

# Research on Harmonious Management Leadership Based on Action Learning

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**Abstract:** Leadership development is considered to be the main way to promote organizational change and deal with environmental challenges, and action learning is an effective way to quickly improve leadership. Action learning is often ranked first in surveys on the best ways to develop organizational leadership. The concept of action learning has been mentioned frequently in domestic literature, but its role in leadership development is quite rare. In reality, due to multiple values, intertwined contradictions and entangled interests, the organization is facing greater challenges in achieving strategic objectives and healthy development. As a new way of leadership development, action learning is being practiced and recognized by more and more organizations. Action is like a necklace, which strings together leadership development tools such as assessment, curriculum, coaching and management consulting around the theme like pearls. It has the characteristics of accuracy, effectiveness and experience, and finally achieves the dual purposes of problem solving and leadership promotion. Based on the related theories of action learning and leadership development, this paper discusses the relationship and function between the core concept of action learning and the development of leadership by action learning.

**Keywords:** Learning, Harmonious Management Leadership

## 1. Introduction

With the intensification of market competition, enterprises pay more and more attention to strategic positioning and talent development, especially the cultivation and development of leadership. In fact, 70% of the improvement of leadership comes from learning from experience, 20% from learning from others, and only 10% from participating in training courses [1]. Since its introduction into China at the end of the 20th century, after years of development, action learning has taken root and blossomed in China and become an effective method to promote the development of major projects and cultivate the growth of important cadres [2]. For some time, domestic researchers have mentioned the concept of action learning more frequently, but it is quite rare to touch on its role in the development of organizational leadership [3]. Faced with the rapid changes of economic and social environment, how to quickly improve the leadership of managers to effectively promote organizational change has become a major challenge for organizations [4]. In all kinds of leadership development practices, action learning method has been accepted, applied and promoted by all kinds of organizations around the world, and achieved amazing results. It is considered as a secret weapon to rapidly improve leadership ability, performance and organizational change. Action is one of the most effective ways to improve leadership, and it is also the most realistic and visible way to realize learning organization [5].

In today's world, the tide of economic globalization is surging, and science, technology and social productivity are advancing by leaps and bounds [6]. Facing the complexity and diversity of social structure and the rapid change of social situation, the development of leadership and its leadership ability has encountered unprecedented challenges [7]. In particular, Chinese enterprises lack leadership talents and face the challenge of scarcity of leadership talents. In various leadership development plans and practices, action learning method has been accepted and applied by various enterprises all over the world. The basic belief of action learning is that without action, there will be no learning, and without learning, there will be no wise action [8]. There are three main factors in learning: participants, problems and sharing groups or teams. They make progress through mutual support and mutual challenge (questioning). Action learning is a process of continuous learning and reflection by a group of colleagues around unanswered real questions. It has dual goals: solving practical problems and

developing individual and collective abilities. The development strategy and business status of the enterprise are the "compass" of leadership development, which can help the project team focus on the key capabilities and behaviors of the enterprise. In order to better resist risks and seize opportunities, we must firmly grasp the core element of human growth, especially to effectively enhance the leadership of leaders.

## **2. The Promoting Effect of Action Method on the Development of Management Leadership**

### ***2.1. Action learning can improve leaders' systematic thinking ability***

We live in a closely connected world. To solve problems effectively, we need to have the ability to think systematically. Leaders, in particular, must be able to see the trends and potential problems behind the phenomenon, and be able to foresee the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to the organization. Use this knowledge to analyze and study problems in practical work, propose solutions and put them into practice. From the perspective of developmental experience provided by action learning project to individuals and groups, action learning contains abundant challenges and support, but relatively few evaluations, especially formal evaluations. For leaders, thinking ability is the highest expression of their wisdom. People's way of thinking determines their behavior. The development of the times requires excellent leaders, whose thinking mode should change from closed to open, from singleness to diversification, from static to dynamic, showing the characteristics of systematic thinking. Encourage learners to question and help this learning community balance its action orientation through reflection; Guide the whole learning process and help learners learn how to learn [9]. Action learning projects should be valued and supported by senior managers. Action learning takes solving practical problems in work as the starting point and foothold, and requires leaders to always focus on solving difficult organizational problems, not only pay attention to strategic planning and grasp, but also pay more attention to the process and method in operation. Focus on the unity of personal leadership development and organizational change development. The urgent need for leadership development often comes from the change needs of organizations to cope with the rapidly changing living environment. Leaders are problem-oriented, constantly improve the level of self reflection in the process of solving problems, strengthen the awareness of abiding by rules, cultivate the ability of team spirit and systematic thinking, and constantly realize the perfect unity of problem-solving process and leadership development process at a higher level.

### ***2.2. Learning can improve the communication and coordination ability of leaders***

Leadership is communication. It is human communication that changes the attitude and behavior of others in order to meet the common group goals and requirements. In today's society, communication has become a necessary ability for leaders, so that authoritative professors at Harvard University agree that the real work of leaders is communication. In action learning, people from different organizations, with different disciplinary backgrounds and growth experiences and with different perspectives come together as equal members for wisdom collision and ideological exchange in order to solve common problems. In the process of action learning, team members who trust each other collectively reflect on their assumptions, concepts and methods, influence and stimulate each other, which is conducive to promoting common values, so as to promote a better understanding of "who we are" (as a collective), which reflects the enhancement of social capital in the cognitive dimension. Action learning is an important measure to develop leadership. This method has been verified by the practice of well-known foreign and state-owned enterprises (General Electric Company, China Resources Group, COFCO group, etc.) and plays an important role in developing leadership. When everyone is proud of the team, leaders can also experience the tremendous energy exerted by the team, which is more helpful for leaders to identify with their own team members, consciously act under the team rules, create a good team consciousness and improve their ability to work in the team. The leader helps the learning team by guiding discussion and project process. He will not force others to accept his ideas, but he can guide the members of the action learning team to effectively complete the action learning process and achieve the set goals. In the process of action learning, the development and promotion of managers' personal leadership is also the process of solving organizational problems and promoting organizational change. Cooperation in difficult situations is what leaders should do, and action learning is an effective way to develop this ability. The most important aspect of action learning is the relationship between action and learning. Through reflection on past actions, people will have a clear understanding of the outside world and themselves. At the same time, through reflection on learning, people can build their own

future actions. The process of experiential learning cycle is shown in Figure 1:

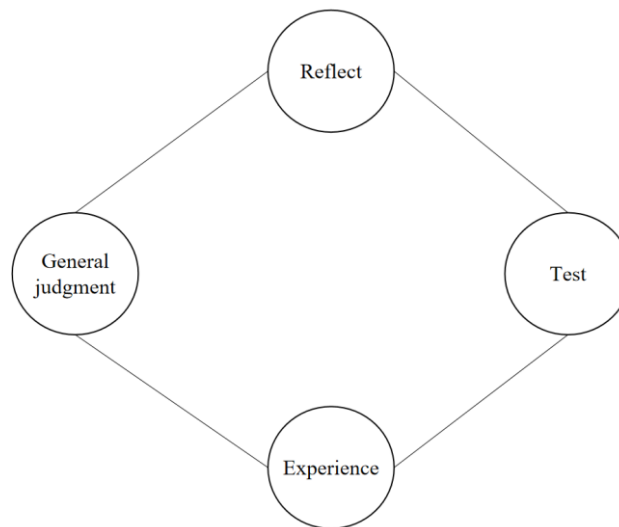


Figure 1: Experiential learning cycle

### 3. Difficulties and challenges faced by enterprise leadership training

#### 3.1. Not systematic enough

Although more and more enterprises attach importance to leadership training and invest more resources to carry out work, the training effect of most enterprises is not obvious, and still face the problem of incompetence of a high proportion of managers. It directly leads to the temporary and acute thought in the selection of training objects, and the lack of training methods for different levels and development needs. There is no consistent system for the management modules of different talents [10]. In Chinese society, due to the influence of thousands of years of feudal culture, leaders, especially the main leaders, have a heavy authority in practical work, which leads to the lack of different voices in organizations, and it is often impossible to effectively discuss issues when making decisions. In action learning, the action learning group will face various challenges, that is, no one will know where to go at first, but through the process of sharing the "at a loss" situation and difficulties encountered, the group began to develop the action goal, that is, gradually clarified where they should go and how to solve problems. The basic belief of action learning is that without action, there is no learning, and without learning, there is no wise action. There is a main factor in learning: participants, problems and sharing groups or teams, who make progress through mutual support and mutual challenge (questioning). Action learning must be based on the team's joint efforts and joint learning, with the goal of achieving organizational performance, based on the management dilemma encountered by managers in the process of practical activities, from "thinking about problems to action practice, and then returning to improved practice from the summary of practice". For many enterprises, although many have established the selection and training system of reserve management cadres, due to the lack of career development channels and no specific training and use plan, successor planning has always been a mere formality.

#### 3.2. Weak pertinence

Single and conventional training methods are difficult to help leaders learn and develop well. The personal knowledge, experience and wisdom of enterprise executives are very limited, and the turnover rate of enterprise executives is often high, so it is difficult for enterprises to obtain sustainable competitive advantage from the management skills of individual executives. Action learning project is a very complicated structural process, and its successful implementation depends on structured operation methods, that is to say, any action learning project must follow a specific process, and this process is closely linked with each other, and any link will affect the final learning effect. Many problems faced by the senior management team of enterprises are global problems, which are complicated and complicated. Traditional leadership training is difficult to meet the expectations of the top managers of enterprises for the development of the organization and the overall performance of

employees, which also leads to the dissatisfaction of the top managers of enterprises with the results of their leadership training. The problems encountered in practical work are often not simple problems, but may be complex problems intertwined with two breakthrough problems and remedial problems; The problems often given in the training are the problems after splitting, which are breakthrough or compensatory. Therefore, one thing that action learning team members need to do is to disassemble the complex problems encountered in their work into one or more simple problems. Because the pertinence is not strong, the learned content is not related to the actual work, so it is difficult to stimulate the students' enthusiasm and motivation for learning; On the other hand, because the training project design is not closely linked to the enterprise strategy, business and performance improvement, many enterprises are not interested in leadership training, are unwilling to spend time and effort in leadership development plans, and senior managers are even unwilling to invest more energy in training.

#### 4. Conclusions

In a word, action learning is flexible, and the process of action learning respects and builds on each person's unique experience. It not only pays attention to the tasks to be completed by participants, but also pays attention to the learners themselves, emphasizing the importance of personal attitude, experience and constant reflection on leadership behavior and decision-making. Action plays a significant role in the development of leadership. Compared with the traditional leadership promotion methods, the characteristics of action learning, such as "learning by doing" and "learning by doing", and its advantages and functions in solving business problems, improving managers' ability and promoting organizational development have prompted many organizations to take action learning as the preferred method of leadership development. The basic leadership training system will always adhere to the concept of action learning as a guide, constantly explore diversified training and guidance modes, provide necessary support for the smooth development of leadership development training, and enable managers to make steady progress from team leadership promotion to organizational leadership promotion. Leadership is the core competitiveness of enterprises. Excellent leadership is different from poor leadership in terms of revenue contribution to the company. The former can bring higher profits to the enterprise. Through the study of professional knowledge, senior management team members obtain rich leadership structured knowledge; Through the study of practical problems, improve the ability to find and analyze problems; Gain leadership experience by solving problems; Finally, the integrated leadership of the senior management team is improved through strategic integration learning.

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