Week 3: Leadership Review

This week has been a rollercoaster for our group. On one end, we didn't finish the practice rounds how we wanted to but on the other, we finally got on the same page as a team and produced a respectable start to the real competition. I felt like our team was going through a kind of existential crisis when we met this week as we sought to figure ourselves out, however, with the support of Peter, we regathered ourselves and put some conviction behind our plans, improving our strategy and our decision making processes with quick effect.

As the CEO, I'm naturally in a different position as I'm more of an overseer and GM rather than in-charge of managing specific portfolios, for example. But with this more generalised position comes greater responsibility, and through the reading by Yukl, I have come to learn about many of the different facets of leadership and managing a team which relate to us.

Like, Yukl said, managers rarely sit down when they are in action to focus on things. Rather, they are constantly engaging in different activities, most of which are brief in duration (2013). I realised this as one second I would be trying to grasp what is happening with plant production and the next I am being asked about our plans for capital raising. Indeed, "interruptions occur frequently, conversations are disjointed, and important activities are interspersed" (Yukl, 2013). As a leader, I must learn that we need to be quick-minded and have a sound understanding of what is happening in all areas of our business. The reading later goes to state that this is a common stereotype - the belief that managers spend lots of time at their desk analysing problems and devising solutions - instead, we actually spend very little time in 'reactive planning' and are often left to decide without much prior thought (Yukl, 2013).

Yukl expands, as managers, our main responsibility is to make "decisions about objectives, strate-gies, operational procedures, and the allocation of resources" (2013). Typically, this is done through determining if a problem is familiar or new to us, and if they are the former, we usually apply our past experiences and knowledge to solve these problems. However, this has been by far the most foreign team exercise I have ever encountered and hence, it has taken me sometime to really adjust to this change of taking charge of a virtual business with new concepts e.g. SCU's, and having to stay up-to date in so many new areas. I think this will come with time, however, and this process has been made a lot easier by my team who have supported and authorised all major decisions, just as Yukl explained they do in managerial theory as peers are consulted, as we make our final sets of decisions for rollover (2013).

Yukl's descriptive studies also found that planning by managers is often informal and implicit. Quinn supported this by saying that "most of the important strategic decisions are made outside the formal planning process, and strategies are formulated in an incremental, flexible, and intuitive manner" (1980, as cited in Yukl, 2013). I have found this to be very true for our group as well. We have been making our decisions very informally through discussions and messages rather than through rigid fill-out forms etc. However, on a personal level, we feel this really suits our team style, especially being an all-boys group that thinks logically, is full of good conversationalists and that has not had much rigidity and formality engrained into our personal teamwork and decision making processes before. So we will continue to keep up the team chemistry and camaraderie as our decision making largely links/intertwines with this.

Furthermore, I wanted to do a quick review of how I have been performing as CEO in relation to Mintzberg's Taxonomy of Roles. I believe I have been perf orming my job well when it comes to say, the leader and figurehead roles etc., particularly the former. I continue to place utmost importance on making sure Peak Performance Bro's function as an integrated unit in pursuit of our basic purpose i.e. to increase our SHV, through providing guidance to my peers, speaking with each team member, keeping their motivations high etc (Yukl, 2013).

However, on the otherhand, I also see lot of room for improvement for myself, especially in the Monitor and Entrepreneur roles. As Mintzberg discussed, in the Monitor role, I need to continually seek information from different sources so we can analyse these and discover the problems and opportunities for our group to better develop our understandings of external and internal events and processes (1973, as cited in Yukl, 2013). So on this front, in the coming weeks, I will be seeking to interpret the spreadsheets devised by Peter, for example, and the higher-level ins and outs of the simulation so I can also expand into the entrepreneur role, i.e. where I can "act as an initiator and designer of controlled change to exploit these opportunities to improve" our bike business... This will be done through the development of new bikes, the purchase of new resources and reorganisation of different processes in the weeks to come (Yukl, 2013). Thus, I aspire to competently combine several of Mintzberg's roles, especially entrepreneur, monitor and leader roles together.

Finally, under the Guidelines for Managers, going forward, my focus will be centred on: what we want to accomplish, planning our weekly activities and how we use that time, looking for connections among problems and experimenting with innovative solutions as we aim to propel ourselves out of the endzone and towards the top of the class ladder (Yukl, 2013).

References:

Yukl, G. A. (2013). Nature of Managerial Work. *Leadership in Organisations, 8*(1), 23-47.