrin 2001). When the truth is not told at all times it will be seen as a betrayal and the leader’s power will be distrusted. The staff members in the firm want to participate in the organisation and therefore wanted to be in a partnership with Hugo, but the issue of distrust had inhibited this in the past. Dubrin also states that one benefit of participation is that it facilitates building trust relationships, as distributed power makes staff members feel less vulnerable.

Staff members also seemed to feel that Hugo could not be trusted to always be fair. My study showed that staff members wanted to be recognized and rewarded for their efforts in the firm and that they wanted it to be a fair process when someone is chosen to be recognized.

#### **4.3.6 The need for fairness, recognition and rewards**

As with most staff members in any organisation, fairness, recognition and reward were clearly important issues for the staff of the law firm. These three themes are grouped together, as staff members used them interchangeably to describe their experience and perception of these in the firm. From the heads of departments’ perspectives it was once again as with the case of the social context discussed earlier, a plea for the general staff members rather than for themselves, as they were at the time the ears for staff’s feelings about these issues.

I think that a true leader gives recognition and rewards to those who achieve and by doing this allows other leaders to emerge. "I think Hugo gives recognition where he thinks it is needed and not where it is deserved". Recognition is really a key factor in every aspect of life where there is a human factor. "We all need a pat on the back and a 'well done' every so often". For me having my efforts recognized is a reward in itself, and I am lucky enough to be a head of department because I do think that Hugo realizes in order to motivate us he needs to recognize and reward our efforts, and he wants to because once we are demotivated it will mean that he has to "deal" with the general staff members, "something he has no idea how to do at this stage". Unfortunately it is a bit unfair to general staff members, because they are not treated the same way as the heads of departments, and there are even "distinctions" made between different heads of departments.

According to Robbins (2005) a leader is able to inspire followers to commit themselves, because he has the ability to reward the commitment, and compliance, with something that others view as valuable. One department head said that she felt valued and rewarded enough when Hugo recognized the work she had done. There is a relationship between reward and personal goals, which can be defined as the attractiveness and degree of satisfaction with which organisations reward the personal goals and needs of an individual. It can therefore also be understood why recognition by means of expressing appreciation was enough for some staff members, while others felt they needed tangible rewards in order to feel appreciated.

When asked what she meant by these distinctions she said that Hugo is prone to practice favouritism.

From the second head of department's interview this was confirmed.

Hugo is only interested in results, "no excuses, don't want to hear it, get it done!" Recognition and rewards are needed when the result he is interested in is achieved

or else staff will feel unappreciated and become de-motivated. But recognition in the firm is “non-existent, except if you happen to be one of Hugo’s favourites”. “A good leader is enthusiastic about their work and thus inspires and motivates others”, I feel that Hugo only knows how to be enthusiastic about results not about motivating staff through recognition and rewards. Recognition and rewards to staff is “vital” for their motivation, and it should therefore also be important to Hugo because without its staff “a business is lost”.

During the interview with the third department head, she expressed her view of fairness and how, in her opinion, it is linked to recognition and reward.

Staff want approval for what they achieve and they want this approval directly from Hugo not from us as the heads of departments. “I feel that Hugo needs to treat all staff members exactly the same when recognising their achievements” if he can reward the heads of departments for their department’s achievements, he must be able to do it for the entire staff, because we cannot achieve without them.

The general staff members’ feelings concerning rewards were also evident as a concern and were fleshed out during the feedback session.

“Big rewards will be nice, but a simple thank you as a show of appreciation is already better than nothing”, one staff member said. Another staff member said that Hugo is aware of every project that takes place as he is the one that drives them, so he should know the efforts that are needed to complete them. “When the projects are done he should call each individual and just thank them or congratulate them on work well done”. A coworker built on this by saying that recognition of hard work even without reward still encourages staff to keep working hard because they then know it doesn’t go unnoticed. “I feel that he respects and appreciates us because he really is a good person, but some people need to hear that they are appreciated before they feel appreciated”, another staff member said. The opinion of yet another was that staff, “really put their

everything” into getting their work up to the standard that Hugo expects, but without acknowledgement of their efforts, interest in doing it begins to wane.

Some general staff members felt that recognition must be followed with rewards if they had gone beyond the call of duty in completing tasks.

“To tell staff he appreciates their efforts will be great, and if they have gone that extra mile to prove themselves it would be even better if he could go the extra mile to show his appreciation”. When asked what her definition of the extra mile for Hugo would be she said, “an afternoon off or buying the staff that went the extra mile lunch would be nice”. Another member of staff said that incentive bonuses were a “nicer” reward in his opinion, and if it was linked to department’s performances it would also promote teamwork and healthy competition between the different departments in the firm.

Bernick (2002) states that achievements have to be celebrated, especially results that were achieved when expectations were high. When an effort is recognized and openly rewarded it gets noticed by others who then attempt the same standard in order to receive recognition. The staff member that suggested departmental targets was right in saying that it would create healthy competition, because Bernick (2002) confirms that dedication to achieve can be sparked by rewards.

A staff member from the same department agreed with her coworkers and said “that would address fairness too, because we will then be judged on our work quality and not on how much we are liked by Hugo or our head of department”. To this statement another staff member responded strongly by saying that using the word “fair” is very appropriate as it is “only fair that Hugo at least gives us something in return for all the hard work, even if it is just a thank you”. All staff members agreed and words such as ‘appreciate’ ‘thank you’, ‘personal recognition’ and ‘an incentive scheme’ were often used in describing how much more motivated they would be if these were a part of the firm.

Cooper (2003) explains that because people will always have needs it is important to understand follower needs in order to manage relationships within an organisation. Because Hugo's staff members had a need for recognition of their efforts, they perceived Hugo as being unappreciative of their efforts and hard work. Cooper also says that everyone has the need for appreciation and recognition, and if this need is fulfilled it would lead to greater self-esteem, that in turn will lead to greater strength and capabilities. The author also explains that people need a lot more from work than money, but if they cannot fulfill these needs at work they would get a sense of worth for themselves in monetary value. This statement explains the emphasis that staff members placed on bonuses and salary increases before the intervention, as they used it as a surrogate to compensate for the dissatisfaction they felt due to the lack of recognition for their efforts.

While many staff members said in the section on recognition and rewards that they needed a 'thank you' from Hugo, another theme that presented itself showed that not only did they want to hear a 'thank you' from him personally, but they also longed to be able to build healthy working relationships with him.

#### **4.3.7 Ineffective social context, relationships and teamwork**

It became evident that the behavior that creates a social climate that can be characterised by the openness and fun that would enhance interpersonal trust—already identified as a clear problem—was not felt to be present in Hugo's leadership style. In the interviews with heads of departments they expressed this need, for the sake of general staff members rather than for themselves, as they had had the opportunity to get to know Hugo on a more personal level. This was something they felt general staff members had never been afforded.

Hugo needs to win his staff's trust. On occasions I don't even feel as if I know all the facts but because I know Hugo not only as my leader but also as a friend I trust that the facts I don't know aren't relevant to me, and that Hugo would not withhold them from me if in doing so he would harm our relationship.

It would help if staff could also get to know Hugo in this way, but “without behavior from his side that can promote teamwork and fun and a community feeling, I fear this will never happen”. If Hugo could make some time for staff and get to know them on a personal level, they will feel that he is interested, and some interest in them as individuals could go a long way in changing their perceptions of him.

Kotter (1999) writes that managing relationships within the working environment is very important, and during this process it has to be realized that these relationships are of mutual dependence between fallible human beings. He also states that an understanding is needed for managing working relationship, and this understanding can only be created when both the strengths and weaknesses of the other is appreciated.

During the interview with a second head of department the high staff turnover was thought to be as a result of the lack of teamwork and social interactions between members of staff and Hugo as a leader.

“I once read that people don’t work for a company they work for a leader, and in our firm this just isn’t the case”. People cannot be committed to a leader that they hardly know and just expects the work to get done. I don’t think staff will ever be committed to the firm as they are constantly looking for positions in other places were they can feel a sense of “belonging, purpose and being part of a team”. Although Hugo will never believe this, he believes that staff leave the firm only in search of more money. It is however true, as staff aren’t even allowed to spend a few moments talking to each other without Hugo asking if there isn’t work to be done and emphasizing how far we are behind in certain tasks. Because of this most members of staff hardly know each other “not to mention know Hugo”.

The third head of department did not feel as strongly about the lack of fun and teamwork in the social context as the other two did, as it did not come out in the open ended

questions, but she did mention it as something that she would value in a leader and that was missing in Hugo's leadership style.

A true leader is able to foster an environment that becomes a second home to staff, as work is the place where most people spend half their time, and I don't think Hugo has this quality "because he shies away from staff and a simple greeting is too personal for him". It was expressed on more than one occasion by staff members of the firm that Hugo had a conservative nature and did not socialize with staff members in a formal or informal setting. This could point to a lack of social skills or social awareness and relationship management as elements of emotional intelligence in Hugo's leadership style.

Daft (2005) defines a leader that is socially aware as one who is able to lead with empathy and to interact in a positive way with a diverse number of people, with an understanding of their points of view. The author describes relationship management as the ability to build relationships with others through positive connection.

The general staff's perception of this issue became a lot clearer because they were never given the opportunity to build any kind of relationship with the leader. They felt it was very important to have a community feeling and to interact on a social level, to promote teamwork and interpersonal trust.

When asked if there was a social climate that inspired openness and fun in the organisation one respondent's answer was "not really". The staff at the firm is so used to the "negative vibe" that a fun afternoon to get to know each other and Hugo better would help everyone to get rid of this negative energy, another staff member said. Someone even suggested during the feedback session that just having a fun day where everyone including Hugo gets to wear "jeans" would be sufficient. "It would add something to the office and our relationships that are more alive and fun. Hugo would become more of a human being and less of a boss in a pair of jeans". Another wrote that team-building days or "fun days"

should not be part of an incentive scheme; “it should just be to connect us as a tightly-knit group”.

It became evident during the feedback session that general staff found the social climate in the office stifling, and their idea of an ideal social climate entailed being able to regain their energy as a group. It was also clear that they felt it would be important for Hugo to be a part of these team-building sessions.

A respondent said, if we could have a social gathering every once in a while with the whole office including Hugo, and have “a bit of fun together” away from the pressures at work, I believe that departments will come together with other departments and the whole office with Hugo. After Hugo had had a social with staff, meetings turned into fun experiences. When reading the suggestions from the suggestion box made staff members laugh and enjoy the experience, and he began to see the value of a looser environment opposed to the stifling one the firm had before intervention.

It is the leader who sets the tone, and even one with a conservative nature can inspire a fun working environment by not taking himself too seriously and still remain true to his own personality. Hugo found that he enjoyed the social as much as his staff members and came to understand their need for a social climate.

A colleague agreed and added that it would recharge the team with the power and energy needed. Another staff member pointed out the importance of Hugo’s involvement in these social gatherings by saying “by showing more interest in what the staff enjoys, and just having a conversation with staff members that is not work related will do the world of good for trust and relationships”. Another staff member added that communication between Hugo and general staff members is “non-existent” and communication on a social level might promote better communication within the office. “I have never actually spoken to Hugo,

except at my initial interviews and an occasional greeting”, one staff member said. .

Maslow, cited in Robbins (2005), states that the social needs individuals have includes a need for affection, to have friendships and to belong, all elements connected to motivation. This would explain why the social gathering held was one of the highlights of the intervention process for staff, as they learned more about Hugo and their coworkers during the experience, and better teamwork, less negativity and motivation was the result. General staff also felt that a lot of wrong perceptions that they had about Hugo could be cleared up by creating a social climate in which to interact as a team.

“People in the office think Hugo is stuck up” one said during the feedback session. A colleague responded by saying that her head of department says Hugo is a “down-to-earth” person, but trying to get to know him at work would never allow general staff to see this side of him.

Goleman’s (1999) supports this: social skills are not merely a matter of being friendly, but being friendly with a purpose of moving people in the desired direction to achieve a certain outcome. He also explains that leaders who have high social skills are effective leaders of teams and proficient at persuading others, because of the leader’s ability to understand the team’s feelings and empathise with them. Goleman stresses the importance of learning these skills as part of developing emotional intelligence. A leader must be able to understand and sense the viewpoints of others without verbal communication in order to effectively manage relationships and lead others. Hugo was never aware that staff members felt the need to get to know him and the lack of communication in the firm inhibited sound working relationships. As soon as these barriers were broken down during the intervention process this changed. From the feedback session again:

Getting to know him at all seemed impossible to her at this stage. “Hugo has a lack of socializing with people in the office, we rarely see him during the day”,

said another staff member. The general feeling of staff was well summarized by a staff member saying, “I heard from someone that Hugo likes art, something I love too, which makes me think I might have a lot more in common with him than I think, but at the moment with him not even having the time to stop and ask how we are doing, it is difficult to relate to him and he is in my mind only the boss who I despise. I want to believe that at work he is under pressure, and time is a precious commodity for all, but if we could all get to know Hugo and each other in a social environment the office environment will change dramatically to a cohesive group that places emphasis on teamwork”.

Staff members in the firm also mentioned Hugo’s inability as a leader to create an environment characterised by openness and fun and stated that the need therefore to build relationships and foster teamwork in the firm was crucial.

According to Hudson (2002) creating an organisational culture of fun can enhance business performance, and that fun is an acceptable part of that culture. The author explains that even though some, as did Hugo in this case, might seem to think at first that fun has no place in the office and that socializing with workers is inappropriate, they would in time become more comfortable with having fun at work to a degree that surprises their biggest critics, those who could never believe that they were capable of having fun, especially once the benefits of productivity and relationship building is realized.

The next theme, Vision, was an interesting one. When we talked about vision during the feedback session, it became apparent that the staff did not really understand the definition of vision. They were still, however, able to provide rich data on the lack of direction they felt Hugo gave.

#### **4.3.8 Unclear vision**

Vision was a theme that mostly surfaced during the interviews with the heads of departments. They felt that decisions were made too hastily, and projects were started

without thinking them through properly and without a clear vision of their leader. Whatever the vision, it was also not communicated in a way that would allow them to align their vision with his.

I think Hugo is very good at planning and organizing, but his vision is not clearly communicated to us and therefore the implementation of his plans is often poor. "It sometimes feels like we are following a blind man with no vision", and then when by chance we do understand his vision for a certain project it becomes clear "that he knew from the start what he wanted; we just didn't know". Hugo often has "brilliant" projects in mind, projects that everyone in the office can "believe" in, but without communicating his vision to all staff members and without the "enthusiasm" from his side in communicating his vision and plans their execution will either be poor (inadequate) or not happen at all.

According to Collins and Porras (1998) a vision is often only inspirational words that lack clear concept and useful tools. The authors state that the framework of a clear vision should provide a guiding philosophy for the future of the organisation, and create something tangible for staff members to work with.

I also think it is important that Hugo establishes a clear vision for "the company as a whole", as I feel emphasis is often placed on a lot of different projects at a time, and that these don't always feed into (focus on) a greater goal.

The second head of department believed strongly that having a vision was one of the most important characteristics of a good leader and communicated this in the first two sentences of her interview.

"The ability to lead includes inspiring others in a shared vision". I am "sure" that Hugo does have a vision for the firm. I just don't think anybody else is sure of what his vision is and because of this "staff tend to lose sight of where they are and where he is coming from with the tasks and standards he expects". This also

doesn't help with staff motivation because they can't be inspired and motivated by their work if they don't understand the purpose or the "bigger picture". "I think the office would be more work orientated if we knew where we were going and how we as a firm were going to get there".

Cooper (2003) states that employees are rarely committed to an organisation's vision because their objectives and best interests are often not expressed in the vision. Although there had never been a clearly written vision statement with which staff members at the law firm could align their own goals, many of the staff members didn't even understand the definition or value that a clear vision could add to an organisation. Staff members just felt that they rarely knew what they were working towards.

The last head of department said during her interview that she felt that changes would only be accepted if staff members understood the reasoning behind the changes, and without a clear vision staff members would not be committed.

I feel that we spent far too much time explaining to staff what changes are going to take place, and then dealing with the resistance, only to repeat the process a week later for a new change. "This leads me to believe that Hugo either does not have a clear vision and cannot therefore give us direction, and makes changes when his vision changes or he is not able to clearly communicate his vision". Hugo has "big ideas" for the company but I feel that none of this can be obtained until he has a clear vision for the direction of the firm and inspires staff to believe in a shared vision. "Hugo often asks during a meeting, when explaining his plans, whether he made himself clear, and I want to shout from the top of my lungs 'NO!', but instead silently nod and hope for the best".

As a result of the rising levels in educated staff members people prefer working for a leader who has a vision they can relate to and align their own goals with. Thus a leader with a clear and well-communicated vision has become very important to people (Puth 2002). The author emphasizes the importance of creating a vision that staff members can

believe in, and states that the best way to do this is to lead strategies and plans by example.

I noted above that staff didn't feel that they understood where the firm was going or what Hugo's vision was, and that during the feedback session it seemed as though staff was not sure about the definition of a vision, even after a clear explanation had been given. So only a few general staff members commented on vision during the feedback session.

“We are not robots, we are people working here. Robots can be programmed to move in a certain directions; people need to understand where they are going and why”, one staff member stated. The demotivation of staff members in the firm could be a result of a lack of vision. Even though they did not understand the purpose of a vision they clearly expressed that they were just expected to implement Hugo's plans without understanding them, or having an input in their formulation, and without Hugo's participation in the implementation phase of his plans.

Puth (2002) explains that it is integral for a leader to lead the change in implementing plans that work towards the organisation's vision and goals, as it is the most effective way to inspire staff members commitment to the vision and getting the message across of what is expected from them.

Another participant felt that staff members' thinking was different to Hugo's, that he thinks on a professional level with a legal background and therefore understands his vision and reasoning but then “forgets” that his staff doesn't share his legal background. It was therefore even more important for his vision to be clearly communicated. A colleague responded to this by saying, “sometimes I feel like I am in the army, we are all fighting for something but nobody knows exactly what it is”.

When this staff member said that she knew she was fighting for something but just wasn't sure what for, a head of department said she was sure Hugo had a vision, but that she just wasn't sure what it was. Staff members in the firm had begun to be comfortable with mediocrity because they didn't have a clear understanding of what they were working towards or what the goals of the firm were. They couldn't align their personal goals with those of the organisation and they were therefore not striving for excellence. Daft (2005) states that a vision is a challenge that drives the entire organisation towards ambitious and attainable goals in the future. He explains that an aspiring vision that has been clearly communicated to staff member is directly linked to an organisation's performance. This vision encourages staff members to work towards achieving the goals of the organisation because they are compelling and inspirational.

Kotter (1999) notes that it becomes easier for staff members to be committed to an organisation and its leader, when there is a clear direction for the organisation that is understood by them. It helps to make staff members feel less vulnerable when they understand the vision of the leader. They are able to perform their tasks in a way that they are sure is in alignment with the vision, and there is therefore less chances of being reprimanded for trying new things if they know how to successfully align their innovations with the leader's vision. Staff members mentioned that they had suggestions on how to perform their tasks better, and once Hugo put up a vision statement for the firm, created with staff participation, it gave staff the confidence to let him know about their suggestions. As a result many workable ideas were put forward.

## Chapter 5

### Intervention and change

*“Possibility and change become growth within the shape of time that we call a day”* (O’Donohue 1997: 165)

#### 5.1 Introduction

Hugo and the two heads of departments that kept personal journals during the intervention process describe their experience, perceptions and feelings during the process, as well as their observations of the change that took place after the intervention. Their own words and entries relevant to the research goals are used in the presentation of this data in order to understand the process from their perspective, and to describe experiences in their own words.

#### 5.2 Feedback and change

Hugo made this journal entry to explain how the changes that were implemented were arrived at.

On my return from the course I first started to make changes to my leadership style based on the needs of staff that came out of the questionnaires that they answered and the feedback session they had with Tania thereafter.

During an interview with Hugo I asked him to elaborate on what he thought of the changes that staff had suggested.

I wasn’t expecting positive feedback from staff members, because I knew that they weren’t “exactly thrilled” with my leadership. It was easy to see from the problems we had been experiencing within the firm. Unhappy staff members resulted in a backlog in work, which resulted in unsatisfied customers, so it did not come as a surprise to me that the feedback from staff members “did not sing my praises”. During the attendance of the leadership module in Grahamstown I realised as the topic on how to mobilise people in the workplace was being

discussed, that I had not been doing any of the things that Trevor Amos presented as positive actions for mobilising my staff members.

Because of this realisation in the classroom, it was easier for me to acknowledge my mistakes when hearing the feedback from my staff. At the time of listening to the feedback I had already come to terms with my shortcomings as a leader during the leadership training module. I appreciated their honesty; it was needed so that I could understand their feelings and change my leadership style to fulfill in their needs. I was pleasantly surprised at how much effort they were willing to put in from their side to make the changes work.

London (2002) states that receiving feedback from staff and using the feedback in a positive way can assist a leader in changing practices and behaviour and to respond in ways that are beneficial to enhancing effectiveness. Although a lot of criticism of Hugo came from the initial questionnaires and feedback session, as well as the first individual meetings with staff members, it assisted in the development process of Hugo and the organisation. According to Phillips and Schmidt (2004) it is important to receive this kind of feedback for a leader to truly know himself. In this way Hugo could build on his strengths and acknowledge and work on his weaknesses. It also gave staff members the opportunity to get rid of negative bottled-up feelings to enable them to start afresh. Daft (2005) states that follower commitment does not mean that people have to constantly accept actions and decisions made by the leader that aren't in the organisation's or their own best interest. According Daft, effective followers take a stand when they do not agree and, if not given the opportunity to do so, they will take their support elsewhere.

The first realisation that Hugo had was that he had not allowed for open and honest communication between himself and staff members and that staff needed it. It was therefore the first change he implemented, along with becoming open to discussions, even if they were not work related, but affected a staff members' work from a personal point of view.

### **5.3 Becoming approachable for open communication**

Hugo described his mistakes in handling communication prior to the intervention and the changes he made in this journal entry.

Previously staff had to make an appointment with my personal assistant to see me and I had allocated only one hour a day for these appointments. I changed this arrangement so that staff could see me without appointment, by merely coming to my office. This was a huge adjustment for me as I thought that the staff members were going to interrupt me constantly and my own work was going to suffer.

Kotter (1999) reminds us that a member of the staff at the bottom of the chain, who seems to be rather unimportant in his position, can make it either easy or very difficult for a leader to achieve any kind of change within an organisation. It was therefore important for Hugo to acknowledge the need that employees had to be able to enter his office at any time without making for an appointment, even though he was at this point afraid of how it would influence his own work.

From the survey feedback Hugo came to realize how important it was for staff that he be available for any discussions they might wish to have. Levy (2002) emphasizes the importance of being a “hands-on” leader that regularly interacts with staff members in order to identify problems early and help staff feel that they are listened to and matter.

Mrs. Nesbit also made an entry in her journal on the staff members’ surprise at seeing a more approachable Hugo at a staff meeting that he called to tell the staff that he acknowledges their need to talk to him.

Today Hugo called an office meeting as the start to the process. He advised staff that he would be more involved in the departments and asked for staff’s suggestions. He explained that he had heard the suggestions they had made at the feedback session, but that he wanted to give them a platform from his side to make suggestions directly to him. I was surprised at this effort but not as surprised

as the other staff members who were sure that the meeting had been called because they were in “trouble” for some reason.

This journal entry of Mrs. Nesbit showed that staff members were still not use to the sudden changes that were taking place and had been expecting a reprimand. It was necessary for Hugo to let staff know that he was personally interested in listening to their suggestions for the way forward. According to Madi (2000) it is important that staff participate in deciding the way forward for an organisation. He suggests that staff members should be asked during meetings; what they think the firm stands for, where it is heading in the future, and how they as staff members feel the organisation’s goals can be achieved. DePREE (1998) builds on this by stating that an organisation needs a covenant that binds its people together and enables them to meet the needs of the leader and the organisation, together with the leader’s effort to meet their needs.

Towards the end of her journal Mrs. Nesbit also described how open communication channels had changed the running of the firm.

Hugo has had a session with most of the departments now and has received feedback from the general staff session with Tania, and he should now have a better idea of the issues in the office. The most important thing in my mind at the moment is to try to ensure that he keeps being involved in the office as it is definitely having a positive affect.

Miss Malan’s journal entry on communication also contains one off her staff member’s feelings towards Hugo’s change in this regard.

Hugo’s door has been “really” open since he has been back. Staff members do still come and ask me if I think their question or suggestion is important enough to take to Hugo, but I think it is just a matter of time before they start becoming comfortable with the idea that they can go to him directly. Hugo has also suggested an office party to interact with the staff on a social level and said that

we could have it somewhere away from the office, which would be a really nice gesture to staff. Hugo is not usually very sociable so I hope that he plans on attending the party. A Staff member told me today that she “loves” the fact that Hugo’s door is open to them as general staff because she always felt that Hugo was not a part of the company, since they always had to go via a head of department when they wanted to get a message across. I think statements like these are good because it shows that the staff is noticing the changes, the communication is becoming better and the fact that they are making use of his open door shows that they are beginning to trust him.

Hugo saw the meetings that staff members suggested as a good idea, not only to further facilitate open communication but also to address their need for greater participation.

#### **5.4 Joint decision-making and the meetings where it all happened**

Hugo made the following entry in his personal journal, describing the various meetings that he set up as part of his efforts to allow for participation in decision-making.

I decided to introduce more meetings and discussion groups in the office, followed by one-on-one sessions with all staff to allow them to participate in the decisions I make. I introduced a weekly staff meeting where we discussed general issues in the office and where staff could voice their opinions on these issues. This led to quite heated discussions and I was unaware before these meetings that staff had strong feelings regarding certain issues in the firm; this just reinforced my feelings that as a lawyer with a law degree that has no formal leadership training in the coursework, I had no idea how to effectively lead staff before this process began. I also introduced a suggestion box in which staff could drop their suggestions anonymously. These suggestions were then read and discussed at general office meetings.

I also introduced departmental meetings with departments as a whole and not just with Heads of Departments. I was surprised about the ideas and suggestions that

came from these meetings, where staff had better ways of doing their work than the way they were trained. A lot of new ideas and better operational procedures were introduced and implemented as a result of these meetings.

Vroom and Yetton, cited in Hickman (1998), suggest that a leader that allows participation from staff considers their suggestions and recommendations concerning work problems and new initiatives during their decision making processes. During the process of intervention Hugo found that valuable suggestions and “better ways of doing things” came from allowing staff members to participate during the meetings that were implemented as part of the change process.

Staff members that were usually quiet and reserved seemed to come alive during these smaller meetings with strong and workable ideas. I was surprised that these meetings actually became team building opportunities and staff enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and openness during these meetings. I initially thought that staff was going to use the meetings and suggestion box just to complain, the contrary actually happened. Staff members had a lot of fun with the suggestion box, and reading the suggestions during meetings became something to look forward to and received a lot of laughs (Appendix F).

Participation also provides intrinsic rewards for staff members because they are part of the decision making process, which makes their jobs more meaningful and interesting (Robbins 2005). Staff members at the law firm were able to articulate the ways in which they felt their tasks could be performed more effectively, because they had given their work a lot of thought. Daft (2005) stresses the importance of realising that most of the thinking around leadership today has shifted from using leadership as a control mechanism over subordinates, to developing staff members into future leaders by means of participation.

Discussion groups were introduced where departments had meetings with each other that resulted in resolving similar issues in different departments and

workflow issues between departments. Through this office morale was lifted as staff realised they work as a team and not as departments against each other.

Puth (2002) states that when a group is involved in a decision-making process, it brings a diversity of knowledge and skills to the process that is not available in individual decision-making. Kotter (1999) has it that involving followers in decision-making, especially those decisions that will have an influence on them, is a motivation technique, as it gives staff members a sense of control.

Mrs. Nesbit also commented in her journal that the participation generated by the different meetings and the changes that these made to staff morale.

Hugo has started having weekly general meetings, and has also set aside a half-an-hour each week for departmental meetings. So far it seems that staff are appreciating his efforts. I hope that he sticks to it as it does seem to have an affect on staff; they feel that he is more involved and they are not just a number. For me it is difficult as I have to sacrifice more time, to be available for three half-hour sessions a week as the office manager, but I hope it proves to be fruitful.

Another entry commented on the individual meetings that Hugo held with every staff member:

Hugo has started with the one-on-one sessions with the staff. This will give them a chance to voice issues that they feel that they would rather not raise in a general staff meeting. So far I have chatted to one or two of the staff about their feelings about the sessions. They have indicated that they feel it went well and they did get a chance to say what wanted to, and felt better for it. They felt encouraged by the session and hopefully it will go towards ending the “negativity”. Since the changes have been implemented people have been having fun with the suggestion box, pretending to be in gangs that has certain demands, and when Hugo reads

them during the once-a-week general meeting the staff has a lot of fun laughing and joking with him, and we still get time to discuss serious issues.

The initial participation by staff and changes in Hugo's leadership style implemented was small to begin with—such as these meetings— so as to ensure that the changes made were sustainable and had the desired results. Kotter (1999) notes that people need to develop new skills and behaviour patterns during a change process, because all human beings are only capable of changing the process within in the organisation to certain extend, and should not expect too many changes too quickly. Puth (2002) states that a lack of empowerment and communication are both barriers to change. He also expresses the importance of short term wins in order to gain momentum. The author explains that true transformation can only take place if all members in the organisation are involved and empowered to drive the change. This was facilitated by allowing staff to make suggestions and express their feelings openly during the general and individual meetings that Hugo implemented.

Miss Malan described her feelings about the changes she observed in the atmosphere and working environment as a result of these meetings:

The last few weeks at the office have been wonderful and it feels as if I am working at a new place. Hugo has been having general meetings, department meetings and one-on-one meeting with each and every staff member, something that staff suggested in their feedback session. He has been so committed to this process and I am so proud of him and my staff because they have really been giving this a chance and have opened up. It looks to me like staff are “warming” to the new environment and there is definitely less moaning and negative behaviour. I just hope that poor Hugo can keep it up because he is making so much time for staff at their request that I don't know how he gets to his work, but somehow he is getting this done and I take my hat off to him.

Miss Malan mentions the fact that she is proud of Hugo and the members of staff because everyone has become equally open and passionate about the process of changing Hugo's leadership style, which is in turn changing the firm. Passion is one of the biggest prerequisites for change, as every decision made or action taken in the change process must be towards achieving the desired result, and this cannot be achieved without consolidated passion (Bernick 2002).

### **5.5 Deserved recognition and earned rewards**

Leadership requires motivating staff members by any method of persuasion to give their commitment and teamwork to the organisation (Dubrin 2001). In this case Hugo received feedback from the feedback session that staff wished to be recognized individually and was motivated by targets and rewards. He wrote in his journal about the changes he made to address this need expressed by staff members.

During the one-on-one meetings with every staff member, I gave them the opportunity to discuss not just work-related issues but also any personal issues that might affect them or their work. These meetings resulted in me getting to understand my staff a lot better, what they needed from me as a leader and from the company as a whole, and that my appreciation for them should be shown on a regular basis.

Awotwi (2003), addressing delegates in Sandton at an African Leader Business Forum, said that building a successful organisation requires mobilising resources to achieve goals. In mobilising the human resource element leaders' commitment was needed and factors that motivate people had to be employed. Hugo wrote:

As a result of this realisation I introduced small incentives and voiced my appreciation of staff members before each session, as suggested by them.

In describing the case of the remaking of Komatsu, Bartlett and Ghoshal (2000) stressed the importance of capturing staff members' interest and commitment, by providing them

with clear and attainable goals that are partnered with rewards. The targets that Hugo set for departments were attainable and the rewards staff requested during the feedback session on the surveys were linked to the achievement of these targets. Hickman (1998) states that people often repeat behaviour that is recognised and rewarded, and in the same way do not repeat behaviour that is punished or ignored. According to the author the most important way to motivate staff is to link job performance to outcomes such as recognition and reward. Hugo again:

Many of the issues that came out of these meetings were minor and easy to resolve, but had a huge impact on my staff before they were resolved. It was becoming one of my priorities to assist them in discussing these issues, finding solutions for them and providing feedback on the progress. I also made a point of walking through the office on a regular basis greeting staff and having short interactions with them at their desks on progress and targets.

Mrs. Nesbit described in her journal one of the rewards that her department received as a result of target achievement, and made note of the change in behaviour of staff members that previously avoided Hugo, and now asked him to participate in their reward.

Incentives had been given to departments that reached their individual targets, and my department got to eat pizza on Friday that Hugo bought. They went and called him when the pizza arrived and asked him to join us. I was amazed. If I was asked two months ago in those interviews if I believed that there could be positive changes and if they would last I would have said “no”; I stand corrected.

This journal entry wonderfully illustrated the change in the relationship between Hugo and staff members. A social gathering held on the request of staff members seemed to be one of the major events in building these relationships.

## 5.6 Building relationships and mutual trust

Hugo explains in his journal how the breaking down of the walls that he had built between himself and staff members was the most difficult change for him to make, and describes the way in which it was done, and the positive experience he had as a result.

I really struggled with the concept of opening myself on a personal level to staff for them to get the opportunity to get to know me. When this need came out of the questionnaires and feedback session with Tania it felt like I couldn't breathe. I was always happy in my perception that there is a distinct line between the "boss" and the staff and that these two shouldn't interact or intermingle on any other level than how and when work should be done.

London (2002) addresses the process of changing ones practices as a leader or the style of leadership under the heading "acquiring a leadership identity", stating that through identifying the needs of different situations, a leader builds his identity as a leader, and this process of creating a new identity could of course requite continual change. It was a challenging experience for Hugo to change his beliefs of leader-follower relationships, because the boundaries he had in his relationships with staff members had been embedded in the organisation's culture for a long time.

I therefore decided that it would be important for me to take this first step towards social relationships and interpersonal trust away from the office, to break free from the ideas that I had embedded in the office environment.

Daft (2005) emphasizes the importance of realizing that leaders can no longer base their relationships on formal authority but need to change this to relationships based on personal influence. He states that there is a positive correlation between relationship management and emotional intelligence, as an emotionally intelligent leader is able to manage his own emotions and those of others that drive our interpersonal relationships. According to Kotter (1999) the leadership role is characterized by a web of complex relationships. Establishing good working relationships entails understanding your own

needs and those of others and building relationships that fit these needs. Although the need to know a leader on a personal level cannot be generalised, the staff in the law firm had a clear need to get to know Hugo and establish personal relationships with him.

With the help of my heads of departments we organized a social for staff members at a venue in town and no expenses were spared for my first real social interaction with the members of my staff. It was a huge success in my opinion. Instead of the forced conversations that I had thought we would have, I had meaningful conversations with members of staff and made a point of having a short interaction with each and every one.

Hudson (2002), in describing the changes made in the Brady Corporation, explains that having fun is an important part of creating an open, collaborative and trusting environment that promotes the belief in an organisation that anything is possible. She states that motivating people to have a positive attitude towards work would need an atmosphere that promotes a spirit of fun. She also maintains that promoting this fun culture within an organisation does not necessarily mean that the leader of the organisation needs to undergo a personality change, only move from a more conservative nature to a more liberal one that would certainly provide pay-offs from a productivity perspective. The social gathering organised by Hugo and the heads of departments as requested by staff members, certainly promoted a more fun environment, identified by staff as something they needed.

My perception of many of them immediately changed to something positive, realising that there were so many diverse people working together, and the potential that our firm had in that. It made me smile when I thought how conservative and reluctant I had been to form healthy working relationships with the members of my staff. During the period of implementing the changes in the office, it was obvious how the staff morale and productivity changed, and how the firm as a whole moved forward because of only a few changes I had made to the way in which I led my staff.

Mrs. Nesbit wrote about the planning, her experience and what she observed in staff members at this social gathering, in her journal.

With the help of Hugo we have planned a general staff party for this afternoon at a venue away from the office. All the staff members are very excited and some approached me and said we don't know how much they need it and how much it means to them. Hugo says that he is going to be there, and I am holding my breath. The mood in the office is good and all are looking forward to the "social" At last! It has been a while.

In her second journal entry on the social gathering she also described what she observed of Hugo's behaviour.

The staff party was a great success and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves. Hugo actually arrived on time, chatted to everybody, not only the heads of department like he usually does at work functions, and he was one of the last people to leave the party. Generally the office seems more relaxed, more motivated and less negative. Hope this lasts. Hugo has had a session with most of the departments now and has received the feedback from the general staff session with Tania, and he should now have a better idea of the issues in the office. The most important thing in my mind at the moment is to try to ensure that he keeps being involved in the office, as it is definitely having a positive affect.

At this point in the intervention staff members were experiencing a change in their feelings towards Hugo and the firm. Robbins (2005) states that positive emotions, unlike negative ones, are connected to an evaluation of feelings that leads to positive outcomes. Generally an organisation would seek to establish a positive set of emotions, opposed to intense negative emotions, such as those that the staff members in the law firm displayed before intervention.

Miss Malan first expressed in her journal her hope that Hugo, who did not usually interact with staff members, would attend the social gathering that he helped plan.

Hugo has suggested an office party to interact with the staff on a social level and said that we could have it somewhere away from the office, which would be a really nice gesture to staff. Hugo is not usually very sociable so I hope that he plans on attending the party.

Her second journal entry gives an account of the positive outcome in staff members' feelings and attitudes, and describes the conversations she had with them after the social.

The office party was the best gesture in my opinion that Hugo had made so far. I would have never thought that a social gathering would bring so much positive energy into the office. The suggestion box, meetings, greetings and incentives that have been introduced have all contributed to better working relationships and motivation of staff, but this was the “chocolate with the best filling in the box”.

- One staff member said that she found Hugo such an interesting person when she spoke to him that she felt like making a marriage proposal.
- A second staff member said that when she got to see the casual side of his personality she understood why she always thought him to be sneaky; he was a fun and intelligent person.
- A third said that it felt that she suddenly trusted Hugo more because she attempted a conversation about her personal life and he didn't run away like she expected, but gave her valuable advice.
- A fourth said that she also got to know other members off staff that she usually only greeted on her way to the fax machine and when she spoke to Hugo—who she was previously deathly afraid of—his grumpy nasty attitude that use to be her perception of him, melted away to make space for someone she felt that she could work with very well.
- Another one said that she personally thinks that she realised at the party that she would always want to work for and with Hugo.

According to Kelly (1998) most followers are talented but these talents cannot come together in creating organisational effectiveness because the talented people are separated by the hierarchical structures within an organisation. Kelly notes that the leader has the power to create effective teams in the organisation by simply putting talented people in the same room together. Puth (2002) is of the opinion that building trust is an important ability that inspirational leaders should have, and in order to foster this ability they should understand what staff members deem as fair process, otherwise a lack of commitment can be the result in an organisation, and last for years. Puth also emphasizes that there is a definite link between relationships, trust and commitment, and it is the inspirational leader that is able to create awareness of the relationships and the link between staff members' and the leader's expectations.

### **5.7 Effective change and the road ahead**

Although time constraints affected the intervention process to certain extent, as there was only time for one feedback session, the firm with Hugo as the director and leader had come a long way. This was made possible by Hugo and his staff's efforts and commitment to the Action Research process. Burns (1998) explains this as an attribute of a transformational leader. The leader and followers are all committed to transforming themselves as the relationship between them becomes fused by the leader's genuine concern for the staff members' needs, and all work together towards a common goal.

The changes to Hugo's leadership style played a big role in the change of emotion and atmosphere within the firm. Daft (2005) explains that people would much rather work hard to meet the standards and expectations of a leader that they liked, than one they did not care for. The author states that building dependant reciprocal relationships with staff members by offering emotional support and time would give staff members the feeling that they are paid back for their hard work. He also emphasises the importance of developing a network of allies to assist the leader in achieving his goals, by having informal conversations outside the formal office environment to get a better understanding of their needs and to learn to have a genuine concern for them.

Miss Malan described her feelings and hopes for the future of the firm, after the implementation of the changes to Hugo's leadership style, in this way:

The past three months has been a “rollercoaster” that was scary and made you feel unsure at the beginning of the ride, but turned out to be so much fun that it was one of those key rides of your life. Staff wanted Hugo to be more involved and show appreciation for their efforts and he has gone above and beyond, and there has been a “dramatic” change. Opinions, relationships and even productivity have changed and I think it is because the teams are now working together for a purpose and for Hugo, and he is doing the same. When I asked a staff member who previously had been very negative and said that she didn't care for the changes because she never spoke to him anyway, what her opinion of him was now, she said that she thought Hugo was a very good leader, who shared his knowledge and helped her better understand anything she goes to him for. I am holding thumbs that we can keep this up because things have really never been better in the office.

Mrs. Nesbit described the day that Hugo, with the participation of staff members, created a vision that was displayed in the office as a show of commitment towards continual change and direction for the future—to “keep it up”, as Miss Malan hoped.

Today Hugo put a vision up in the office where everybody can see it as part of showing his commitment to create a shared vision.

Puth (2002) states that creating a clear vision that aligns people is a crucial part of effective motivation. Alignment of people is achieved when the feel part of a community in an organisation, when they work at their full capacity, and when the entire organisation comes together with collective, committed to achieving the future as articulated by the vision. Creating a vision for the future was necessary to motivate the firm to become a learning organisation, open for continual change. The firm and Hugo as the leader were now better equipped to continue the change process, because of the new relationships that

had been built. They were working together for the future, opposed to working against each other.

Kotter (1999) explains that having the power to influence others in a dependant relationship does not have to be done by fear, but can be more effective when built on friendships. He says that friendships carry certain obligations with it and creating close friendships with the staff members you are dependant on as a leader will provide more power to influence than fear would. Robbins (2005) emphasises the importance of effective communication in relationship and trust building. He notes that effective communication can motivate employees as they will know what is expected and know when they are doing well. It will also allow staff members to express emotions and feelings that would assist in fulfilling social needs.

According to Bruce and Wyman (1998) changes in an organisation are synonymous with the unearthing the problems in it. They states that no organisation has the resources to solve each and every problem that surfaces during organisational change, but through an action training research intervention such as the one that I undertook at the law firm, the most important problems that effect organisational commitment and staff motivation can be identified and dealt with. In any organisation one might get the perception that merely conducting meetings that allows for staff participation, and devoting time to meet with staff members individually are minimum expectations, but as none of these were present at the firm before the intervention, they were the first and foremost on staff members minds when asked what suggestions they had for changes to Hugo's leadership style. These minor changes facilitated open communication, participation, trust, a vision and common goal and mended tense relationships between Hugo and his staff.

The open door policy that Hugo had before the start of the intervention and that most staff members' believed only to be a myth, changed to one that was implemented effectively. The communication that resulted also assisted in creating an open environment with healthy working relationships and increased motivation. According to Cooper (2003), in order to achieve follower commitment to a leader, the leader will have

to recognise his followers and their needs and act in correspondence with these in his policies. The author also states that with recognition comes follower participation as it would involve asking staff members for their suggestions and about their needs. A leader can be the one that prevents follower commitment as a result of previous behaviour that led to the perception that the leader could not be seen or trusted as a leader. As behaviour and perceptions change through changes in leadership, the behaviour of staff and their commitment will follow.

Staff members became committed followers the moment that they realised that Hugo was truly committed to them and was changing the way in which he led them, based on their suggestions for improvements. Kelly (1998) states that followers are willing to put themselves on the line only once they believe that their leader will do the same.

Followers that become exemplary are those working for a leader that shares the rewards when things are going well, and helps carry the blame and burden of problem-solving when things aren't going as desired. Staff members in the firm asked for Hugo's participation in the office, their request for participation in problem solving and craving for recognition and rewards, was an example of what Kelly said. As the needs of the staff were addressed, they became motivated and committed, opposed to the negative behaviour and attitudes that they displayed before.

By acknowledging his weaknesses and changing the way in which he had led the organisation to listening to the needs and desires that his staff members, it took only a relatively brief intervention and Hugo's effort to get the ball rolling to create a more effective future for the firm. Howard (1998) describes it in this way: the leadership challenge lies in changing the leader to become a visionary to see a brighter future, a change agent to encourage ideas and challenge the status quo, an inspirer that inspires followers to commitment and a common goal, a model of trust by being trustworthy and in turn also trusting, a supporter that constantly shows support for his staff members' abilities, a champion that celebrates achievements openly, a coach that makes staff development and their personal fulfillment his priority, a team builder that establishes effective teams that work well together and a partner that establishes bridges for open

communication and participation. Although Hugo is still a long way from the leader that Howard describes, and the change process for him as a leader would be continues as needs change, the intervention process provided the ladder to get there.

## Chapter 6

*“Transformational, adaptive and enabling leadership are emphasized as keys to effective leadership in the changing business environment” (London 2002: 1).*

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I summarize my research findings and give a brief outline of what the participants in this intervention have to continue with, so as to fulfill its potential. After that I discuss the significance of the research and comment on research directions that could be valuable for the future. I then reflect on the method of research I chose, the limitations that I experienced and lastly give an account of my personal experiences of the research and intervention.

### 6.2 Summary

Very few people have the ability to become the type of leaders who can influence or inspire people to change the whole course of their lives and society in an overwhelming way (Puth 2002). But he emphasizes that today’s leadership research is not based so much on the leaders from history that were able to do that, but rather on the leaders that are trying to lead their people towards individual and organisational goals. Goleman, et al. (2001) explain the process of becoming an effective leader as changing behaviour through the process of self-discovery, an ability that is strongly linked to emotional intelligence, and therefore emotional intelligence should be developed in such a leader. Howard (1998) emphasises the importance of empowerment as part of becoming an effective leader. He states that leaders often resist empowerment of employees through participation as they fear they will be left with time on their hands and have a lack of control, it however remains imperative that a leader provide support and guidance to staff members that have been empowered to make on the spot decisions. That true evolutionary change means that the leaders’ responsibilities will increase with participation.

Kotter (1998) is of the opinion that in changing and managing relationships during the change process a leader would need to have an understanding of his own and staff members' strengths and weaknesses, the style in which tasks are completed and the needs his staff members have. The author explains that mutually dependant relationships are built on the expectations that your most critical needs will be met. Robbins (2005) states that it is difficult to fulfill in all staff members' needs, as the motivating factor for one might not be the same for another. The motivator for any individual will change according to the situation and it is therefore important that a leader understands his staff members' individual goals, what provides them with the motivation to increase their effort to perform and how their performance should be linked to rewards.

Kotter (1999) notes that any change that is decided on in an organisation will take a considerable length of time to be implemented successfully and that during the steps of change errors will be made. Phillips and Schmidt (2004) confirm that one of the most important aspects in leadership development is staff involvement. It is more difficult for staff members to be critical of something they helped to develop and it is therefore important to involve them in the learning process. According to Daft (2005), learning implies a change in behaviour or performances as a direct result of a certain experience. Many leaders today are looking for ways in which to enhance their own and their organisation's abilities to change. It takes courage to be this type of leader; building courage entails connecting with others and drawing strength from others through truly caring for them (Daft 2005). Daft emphasizes that a leader should welcome failure because the strength of learning for the entire organisation is stronger under these circumstances.

The leader in this single case study knew how to be a lawyer, he was a professional at winning court cases, he was proficient in the language of the law, a well educated person in his field of study and a compassionate person in his personal and social environment, but somehow found himself and his law firm in turmoil. The firm was treading water with staff that was not productive, with a high staff turnover. It became a daily struggle to

resolve conflicts between him, the department heads and general staff members. At this point it became apparent during an informal conversation between Hugo and me that he had received all the necessary tools to become an excellent lawyer during his higher education studies, but no tools whatsoever to effectively lead and empathetically understand the people he was dependant on to make his firm effective, his staff members.

It seemed like an impossible intervention to undertake when I first gained more insight into the feelings and perceptions of staff members at the law firm through the Productive Practice Survey (1987). Staff members were critical of Hugo's leadership style to the point where it seemed that they were skeptical that the suggested intervention process would bring about any change. They had become accustomed to the lack of recognition and rewards, lack of communication and participation, and distance between Hugo as the leader and themselves as the general staff members. Much time and effort had to be invested in getting the participants in this project excited about the process by explaining the potential benefits that certain changes in Hugo's leadership style could have for them.

Excitement and commitment to the intervention process came a lot faster for Hugo. While attending the leadership module at the Rhodes Investec Business Schools' MBA programme, he understood for the first time the frustrations of his staff members under the authoritative leadership style he had been practicing. He also became aware of the opportunities for his firm, should he change to practice effective leadership. It would entail drawing from different styles as situations within the firm warranted. It was however critical to make the change process a participatory effort, involving all members of staff, as without staff members to lead, Hugo would just be a lawyer that attended a leadership module. The three department heads were the first to show their commitment to the process and made every effort to get their staff members involved and excited. Even these efforts however seemed to fail as staff members' only positive comment after the Productive Practice Survey (1987) was that they had gotten an opportunity to express their feelings and felt better for it.

It was during the questionnaire feedback session where I introduced the general themes that I had identified from the survey that the staff realized that they had all experienced similar dissatisfactions with Hugo's leadership style. At this point they started to open up and elaborate on the themes, discussed problems and possible solution as well as made suggestions on how to achieve the leadership style that they would like to see. The staff craved a working relationship with their leader, which could become a mutually dependant/independent relationship in fulfilling each others needs. They had a desire to be recognised and rewarded for their efforts in the firm. They were desperate for open communication channels between themselves and Hugo and for an opportunity to become more involved in decision-making. The general feeling was that Hugo could not be trusted because he was not known to them and therefore everything Hugo said was doubted by staff. They longed to be trusted to participate in matters that affected them, and they longed to be able to trust that their leader would not act in any way opportunistically but rather open and honestly. The staff were thirsty for change but had become despondent as a result of a lack of a clear vision and the leadership style that was practiced by Hugo

The change process was challenging and demanded a lot of commitment from Hugo and staff, and although a long road still lies ahead for Hugo in learning to further adapt his behaviour to those identified in an effective leader, and staff members learning to adapt to new responsibilities as partners through participation in decision making, the intervention showed that the firm could, with its diversity of skills, knowledge and continuous development of both the leader and other organisation members, achieve the vision that they all developed during the intervention process.

The value of the research became more apparent during the process than I originally anticipated, as it showed a little knowledge could go a long way in changing the way in which Hugo led his staff. The importance of participation by and feedback from colleagues during the process of getting to know oneself as a leader was also a valuable discovery of the research, because without the staff members' voices expressing their

views and opinions honestly during the questionnaire and feedback session as well as committing to continual improvement and participation, my research would have only been a formal training exercise and would have not elicited the rich data and gains that came from the intervention process.

The participants to the research expressed their excitement about the future of the organisation with the new found direction provided by a vision and their strong commitment to continually participate in achieving their personal and organisational goals. The staff and Hugo have decided that, in order to ensure that it was not only temporary change, they would have to continue learning and growing and that they will need more help and advice as it is still new territory for all of them. They have acquired the help of an Internal Marketing Consultant that will assist them in deciding on action plans for the future, and they plan to continue going from strength to strength as a team.

### **6.3 Significance of the research for the future**

I found it very interesting when the topic for my research came up namely that lawyers do not receive any formal training in management during their higher education studies, and yet they often end up as leaders of a firm, managing an organisation and its important human capital. It is my understanding that there are other professions in which this same phenomenon occurs, but the scope of my research was not able to cover this. If research is to be done on the extent of professional organisational management training that is given to students in professional services and the need for such training and development, it could certainly be valuable.

### **6.4 Reflections**

From my experiences during this Participatory Action Research Case Study I can offer the following suggestions to future researches and facilitators. I offer these

recommendations only for discussion and not as steps that have to be followed when embarking on Participatory Action Research.

#### **6.4.1 Reflection on the research method**

1. The process of choosing a case for Action Research should be undertaken with extreme care and ample knowledge of your topic. Choosing a topic and a case that you are passionate about, the way I was passionate about the study of leadership, will inspire you and the participants and make the research challenging.
2. Intensive work on how to conduct Action Research, the different techniques for conducting the research, different methods of gathering and analyzing data as well as the different paradigms within which the research will fall, has to be done in order to completely understand what you are doing, before trying to explain to participants what you are doing.
3. It is also very important to understand your role as the researcher, as you can easily become carried away in trying to achieve an outcome you desired, rather than one the organisation desired. According to Cousins and Earl (1995) the role of the researcher is to act as consultant to the organisation and coordinator of the research project. Translating needs into actions and implementing them is the responsibility of both the researcher and participants.
4. Once the topic and organisation has been chosen, it is important to first gain trust in order to gain knowledge from participants regarding the real problems in the organisation, their own hopes, dreams and goals, as well as the organisation's future, and what input from them they think should be accepted and acted upon to achieve this. You can't change what you don't acknowledge and it happens often that critical information for intervention only presents itself later in the process, when something can no longer be addressed or changed. After the intervention, when participants became truly comfortable they became even more creative than during the intervention process, and although the organisation can implement and build on these long after my research was done, it would have been valuable to the research had this information and creativity presented itself sooner.

5. The purpose, techniques, approaches and steps of the research should be explained to participants in detail. I realised well into the intervention process that staff members in the organisation were not sure about the definition of a vision. One should never assume anything to be common knowledge and always leave the floor open for questions and discussions on the research itself, because clarity amongst participants helps the process move ahead smoothly.
6. Giving feedback to participants on how the research is going and how they as participants are contributing and growing during the process is important for creating a partnership and trust during the process.
7. A lot of time and effort needs to be devoted to the Action Research study, as change is not brought about in a day. Time and effort are needed from both the researcher and the participants, and it is therefore important to make sure that all participants that have stated their willingness to be a part of the programme should also understand that a lot of their normal working hours will be consumed by the intervention process.
8. It is important to ask probing questions during interviews when using open-ended question to gather data. By the time you are analysing the data it is too late to ask a participant to elaborate on something.
9. It is critical to know every detail of the referencing method that is expected from your department, and keeping the reference list up to date, because reworking referencing and the reference list becomes almost impossible by the time you have used eighty sources and no longer have an idea where you found them when you originally used them.
10. Make use of other researchers' theses as points of reference when first embarking on the research, as they provide a clear idea of what lies ahead as well as the mistakes to avoid. It also definitely assists in focusing your work when at any point you feel lost.
11. The most important thought that I would like to leave to future researchers is to remember that without participation Action Research is not possible, and it is therefore important to truly value the people you are working with, to be patient at all times when the desired outcome is not immediately achieved, and to

continuously support participants in their efforts to change behavior as part of what will essentially be your research.

### **6.4.2 Limitations**

It is never easy to critique your own work, especially during research, as any result is worth while to the researcher after the hours and time spent on it. I however believe that there were certain shortcomings to my research.

Although I initially believed that it would be easier conducting research in which my husband was involved, regardless of the extra effort needed to address ethical considerations, this did not prove to be the case. I trust that my research was valuable and that my findings were more than adequate and better than expected, but I believe that the data and my findings would have been even richer if staff members did not have to participate with the thought in the back of their heads of whether I could be trusted completely not to compromise their privacy, as promised.

Building trust relationships is a necessary part of any interpretive research and not an overnight process. The research findings could have shown even better results if the time for conducting the research was not influenced by the building of these relationships first. It was, however, still worthwhile, as it ensured the quality of the research.

A leader/follower relationship in the firm was non-existent, and the problems identified in Chapter 4 so extensive that I realised that it was basic leadership principles that were lacking, and it was necessary to start at the very beginning. I feel that if there wasn't such a big time constraint in conducting the research, and I could have moved beyond the basics during the intervention, I would have been able to report on more gains and growth. Any organisational culture change process is however a long term endeavor and I am satisfied with the outcome achieved in the time available.

### 6.4.3 Personal Reflection

My husband and I enjoy discussing interesting phenomena that we come across in every day life, especially those that affect us. When he first asked my advice on how to solve the problems he was experiencing with inspiring and leading his staff members, thinking that I would be able to offer advice because of my field of study, it never occurred to me that he would not have had classroom-based training on the subject. It was then that a lengthy discussion followed on the importance of receiving training and continuously developing leaders if they are to successfully lead people. I would have never thought that my half thesis would be born from such a discussion, but am thankful that it was.

The second realisation that kicked in when I started analysing the mountain of data I had gathered, was that it was a learning experience for me too. The data did not always reveal what I thought would be important to staff members. I expected large demands and passionate desires from them, and was afraid that my research would not be able to provide them with these, as it would have meant major changes in Hugo that I was not sure he would be able to pull off in the time available for the intervention. To my surprise they only expected a few small steps—and gave giant leaps in return.

I was dumfounded at what a few small changes in the style a leader practices can make to an organisation. It was almost as if the willingness to become a better leader had been enough. This inspired me to be committed to the staff members of the law firm and Hugo's development during every step of the research, and it was a blessing when I realised that my research would not only change my perceptions and beliefs, but that of an entire organisation.

*“In order to feel real we need to bring the inner invisible world to expression. Every life needs the possibility of expression. When we perform an action, the invisible within us finds a form, and comes to expression. Therefore, our work should be the place where the soul can enjoy becoming visible and present. Our nature longs deeply for the possibility of expression which we call work.” (O’ Donohue 1997: 162)*

## Reference List

- Awotwi, K.A. 2003. Building Organizations that Defy the Odds.  
Ashanti Goldfields Company Limited. Unpublished report of  
an address at The African Leaders Business Forum Sandton  
Convention Centre.
- Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2006. *The Practice of Social Research*.  
Oxford:Oxford University Press.
- Bartlett, C.A, AND Ghoshal, S. 2000. Changing the Role of Top  
Management: Beyond Strategy to Purpose, *Harvard Business  
Review*, November–December 1994.
- Batten, J. 1998. “Servant Leadership a Passion to Serve”. In: Spears,  
L.M. (eds.). *Insight on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley &  
Sons, Inc.
- Bausch, T.A. 1998. “Servant Leader: Making Human New Models of  
Work and Organizations”. In: Spears, L.M (eds.).  
*Insight on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Beckhard, R. 1996. “On Future Leaders”. In: Hesselbein, F.,  
Goldsmith, M. and Beckhard, R. (eds.). *The Leader of the  
Future*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Bennis, W. 1998. *Managing People is like Herding Cats*. London: Kogan Page.
- Bennis, W. 1999. *Old Dogs New Tricks*. London: Kogan Page.
- Bennis, W. and Goldsmith, G. 1994. *Learning to Lead*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- Bennis, W., Spreitzer, G.M. and Cummings, T.G. 2001. *The Future of Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.
- Bernick, L.C. 2002. "When Your Culture Needs a Makeover". In: *Harvard Business Review*. Culture and Change. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.
- Bester, C., du Plessis, M. and Pienaar, C. 2006. A World Class CEO: What's the competence profile? *Management Today*, 22(8): 6.
- Bernthal, P. and Wellis R. 2006. Trends in Leadership Development and Succession. *Human Resource Planning*, 29 (2): 31.
- Blanchard, K. 1996. "Turning the Organizational Pyramid Upside Down". In: Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M. and Beckhard, R. (eds.). *The Leader of the Future*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Blanchard, K. 1998. "Servant Leadership Revisited". In: Spears, L.M. (eds.). *Insights on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Bratton, J., Grint, K. and Nelson, L.N. 2005. *Organizational Leadership*. Mason, Ohio: South-Western.
- Bolman, L.G. and Deal, T.E. 1994. Looking for Leadership: Another Search Party's Report. "*Educational Administration Quarterly*" 30(1): 81-87.
- Bowman, R.F. 2005. Teacher as Servant Leader. *The Clearing House*, 78 (6): 257.
- Bruce, R. and Wyman, S. 1998. *Changing Organizations Practicing Action Training and Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Burns, J.M. 1978 *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Burns, J.M. 1998. "Transactional and Transformational Leadership" In: Hickman, G.R. (eds.). *Leading Organizations Perspectives for a New Era*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Byrne, C. 2005. Don't Get Stuck in a Style Rut. *New Zealand Management*, 52(6): 19.

- Caldeira, S.J. and Van der Does, L. 2006. Leaders Profit by Strengthening Corporate Culture. *Nations Restaurant News*, 40(29): 10.
- Carr, W. 1995. *For education: Towards critical educational enquiry*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Charan, R. 2002. "Conquering a Culture of Indecision". In: *Harvard Business Review. Culture and Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.
- Charlton, G. 1993. *Leadership: The Human Race*. Kenwyn: Juta and Co, Ltd.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. 2000. *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, J.C. and Porras, J.I. 1998. "Organizational Vision and Visionary Organizations". In: Hickman, G.R. (eds.). *Leading Organizations Perspectives for a New Era*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Conger, J.A. and Kanungo, R.N. 1988. *Behavioral Dimensions of Charismatic Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Conger, J.A. and Kanungo, R.N. 1998. *Charismatic Leadership in Organizations*. California. Sage Thousand Oaks.

- Conger, J.A., Spreitzer, G.M. and Lawler, E.E. 1999. *The leader's Change Handbook*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- Cooper, D.J. 2003. *Leadership for Follower Commitment*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Cousins, J.B. and Earl, L.M. 1995. "The Case for Participatory Evaluation: Theory, Research, Practice". In: Cousins, J.B. and Earl, L.M. (eds.). *Participatory Evaluation in Education: Studies in Evaluation Use and Organizational Learning*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Daft, R.L. 1999. *Leadership Theory and Practice*. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Daft, R.L. 2005. *The Leadership Experience* Ohio: Thomson South-Western.
- DePREE, M. 1998. "What is Leadership?". In: Hickman, G.R. (eds.). *Leading Organizations Perspectives for a New Era*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Dubrin, A.J. 2001. *Leadership Research Findings, Practice and Skill*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Elden, M. and Levin, M. 1992. "Co-generative Learning, Bringing Participation into Action Research". In: Whyte, W.F. (eds.). *Participatory Action Research*. California: SAGE Publications.

- Fassel, D.1998. "Lives in the Balance: Challenge of Servant Leadership in a Workaholic Society". In: Spears, L.M. (eds.). *Insight on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Fontana, A. and Frey, J.H. 2000. "The Interview, from Structured Questions to Negotiated Text". In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Gibson, J.L., Donnelly, J.H., Ivancevich, J.M. and Konnopoulos, R. 2003. *Organizations Behavior, Structure, Processes*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Goleman, D. 1999. What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review*, November-December: 101.
- Goleman, D. 2004. What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review*, 82 (1).
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. and McKee, A. 2001. "Primal Leadership, the Hidden Driver of Great Performance". In: *Harvard Business Review. Breakthrough Leadership*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Gordon, J. 2003. *Pfeiffer's Classic Activities for Developing Leaders*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

- Greenleaf, R.K. 1998. "Servant Leadership". In: Spears, L.M. (eds.). *Insight on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Harper, S.R. 2001. *The Forward-Focused Organization: Visionary Thinking and Breakthrough Leadership to Create your Company's Future*. New York: AMACOM.
- Hedrick, T.E., Bickman, L. and Rog, D.J. 1993. *Applied research design*. California: Sage Publications.
- Heifetz, R.A. and Laurie, D.L. 1998. *The Work of Leadership*. Harvard Business Review on Leadership. Boston: President and Fellows of Harvard College.
- Hickman, R.G. 1998. *Leading Organizations, Perspectives for a New Era*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Henning, E. 2004. *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Hosch, M.D. 2002 *Critical theory and critical science*.  
<http://www.fcs.iastate.edu/classweb/spring2002/FCEDS413/lessons/hosch.pdf>. [Accessed 28/11/2007].
- Howard, A. 1998. "The Empowering Leader, unrealized opportunities". In: Hickman, G.R. (eds.). *Leading Organizations Perspectives for a New Era*. London: SAGE Publications.

- Hudson, K.M. 2002. "Transforming a Conservative Company – One Laugh at a Time". In: *Harvard Business Review. Culture and Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.
- Kakabadse, A. and Kakabadse, N. 1999. *Essence of Leadership*. London: International Thompson Business Press.
- Katzenberg, J., Beckett, F., Dichter, S., Feigen, M., Gagnon, C., Hope, Q. and Ling, T. 1996. *Real Change Leaders*. Naperville: Brealy.
- Kelly, R.E. 1998. "Leadership Secrets From Exemplary Followers". In: Hickman, G.R. (eds.). *Leading Organizations Perspectives for a New Era*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Kincheloe, J.L. and McLaren, P. 2000. "Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research". In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Kirby, D.A. 2003. *Entrepreneurship*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.
- Koestenbaum, P. 2002. *Leadership the Inner Side of Greatness a Philosophy for Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kotter, P. 1988. *The Leadership Factor*. New York: The Free Press.

Kotter, P. 1999. *What Leaders Really Do*. Boston: President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Kotter, J.P. and Cowen, D.S. 2002. *The Heart of Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Krufka, M.M. 2005. "Teaching Lawyers to be Managers".  
<http://find.galegroup.com> [accessed 26/09/ 2006].

Kumar, R. 1999. *Research Methodology, a Step by Step Guide for Beginners*. London: SAGE Publications.

Levy, P.F. 2002. "The Nut Island Effect When Good Teams Go Wrong".  
In: *Harvard Business Review. Culture and Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. 2000. "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions and Emerging Confluences". In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.E.S. (eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California: SAGE Publications.

London, M. 2002. *Leadership Development*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lowe, J.1998. "Trust: The Invaluable Asset". In: Spears, L.M. (ed.). *Insight on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- Lussier, R.N. and Achua, C.F. 2001. *Leadership, Theory, Application, Skill Development*. Ohio: South- Western College Publishing.
- Madi, P.M. 2000. *Leadership Lessons from Emperor Shaka Zulu the Great*. Johannesburg: Knowledge Resources (Pty) Ltd.
- McGee Cooper, A. 1998. "The Taproot of Servant Leadership". In: Spears, L.M. (eds.). *Insight on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Melrose, K. 1998. "Putting Servant Leadership into Practice". In: Spears, L.M. (eds.). *Insight on Leadership*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Nehr, J. 2004 Servant Leadership: The Importance of Trading Power for Influence. *Detroit*, 26 (9): 41.
- O'Donohue, J. 1997. *Anam Cara, Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World*. London: Bantam Press.
- Oja, S.N. and Smulyan, L. 1989. *Collaborative Action Research, a Developmental Approach*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Patterson, N. 2005. Nice Guys are the Right Guys. *Lawyer*, 19 (43): 59.
- Phillips, J.J. and Schmidt, L. 2004. *The Leadership Scorecard*. Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

- Pinchot, G. 1996. "Creating Organizations with Many Leaders". In:  
Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M. and Beckhard, R. (eds.). *The  
Leader of the Future*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Prentice, W.C.H. 2005. *Understanding Leadership*. Harvard Business  
Review on the Mind of the Leader. Boston: Harvard Business  
School.
- Prescot, J. 2005. "How to Spot your Firms Future Partners/Leaders",  
*Compensation and Benefits for Law Offices*, 5 (11): 2-3
- Puth, G. 2002. *The Communicating Leader: The Key to Strategic Alignment*.  
Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Robbins, S.P. 2005. *Organizational Behavior*. New Jersey: Pearson  
Education, Inc.
- Richardson, M. 2002. People Skills and Self-Knowledge. *New Zealand  
Forest Industry Magazine*, 29(3): 1
- Rooke, D. and Torbert, W.R. 2005. Seven Transformations of Leadership.  
*Harvard Business Review* 84 (4): 68-74.
- Rowlands, W. 2005. Reflections from the top. *Works Management*. Findlay  
Publications Ltd. November. p.20.

- Santos, J.L.G. 1991. "Participatory Action Research, a View from FAGOR".  
In: Whyte, W.F. (eds.). *Participatory Action Research*.  
California: SAGE Publications.
- Sashkin, M. and Sashkin, M.G. 2003. *Leadership That Matters*. San  
Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Schein, E. H. (1992) *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco:  
Jossey-Bass.
- Schein, E.H. 1996. "Leadership and Organizational Culture". In: Hesselbein,  
F., Goldsmith, M. and Beckhard, R. (eds.). *The Leader of the  
Future*. San- Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schwandt, T.A. 2000. "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative  
Inquiry". In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *Handbook  
of Qualitative Research*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Smith, C. 2003. *Organisation development (OD): What it is and how it  
works*. Work in Progress. Grahamstown: Rhodes University  
Education Department.
- Stake, R.E. 1995. *The art of Case Study Research*. California: SAGE  
Publications, Inc.
- Tracy, B. 2002. *Principles of success [online]*. [www.getmotivation.com](http://www.getmotivation.com)  
[accessed 29/08/06]

- Useem, M. 2001. "The Leadership Lessons of Mount Everest". In: *Harvard Business Review. Breakthrough on Leadership*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Vivalci, P.L. 2005. Servant Leadership. *Army Logistician*, 38(3): 51.
- Weisbord, M. 1987. *Productive workplaces: Organizing and managing for dignity, meaning, and community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Weiss, T. and Kolberg, S. 2003. *Coaching Competencies and Corporate Leadership*. Boca Raton: St. Lucie Press.
- Whetten, D., K. Cameron and M. Woods 2000. *Developing Management Skills for Europe*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Whickens, P. 1999. *Energize Your Enterprise*. Hampshire, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Whyte, W.F., Greenwood, D.J. and Lazes, P. 1991. "Participatory Action Research: Through Practice to Science in Social Research". In Whyte, W.F. (eds). *Participatory Action Research*. California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Williams, A., Woodward, S. and Dobson, P. 2002. *Managing Change Successfully*. London: Thomson.

Wind, J.Y. and Main, J. 1998. *Driving Change*. New York: The Free Press.

Winegardner, K.E. *The case study method of scholarly research*. The graduate school of America [On-line]. Available: <http://www.tgsa.edu/online/cybrary/case1.html>. [accessed 20/11/2007]

Wis, R.M. 2002. "The Conductor as Servant Leader", *Music Educators Journal*, 89(2): 18-22.

Wentz, D.L., Keeling, J.M. and Owen, R.T. 2005. "CEO to CEO", *Association Management*, p.136.

Woods, W. 2006. "Leadership Takes on a Variety of Styles", *Corrections Today*, 68(5) : 8.

Yin, R.K. 1994. *Case Study Research Design and Method*. California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Yukl, G. 1998. *Leadership in Organizations*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall

## Appendix A: Productive Practice Survey



(011) 787-3349/787-2220/789-4628  
200 Main Avenue  
Ferdies  
Randburg, Transvaal  
P.O. Box 756  
Randburg, 2125  
Republic of South Africa

Member and Sole Representative for Entire  
African Region of:  
Teleometrics International  
Houston, Texas

# PRODUCTIVE PRACTICES SURVEY

BY  
JAY HALL, PH.D.

---

## **TELEOMETRICS INTERNATIONAL**

DEDICATED TO HELPING YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

---

1755 WOODSTEAD COURT □ THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS □ 77380 □ (713) 367-0060

---

## Instructions

This is a survey of your managerial practices – and whether or not they are productive. The job of the manager is, obviously, a complex and sometimes difficult one. Yet the behavior of the manager – because of its effects on other people – determines to a large extent the success and productivity of the organization. While there may be factors within the organization itself (e.g., organizational norms) which influence the behavior of both the manager and those who are managed, the fact remains that each manager does have considerable control over (and responsibility for) *what* is actually done. Productive managers engage in behaviors that enable and encourage others to do their best work and ultimately determine how well people can accomplish organizational purpose.

The present survey is designed to tap into some of those factors which may affect the productivity of those being managed. On the following pages are a number of items which address some of the specific behaviors that a manager may or may not engage in. Some may appear desirable to you – as if they promote productivity – and others may seem undesirable and counter-productive. In either event, your task is to respond to each item in terms of *how characteristic that behavior is of you* by indicating how frequently you engage in that particular behavior.

In this booklet you will find a column along the left margin where you are to record your assessment of your current practices – i.e., how often you engage in a particular behavior. Please use the following scale in making your ratings:

- My  
Actual Practices
- As a manager, I do this:
- 9 Always
  - 8 Nearly always
  - 7 Frequently
  - 6 Quite often
  - 5 Half the time
  - 4 Sometimes
  - 3 Hardly ever
  - 2 Rarely
  - 1 Never

In order to give the most representative profile of yourself, please read each item carefully and respond in terms of the extent to which these behaviors are *actually* practiced by you as a manager. Hence, for a statement like, "I tell people just what I think of them," you need to consider not whether it is a "productive" practice but, rather, how characteristic this statement *really* is of your behavior. Again, it is not what you would *like* to do but what you *actually* do. Thus, it may be of value to consider your behavior over the past 6-12 months as you try to determine the degree of characteristicness of each item.

### THIS IS INFORMATION FOR YOU

Try to be as honest and objective as you can in appraising your practices. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. *An accurate rating of what you do is the only answer that will provide you with valid and useable information about yourself.*

You may have an opportunity to compare your self-ratings with other ratings of your practices provided by some of the people you manage. This makes the accuracy of your assessment all the more important.

Copyright 1987 Jay Hall  
Published by Teleometrics International, Inc.

## Productive Practices Survey

### My Practices

### Subordinate Ratings

		A	B	C	D	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. I treat all the people I work with - subordinates, colleagues, and bosses - with respect.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. I discourage pre-judging anyone or looking upon people more or less favorably because of the particular work they do.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. I avoid playing favorites; I treat everyone according to the same rules of fairness.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Through both my words and practices I demonstrate that anyone who does a job this organization needs accomplished is considered important and worthy in his or her own right.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. I oppose factors like titles, education, or job complexity being any basis for special privileges or extraordinary treatment.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. I actively work to erase any "hard line" of separation between bosses and their subordinates and to bridge the gap between those with formal authority and those without.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. I openly work for policies and procedures that display my confidence that all the people in this organization are both able and want to do what needs to be done.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. I try personally - and encourage others - to operate on the principle that each of us has something special to offer.					Actual
						Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 1					Actual
						Desired

**My Practices**

**Subordinate Ratings**

		A	B	C	D	
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. I make sure that people have all the information they feel they need to do their jobs the best way possible.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. I make sure that people have access to and contact with those individuals with whom they must coordinate their efforts.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	11. I encourage people to express freely their opinions and make suggestions about their work and how it might be better accomplished.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	12. I get people together to critique operations and solve common problems.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	13. I recommend ways to insure that people who depend on one another for support or whose jobs are inter-related are in reasonable proximity to one another.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	14. I give visible support to people who are trying to express their opinions, make suggestions, or critique the way we do things.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	15. I specifically ask for peoples' ideas regarding changes in procedures, staffing, supplies, etc., which would make for more efficient and productive performance in their jobs.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	16. I provide a psychological climate that encourages people to say whatever is on their minds.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 2					Actual Desired

**My Practices**

**Subordinate Ratings**

17. I can be counted on to follow up on agreed upon plans and action steps and keep people informed on the status of their proposals.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

18. I make an honest effort to do what I have told people I will do.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

19. I shoot straight with people - on both pleasant and not so pleasant issues - so that they know where I stand.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

20. I support periodic review of the policies and operating procedures governing peoples' work so that we can update our practices and get rid of counter-productive rules and expectations.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

21. I encourage a search for the most straightforward means possible to good personal performance by weeding out restrictive or self-defeating job requirements.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

22. I honestly assure people that the ideas and suggestions they give me are not only welcomed, but will receive my serious consideration.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

23. I behave in ways - in words and deed - that encourage and justify people trusting me.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

24. I try to be authentic and spontaneous in all my relationships and avoid phoney or contrived behaviors.

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

Component 3

A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired

Dimension 1

**My Practices**

**Subordinate Ratings**

		A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	25. I encourage people to make their own on-the-job decisions and to do what they think best in getting their work out.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	26. I question people about the administrative supports - rules, policies, controls, etc. - they need to do their best work.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	27. I discourage blind obedience to rules and policies that get in the way of peoples' best efforts.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	28. I try to give people power and opportunities to influence decisions affecting their work.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	29. I encourage people to question traditional ways of doing things and, when it seems necessary, actually to test the system for more productive procedures.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	30. I encourage self-control and self-direction rather than directives and prohibitions imposed by someone else.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	31. I want people to feel that their opinions and job knowledge are important and that each of them can actually make a difference in how work is accomplished.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	32. I try to put decision-making power at the lowest level needed to get the job done as quickly and as well as possible.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 4						

**My Practices**

**Subordinate Ratings**

		A	B	C	D	Actual	Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	33. I discourage "busy work" or people trying to fill their time with meaningless activities.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	34. I try to insure that people spend their time on work in which they are most interested and to which they can contribute most.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	35. I make sure people are not asked to work on projects or take on responsibilities that are not centrally related to the work they are supposed to do.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	36. I encourage people to treat their work as an opportunity for self-expression.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	37. I encourage people to feel good about themselves when they do a good job.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	38. I encourage people to take pleasure from doing tasks that really need to be done.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	39. I publicly emphasize the importance of each person's work and how it contributes to overall organizational objectives.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	40. I try to help people see the relevance - personal and organizational - of the work they do.						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 5						

**My Practices**

**Subordinate Ratings**

		A	B	C	D	
<input type="checkbox"/>	41. I encourage people to learn one another's jobs so that they can help each other when the need arises					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	42. I promote collaboration toward common goals and discourage competition between individuals or groups.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	43. I try to promote a feeling that we are all in this - i.e., making the organization work well - together and what is good for one is good for us all.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	44. I discourage "rugged individualism" or people isolating themselves from their co-workers.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	45. I try to get people to rely on one another for help and encouragement in doing their work.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	46. I work toward people feeling a shared commitment to one another and to the goals of their work group.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	47. I stress the idea that we are mutually responsible to one another and personal practices should be geared to the common good as much as possible.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	48. I strive for a sense of community - of mutual reliance and belonging - in the workplace.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 6					Actual Desired

Dimension II

**My Practices**

**Subordinate Ratings**

		A	B	C	D	
<input type="checkbox"/>	49. I see to it that the workplace is organized and laid out in a way that facilitates rather than hinders people accomplishing their work objectives.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	50. I try to discourage the notion that work is an onerous or boring chore, simply to be endured rather than enjoyed.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	51. I encourage people to organize their own work activities - flow, sequence, schedules, and job components - in ways that not only help them do their best, but get the most personally out of working where they do.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	52. I routinely ask people what tools or equipment they need to do their best work, irrespective of what the "manual" or "job design plan" might say.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	53. I encourage people to experiment with different ways of doing their work which might lead to better performance.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	54. I emphasize the fact that working well is one of the healthiest things a person can do in life.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	55. I place much more emphasis on the quality of the end product than I do meeting production schedules or being cost effective.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	56. I try to create a free-flow work environment that is challenging, supportive of peoples' efforts, and encourages their best work.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 7					Actual Desired

**My Practices**

**Subordinate Ratings**

		A	B	C	D	
<input type="checkbox"/>	57. I routinely mingle with people on the job, joking with them and seeing how they're doing in their work.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	58. I encourage people to talk with one another - both about their work and more personal issues - whenever they like.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	59. I promote the idea that work can be fun and try to set an example for making the workplace light and productive at the same time.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	60. I try to champion a norm of candor and openness among people at work.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	61. I help people to be relaxed and spontaneous - to know that they are free to fail - both in dealing with one another and in individual performance.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	62. I promote a ground rule of empathy and mutual understanding among people who work together.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	63. I discourage secretiveness or "one-upmanship" on the part of anyone.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	64. I do what I can to make the workplace socially stimulating, interpersonally rewarding, and a place where people like to spend their time and energies.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 8					Actual Desired



My Practices

Subordinate Ratings

		A	B	C	D	
<input type="checkbox"/>	65. I encourage people to look for novel solutions when faced with problems in their work, rather than automatically responding "by the book."					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	66. I welcome and reward innovative insights or creative ideas people have gained from their work, no matter how far-out they may seem at first.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	67. I try to get the people who share a problem to also share the decision making that will solve it.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	68. I encourage people to get the most reliable information they can and to draw fully on one another's expertise in solving work-related problems.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	69. I am - and encourage others to be - open to ideas and suggestions from the most unlikely sources when we are looking for the best way to accomplish a task.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	70. I discourage the idea that our policies or procedures are "set in cement" and not to be tampered with when they get in the way of properly doing our jobs.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	71. I view differences of opinion as healthy and do what I can to prevent premature smoothing over, suppressing, or going around conflicts between people.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	72. I do not reward poor decisions or make-do solutions to problems simply because they conform to policy or precedent.					Actual Desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Component 9					Actual Desired
<input type="radio"/>	Dimension III					

## Instructions for Scoring Your Productive Practices Survey

The *Productive Practices Survey* assesses your practices regarding nine component areas of management. A separate score for each of the nine components may be computed. Each component is assessed by eight items and uses one page of the survey. Therefore, when asked to do so:

*Please add the eight scores for each page and place the total in the component box provided.*

The nine components of management practice combine, three at a time, to yield three dimension scores. Therefore, please proceed to:

- 1. Add components 1-3 and enter the total in the Dimension I circle provided.*
- 2. Add components 4-6 and enter the total in the Dimension II circle provided.*
- 3. Add components 7-9 and enter the total in the Dimension III circle provided.*

## Appendix B: Productive Practice Survey Results

	Components	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Number of Participants</b>										
1		15	19	17	17	14	16	8	8	14
2		56	53	57	58	54	54	54	39	34
3		42	67	60	69	66	39	49	15	53
4		40	8	8	14	14	19	16	8	49
5		20	21	11	27	27	14	13	10	16
6		17	20	16	25	23	17	17	9	34
7		52	33	48	45	49	53	53	47	52
8		56	50	54	59	61	63	59	61	58
9		58	55	57	57	56	56	48	38	46
10		57	33	56	40	49	19	29	29	25
11		70	61	72	58	62	70	81	43	51
12		54	44	44	52	53	50	44	28	38
13		38	43	31	43	24	34	43	14	31
14		44	66	57	54	69	51	58	39	47
15		8	14	22	39	17	19	18	8	17
16		57	42	45	56	64	43	28	23	44
17		69	52	48	47	55	41	42	40	42
18		43	51	58	49	69	61	53	41	46
19		70	72	62	64	72	66	66	58	63
20		43	44	40	46	55	31	46	23	57
21		51	50	41	33	34	57	46	51	41
22		60	63	47	44	57	41	44	30	42
23		54	18	33	38	38	31	32	20	30

**a. Management Values:**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Hugo's score on Management Values:</b>
10	Low
6	Below Average
4	Average
3	Above Average
0	High

**b. Support Structures:**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Hugo's score on Support structures:</b>
8	Low
9	Below Average
1	Average
2	Above Average
4	High

**c. Managerial Credibility:**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Hugo's score on Managerial Credibility:</b>
11	Low
4	Below Average
1	Average
6	Above Average

1	High
---	------

**d. Impact:**

Number of Participants	Hugo's score on Impact:
9	Low
6	Below Average
0	Average
6	Above Average
2	High

**e. Relevance:**

Number of Participants	Hugo's score on Relevance:
8	Low
2	Below Average
0	Average
6	Above Average
7	High

**f. Community:**

Number of Participants	Hugo's score on Community:
12	Low
3	Below Average
1	Average
5	Above Average
2	High

**g. Task Environment:**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Hugo's score on Task Environment:</b>
9	Low
4	Below Average
0	Average
6	Above Average
4	High

**h. Social Context:**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Hugo's score on Social Context:</b>
14	Low
6	Below Average
0	Average
2	Above Average
1	High

**i. Problem Solving:**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Hugo's score on Problem Solving:</b>
9	Low
8	Below Average
1	Average
4	Above Average
1	High

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions:

1. What are your thoughts on Hugo's leadership style and how does it affect the staff members including yourself?
2. What type of traits, characteristics and behaviours do you like to see in Hugo as a leader?
3. What are your thoughts on the current situation regarding the human element under Hugo's leadership style within the firm?
4. What changes would you like to see take place in Hugo as a leader and the firm as a whole?

## Appendix D: Feedback forms for feedback discussion session

### Feedback on Productive Practice Survey

#### Problems Identified from Questionnaires

Staff suggested solutions to Identified problems: Were these questions discussed in the feedback?

##### A Management Values

Staff does not feel that Hugo respects them, is fair or appreciates their efforts

What can Hugo do to change this?

##### B Support Structure

Hugo's door is not open to staff to discuss work related problems or make suggestions, he does not participate or allow staff to participate to find solutions, staff isn't supported by Hugo.

What can Hugo do to show support and how can he involve you more and be more involved with you?

##### C Managerial Credibility

Staff do not trust or have confidence in Hugo as a leader. They do not receive feedback from him or feel that they can depend on promises he makes.

What can Hugo do to change this?

##### D Impact

Members of staff don't feel empowered to take control of their work or that they have any influence in decision making, Hugo does not give them a feeling of ownership of their tasks.

What should change for you to take control and ownership of the work you do?

##### E Relevance:

Staff doesn't feel that their work is relevant to the organisations objectives. Staff feels that their tasks are mindless or meaningless and not consistent with job expectations or personally meaningful.

What about your job feels meaningless and what would change that?

##### F Community

There is no sense of teamwork, mutual reliance or independence among staff, Hugo does not encourage an environment for this to take place. Because of this there is no commitment to the organisation.

How can Hugo help people in the office to feel more like a team that is working together for a common goal?

---

**G Task Environment****What are your suggestions to change this?**

---

Hugo does not allow staff to be innovative when it comes to their work. Their job design is strict and there is no freedom to redesign one's work to make it easier or faster, no room for failure, necessary for creative problem solving is allowed.

---

**H Social Context****How can Hugo change this?**

---

There is no social climate that inspires fun, openness or interpersonal trust between Hugo and staff; therefore they aren't willing to invest energy for creative insight.

---

**I Problem Solving****How can Hugo change this?**

---

Hugo does not allow staff participation in making decisions that will effect them, he makes no conscious effort to ask their input on problem solving and looking for better alternatives for the way things are done.

---

## Appendix E: Samples of staff members suggested solutions to achieve the desired outcome

Feedback on Productive Practice Survey:

Page 1 of 10

Lindy Johnson

From: [REDACTED]  
 Sent: 21 August 2007 11:37 AM  
 To: 'Lindy Johnson'  
 Subject: Feedback on Productive Practice Survey 3

### Feedback on Productive Practice Survey:

Problems Identified from Questionnaires:	Staff suggested solutions to identified problems:
A. Management Values:	What can Gerhard do that will change this?
Staff does not feel that Gerhard respects them, is fair or appreciates their efforts.	Well he can greet more and smile and mabe if efforts has been made that we can at least get a thank you via email of personal just something that we can feel more positive towards our work that we can strive to do better

21/Aug'07

<p><b>B. Support Structure:</b></p>	<p><b>What can Gerhard do to show support and how can he involve you more and be more involved with you?</b></p>
<p>Gerhard's door is not open to staff to discuss work related problems or make suggestions, and he doesn't participate or allow staff to participate in finding solutions, staff isn't supported by Gerhard.</p>	<p>Allow us to be able to go to him with a problem or suggestions that we mite have to improve the company it would also be nice to see him more in the office and to give complements as needed as a compliment from your boss means more to us then a compliment from your IOD</p>

21/Aug/07

<p><b>C. Managerial Credibility:</b></p>	<p><b>What can Gerhard do to change this?</b></p>
<p>Staff members do not trust or have confidence in Gerhard as a leader. They do not receive feedback from him or feel that they can depend on promises he makes.</p>	<p>Well we cant trust him or have confidence in him as we never see us and the only time that we see him in his office if it is for training or being in trouble personally I am still waiting for training that was promised that never came as I think he teaches good and we understand the way he teaches us</p>

<b>D. Impact:</b>	<b>What should change for you to take control and ownership of the work you do?</b>
<p>Members of staff don't feel empowered to take control of their work or that they have any influence in decision making. Gerhard does not give them a feeling of ownership of their tasks.</p>	<p><b>To be liable for your own work to do your work yourself and to know that you must decide what should be done in situations and only have him to approve or decline it</b></p>

21/Aug/07

<p><b>E. Relevance:</b></p>	<p>What about your job feels meaningless and what would change that?</p>
<p>Staff doesn't feel that their work is relevant to the organizations objectives. Staff feels that their tasks are mindless or meaningless and not consistent with job expectations or personally meaningful.</p>	<p>Im happy with all I do</p>
<p><b>F. Community:</b></p>	<p>How can Gerhard help people in the office to feel more like a team that is working together for a common</p>

21/Aug 07

<p>There is no sense of teamwork, mutual reliance or interdependence amongst staff, Gerhard does not encourage an environment for this to take place. Because of this there is no commitment to the organization.</p>	<p>goal? Well first of all create a loving and supportive environment that everyone can be peaceful at make up teams that has to work together and that can work together as a team</p>
<p><b>G. Task Environment:</b></p>	<p>What are your suggestions to change this?</p>
<p>Gerhard does not allow staff to be innovative when it comes to their work. Their job design is strict and there is no freedom to redesign ones</p>	<p>No comment</p>

21/Aug/07

<p>work to make it easier or faster, no room for failure, necessary for creative problem solving is allowed.</p>	
<p><b>H. Social Context:</b></p>	<p><b>How can Gerhard change this?</b></p>
<p>There is no social climate that inspires fun, openness or interpersonal trust between Gerhard and staff; therefore they aren't willing to invest energy for creative insight.</p>	<p>We be more involved with us as staff  I only found out that Gerhard likes art I would have never known if I didn't hear it we know nothing about him he can never stop and ask you how are you coz he is the 'boss' he doesn't have the time let him be more friendly with us</p>

21/Aug/07

<p><b>I. Problem Solving:</b>                  Gerhard does not allow staff participation in making decisions that will affect them, he makes no conscious effort to ask their input on problem solving and looking for better alternatives to the way things are done.</p>	<p><b>How can Gerhard change this?</b>                  Get al the people involved and brain storm ideas its amazing what ideas people come up with things you will never have thought of it works</p>

21/Aug/07

--	--

This message may contain information, which is confidential, private or privileged in nature and subject to legal privilege. It is intended solely for the addressee. If you are not the intended recipient, you may not peruse, use, disseminate, distribute, store or copy this message or file (or any part thereof), which is attached to this message. Any action taken or omitted in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful and access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately by e-mail, facsimile or telephone and thereafter return and/or destroy the original message. Whilst all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the accuracy and integrity of information and data transmitted electronically and to preserve the confidentiality thereof, no liability or responsibility whatsoever is accepted if information or data is, for whatever reason, corrupted or does not reach its intended destination. If any view or opinion is expressed in this e-mail, such views or opinions are those of the sender unless it is clearly stated that it is that of CW Van Huyssteen Inc.

We have taken steps to ensure that this message, and any attachments or hyperlinks contained therein, are free from computer viruses and the like. However, in accordance with good computing practice the recipient is responsible for ensuring that it is actually virus free before opening it. CW van Huyssteen Inc accepts no liability of whatever nature for any loss, damage or expense of

21/Aug/07

whatsoever nature and arising from whatsoever cause and whatever such loss, damage, liability or expense is actual, contingent, consequential, direct or indirect. Opening of the message itself or any files attached to this message is therefore at the sole risk of the recipient. None of our employees is permitted to send unsolicited messages and our company cannot be held liable therefore. Should this message contain an unacceptable communication, spam, derogatory statements, defamatory statements, chain letters or offensive material of any nature, it means that the messages been sent outside the sender's scope of employment with CW van Huyssteen Inc and only the sender can be held liable in his/her personal capacity.

21/Aug/07

**Feedback on Productive Practice Survey:**

Problems Identified from Questionnaires:	Staff suggested solutions to identified problems:
<p><b>A. Management Values:</b></p>	<p><b>What can Gerhard do that will change this?</b></p>
<p>Staff does not feel that Gerhard respects them, is fair or appreciates their efforts.</p>	<p>Too Get more involve with the staff. Show some interest in what the staff is doing encourage the staff even though we need some other things the staff get the work done.</p>

<b>B. Support Structure:</b>	<b>What can Gerhard do to show support and how can he involve you more and be more involved with you?</b>
<p>Gerhard's door is not open to staff to discuss work related problems or make suggestions, and he doesn't participate or allow staff to participate in finding solutions, staff isn't supported by Gerhard.</p>	<p>By having more staff meetings were he is present at all times. Also sometimes we have suggestions on to do our work it be even just like</p>

C. Managerial Credibility:	What can Gerhard do to change this?
<p>Staff members do not trust or have confidence in Gerhard as a leader. They do not receive feedback from him or feel that they can depend on promises he makes.</p>	<p>This is true.  He must keep his word  and try his very best to  provide staff with feedback</p>

<b>D. Impact:</b>	<b>What should change for you to take control and ownership of the work you do?</b>
<p>Members of staff don't feel empowered to take control of their work or that they have any influence in decision making, Gerhard does not give them a feeling of ownership of their tasks.</p>	<p>He must see things from our point of view. He must connect with the staff.</p>

<b>E. Relevance:</b>	<b>What about your job feels meaningless and what would change that?</b>
<p>Staff doesn't feel that their work is relevant to the organizations objectives. Staff feels that their tasks are mindless or meaningless and not consistent with job expectations or personally meaningful.</p>	

<p><b>F. Community:</b></p>	<p><b>How can Gerhard help people in the office to feel more like a team that is working together for a common goal?</b></p>
<p>There is no sense of teamwork, mutual reliance or interdependence amongst staff, Gerhard does not encourage an environment for this to take place. Because of this there is no commitment to the organization.</p>	<p>ENCOURAGEMENT, SUPPORT</p>

<b>G. Task Environment:</b>	<b>What are your suggestions to change this?</b>
<p>Gerhard does not allow staff to be innovative when it comes to their work. Their job design is strict and there is no freedom to redesign ones work to make it easier or faster, no room for failure, necessary for creative problem solving is allowed.</p>	

H. Social Context:	How can Gerhard change this?
<p>There is no social climate that inspires fun, openness or interpersonal trust between Gerhard and staff; therefore they aren't willing to invest energy for creative insight.</p>	<p>By showing more interest in what the staff do and involve</p>

I. Problem Solving:	How can Gerhard change this?
<p>Gerhard does not allow staff participation in making decisions that will affect them, he makes no conscious effort to ask their input on problem solving and looking for better alternatives to the way things are done.</p>	<p>Get more involved with the staff committee we have better suggestions.</p>

Appendix F: Samples from suggestion box

Can we get a  
kettle so that  
when we work  
overtime we can  
have coffee plz.

06/09/2007

SUGGESTION / DEMAND: Men's bathroom

Good day Sir

As a male member of staff I feel discriminated against because I have a penis!!!  
As the male members of staff "WE DEMAND!!!" that we receive the following  
accommodating factors in our bathroom:

1. Hand soap
2. Hand towel (that is to be replace once a day with a fresh towel)
3. Air freshener
4. Smelly urinal block to odorize! NO MOTH BALLS OK!!!
5. That the plumbing in the urinals is adequately seen too and repaired!

It's only fair that the male species shares in the same accommodating toiletry factors that  
the female members of staff do in this company!

Especially considering we seem to be the cleaner gender when it comes to the companies  
facilities.

Too long have our ablution accessories demands been ignored! As the men in the firm we  
demand that our rights be heard and accommodated or strike action will follow!!!

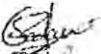
You have until Monday to respond or further action will be taken!  
WE DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS!!! ROCK ON!!!

Please see the undersigned pertained petition signed by the agreeing male parties in the  
firm.

Regards

The Male Union

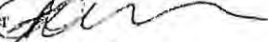
Scott Cockcroft



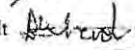
Jonathan Smith



Wayne Philander



Denny Eberhardt



Daniel Amundale



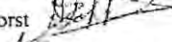
Rory Holtman



Godfrey Eddie



Danie Badenhorst



Joshua Rich



Denver Bright



*If you're not with us! You're against us!* - Male union motto

OK We have  
the microwave  
What is happening  
with the  
fridge??

Hi,

Dont want to loose my job for asking this because everyone knows you're lucky to me working in the first place x

Is there not meant to be a difference between a casual's workers salary & permanent employee's

x 22? x

When sitting in  
reception on your  
relieving day's client  
get frustrated for  
waiting too long there  
is a short in queue  
today's. think we should train  
staff to help out now  
and then with queries.

I think we  
should have  
socials every  
3 months or  
so ???????

To Who it may Concern,

I have an Idea or Two that I think could Get everyone in the office working harder.

1. every month we should have an Employee of the month with a reward of make a Rs.100.00 extra on our salaries and half a day off. That sounds good enough to work for if you ask me!

I just think that if there is a reward given for hardworkers everyone is going to put their best in.

OR

Employee per Department of the month where all the HOD's decide and they get a day off in the month which is even better!

Think about it

It will work!!!

Casual Day fun!

We pay the fee for casual day & dress up.

Then we have a picnic to celebrate Spring!  
Everyone brings a plate of eats (some eats & some drinks) and then we celebrate spring & casual day all in one!

It would be nice if we could have the picnic at another location & not at work, for a relaxed atmosphere ...

This way it costs the company nothing but production!

I hope you like the idea!

Mariska.

## Department Problems Lesson

Other departments ~~to~~ must  
be able to address  
your mistakes in your  
own department  
Reason to recognize it  
and improve to it

## Appendix G: Communication from Mrs. Nesbit regarding the social

Page 1 of 1

29/08/07

Wayne Philander

---

From: Wayne Philander [wphilander@cwvh.co.za]  
Sent: 29 August 2007 10:12 AM  
To: 'Lindy Johnson'  
Cc: 'marlene king'  
Subject: social

Hi Lindy

I've been in contact with the people at buccaneers pub and restaurant and spoke to the manager and after our conversation he said that we can use their venue for our social gathering and asked him if we can braai,he said that they will give us the wooden deck area facing the beach front where we can braai and do our thing,but we have to buy our drinks from them.

wphilander@cwvh.co.za  
LEGAL DEPARTMENT  
CW VAN HUYSSTEEN INC  
Tel: (043) 742 1454/5/8  
Fax: (086) 6290189

## Appendix H: Sample of personal journal

Gerhard has started with the one-on-one sessions with the staff - this will give them a chance to voice issues that they feel that they would rather not raise in the general staff meetings.

So far I have chatted to one or two of the staff about their "feeling" of the sessions. They have indicated that they feel it went well and they did get a chance to say what they wanted to and felt better for it. They felt encouraged by the session and hopefully it will go towards ~~an~~ ending the "negativity"

x ————— x

## Appendix I: Micro Design for the Workshop- Feedback session

Venue: Law firm board room

Time: 10:00 am

Pre-Arrangements:

1. Give Denver the result slides in advance to have the overhead projector with slides ready.
2. Meet Veronica at the boardroom at 8:30am to delegating the placing of tea, coffee and water in the board room.
3. Arrange with Mrs. Nesbit that staff members be notified in advance to bring a pen or pencil to the Feedback Session.
4. Feedback session Feedback forms, for anonymous suggestions should some staff members wish to not participate verbally in discussion of topics presented.

Agenda:

1. Opening and welcome.
2. Questionnaire results.
3. Results discussion.
4. Suggestions.
5. Evaluation.
6. Closure.

