

I. ABSTRACT:

First an introduction of the management background of China and ancient Chinese philosophy is provided. Then, through the illustration of a combined management philosophy, efforts are focused on the exploration of spiritual leadership in modern management. In the four levels of my management philosophy, the first two levels are about what kinds of principles managers should stick to in management. How managers can achieve the prime level of management art is discussed through personality accomplishment. Finally a conclusion is drawn.

II. INTRODUCTION

In China, we do not have a systemic management concept until the introduction of western management in mid 80's. Though management had been very popular as a course in universities during that time, students had great difficulties in finding a job in the area. However, in the recent few years, management has become popular again in China and MBA students are often lured to many companies, especially to some multinational companies.

Similar to other Chinese, who have inherited Confucianism or Taoism ideas before starting their normal education, I have been using a traditional concept to direct my behavior at work.

I have been believing that western management concepts were in conflict with my traditional concepts because western management focuses on the outer forces while eastern philosophy pays much more attention to the inner forces of human being and the balance between man and nature. Despite major differences, recently, I discovered that both the western and eastern ideas shared something in common in basic principles of management, which I will elaborate further in the rest of my paper. Both share similar attitudes about what it means to be human, the so-called "overlapping consensus" according to philosopher John Rawls in his book.

Before demonstrating my philosophy of management, I would like to briefly introduce some concepts in the main Chinese philosophy systems, which have influenced my management a lot.

Yin and Yang are the basic elements of everything in the universe. The concept of Yin and Yang applies to many more issues of life than merely the relationship between man and woman. To achieve the harmony and balance of Yin and Yang is the trend and rule of the universe, which can help to understand the development of world economy and the basic ideas in management.

Confucianism has five concepts: **Jen, Chun tzu, Li, Te and Wen**. *Confucius* built his concepts from the basic understandings from the concepts of heaven and earth, the importance of age, and Yin and Yang.

Taoism was established by Lao Tzu with his great book *Tao Te Ching*. The word "Tao" literally means The Way or path, but in *Taoism*, Tao means much more than that. It also means "the union of opposites by the middle way." (C. G. Jung) The 5,000 words in *Tao Te Ching* include the basic life principles of the universe - the human way of life, the rhythm of nature and the integrating spirit of the whole. *Taoism* management regards "Wu-Wei" as the prime state in

management. *Taoism* encourages not to be rigid and aggressive, but flexibility and simple naturalness are encouraged.

III. THE PARADOX IN GLOBALIZATION

As John Naisbitt mentioned in “*the Global Paradox*”, the considerations shaping the world are: 1) the collapse of communism; 2) the revolution of telecommunication and high-tech; 3) the rise of the Asia-Pacific Region.” From the perspective of Yin and Yang, we can find out this inevitable trend of globalization. The big difference in capital, cost of raw material, labor cost and high-tech between the western and eastern countries could be regarded as Yin and Yang factors, these factors gradually exchange by way of international trade which will lead to a new balance.

With the globalization of the world economy, what kind of values should be regarded as the starting point as the managers formulate and evaluate standards of ethical conduct at home and abroad? The principle, which is recognizable around world, is what *Confucius* counsels people to maintain reciprocity, or “*not to do to others what you do not want to be done to yourself*”.

IV. THE FOUR LEVELS IN MY MANAGEMENT

We are facing a rapidly changing world economy, what managers should do and what the new management should lead to? “To operate in chaotic environments, managers must work smarter in new ways. They must work smarter collectively (developing supportive attachments to others), reflectively (reframing perspectives on organizational problems), and spiritually (attuning themselves to timeless truths)” (from Page 365 *Managing as a Performing Art*)

There are four levels in my management philosophy, which are also the principles and goals I have been keeping as a guide to my behavior during my management experience:

A. “Do not do unto others what you would not want done unto yourself” (*Confucianism*)

This is the principle managers should keep in their handling issues. To illustrate it further, it is essential that managers must not treat subordinates simply as tools. The right way is to recognize a person’s value as a human being and treat people in way that respects people’s basic rights. The video *The Man Talking To Horses* has shown us a good idea of how finding out the human nature would help to access others more easily.

The so-called “Hiding the Light” strategy could also direct managers’ behavior. “When one is about to take an inspiration, he is sure to make an expiration; when he is going to weaken another, he will first strengthen him, ...” (from *Tao Te Ching*)

The above principle and strategy can also direct managers to issue orders and solve the paradox between the issuer and the receiver. The way it works is to help people get used to the patterns of the order or help create new habit patterns. According to the paradox of issuing and receiving an order, “we see that people can obey an order only if previous habit patterns are appealed to or new ones created... the order must be integral to the situation and must be recognized as such.” (*The Giving of Orders* by Mary Parker Follett)

B. “Leading others to lead themselves”

We should say good bye to the era of such famous historical leaders as Caesar, Napoleon, George Washington, and Churchill, when the leader is the one who has either power or authority to command others. “Leading others to lead themselves” suggests a new measure of a leader’s strength — the ability to maximize the contributions of others through recognition of their right to guide their own destiny, rather than the ability to bend the will of others to one’s own. Leading others to lead themselves means bringing out the best lying within those that surround the leader.

What a manager should do first is to motivate the self-leadership of his subordinates. “Self-leadership can be defined as the influence we exert upon ourselves to achieve the self-motivation and the self-direction we need to perform. An important way to measure your own success is through the success of others.” (*Manager’s Bookshelf*)

To achieve self-leadership, managers should act as a mentor. Through mentoring, managers are winning respect and trust from mentoring the employees while strengthening their loyalty. As the Chinese saying goes, “Give people a fish, and they will be fed for a day; teach them to fish, and they will be fed for a lifetime.” The best of all leaders is the one who helps people so that, eventually, they do not need him or her.

I benefited greatly from mentoring during my experience in starting my small business in China. At the very beginning, I had only several sales people, who had never done any insurance before. I trained them and made them skilled salesmen. We had a morning meeting everyday. During the half-hour meeting, we can talk about the frustration or failures of the previous day. I would encourage one of them to talk about his experience and tell others his suggestions. Later, the regular meeting was hosted by one of them everyday. We even song some songs or slogans to stimulate the courage and recover the frustration. I would not like to treat my subordinates as though they were pieces on a chessboard. My style of leadership in my company was powerfully indirect. My success was based on consistently encouraging, developing, and benefiting from the effectiveness of others, and these are the key points to achieve self-leadership.

Super-leadership consists of a practical set of strategies designed to bring out and develop the self-leadership potential of subordinates. This set of strategies is as follows: set a positive self-leadership model or example for subordinates, provide encouragement and guidance for their progress and at last praise or provide some available rewards to stimulate their further performance.

C. Be willing to stay in lower position and to be able to contain

To “get ahead,” it is best to lie low and keep quiet. As a manager, it is a wise way to be lured by his subordinates and open the way to more creative ideas and suggestions.

To achieve it, just learn something from the wisdom of the seas and rivers. “That whereby the rivers and seas are able to receive the homage and tribute of all the valley streams, is their skill in being lower than they; it is thus that they are the kings of them all.” In this way, though a manager has his place above his people, men do not feel his weight. Instead, when a manager

puts his place below his people, make his subordinates easily accessible to him and is willing to hear either positive or negative ideas from anybody, he becomes the king of his men just like seas or rivers are the king of all valley streams. Therefore, all in the world delight to exalt him and do not weary of him. “Because he does not strive, no one finds it possible to strive with him.” (*Tao Te Ching*) To be modest and to reconcile the extremes are required for a manager. Managers should always remember that they are serving their employees first thus far to serve their customers well.

D. “Does nothing (Wu-Wei) and so there is nothing which it does not do” (Tao Te Ching)

This is the highest level in my management. “Wu-Wei”, or “Creative Quietude”. Literally translated as do-nothingness. “Wu-Wei” refers to the idea of not forcing something. “A oneness of mental, physical, and spiritual energy often surfaces in descriptions of peak performance.” “Wu-Wei” maintains the unity of time, of thought and action, and of self and environment. (*Managing as a performing art*) This level is rather a spiritual state of a human than any physical sensible or descriptive condition.

After going through the first three levels, managers can climb to the highest level, which is not only the highest level in management, but also is the most ideal way to lead a perfect life. The power of authority itself is not important but the power of personality becomes the key factor to successful management. Under this circumstance, Wu-Wei managers have lots of creative employees around them, who benefit from the mentoring and can lead themselves well and they have solved the paradox of confronting different value system and will also find the power of the teamwork.

At the organizational level, when there are trust-worthiness, trust and super-leadership, a flat and flexible structure rather than a rigid, hierarchical system will facilitate the attainment of organizational goals.

1. The power of teamwork:

Though there are also problems with teams. Teams are the keys to improving organizational performance. The real teams develop when groups of people work together with mutual support, trust-based relationships, and meaningful purpose with everyone with everyone being expected to think and grow. From a performance perspective, teams are generally superior to individuals performing alone or in-groups. As a result, they will be the building block of organizations in the future. (In *The Wisdom of Teams* by Katzenbach and Smith)

2. The power of perfect personality:

“Wu-Wei” is often mistakenly believed to be a state of passive way to handle issue, which is actually a misunderstanding. People just see the superficial results while failing to consider the tough process of achieving this level. To make a great manager must first make a perfect personality. To do that, just to be as pure and powerful as water.

There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, and yet for attacking things that firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it. For there is nothing for which it

can be changed. The soft overcomes the hard, and the weak the strong. Wu-Wei managers are just like water; On the one hand they so soft and weak that nobody will think them as a threat, on the other hand they are so powerful and threatening that there is nothing can suppress them. Use this way to lead a organization will be so effective that the employees will regard their managers as the center of all and their competitors could never overthrow.

V. CONCLUSION

From the above statement, I roughly conclude that my philosophy of management is the combination of western concepts with some traditional Chinese principles. Generally speaking, my philosophy of management mainly focuses on one point -- to achieve greatest success in management, you must first accomplish a perfect personality.

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