Case Analysis:

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg

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How would Sheryl Sandberg’s leadership style be described

based on the four behavioral leadership styles?

The University of Iowa breaks leadership into autocratic and democratic and Sheryl Sandberg rests on the democratic end of leadership styles. The University of Michigan and Ohio State University would classify Sandberg as an employee-centered leader, focusing on meeting human needs of her employees while providing supportive leadership. “She tends to use a participative leadership style...with an emphasis on influencing and motivating others…” (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 102). A democratic leader encourages participation among their followers and one of the goals of Sandberg’s book, *Lean In*, was to “bring women together” (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 102) to take part in discussions regarding what makes a woman successful.

How does Sandberg’s book *Lean In* emphasize the three content motivation theories?

Sandberg’s book emphasizes Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in its fullest by encouraging women to get involved, pushing self-actualization needs to develop one’s potential in their career. Given that each of Maslow’s needs are cumulative, this is the highest level of need in an individual and encompasses all other levels as well (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 81). *Lean In* focuses on intrinsic motivators such as achievement and advancement (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 82) in the reader’s career. Herzberg argues that motivation is not 2-dimensional (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 84) and satisfaction needs to be taken into consideration on top of the intrinsic motivators. “People want job satisfaction, and they will leave one organization for another to meet this need” (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 80).

How does Sandberg’s book *Lean In* emphasize the three process motivation theories?

Sandberg’s book defines the title, *Lean In*, as a way to motivate other females to embrace success and drive the *Equity Theory*. She believes that change is possible and can happen within by changing the power structure that typically places men at the top of companies and women in the home. Sandberg feels that “half of the companies around the world should be run by women and half of the houses run by men” (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 102) leveling the playing field for women as a whole.

As the COO of Facebook, Sandberg has worked towards removing internal barriers, such as the lack of self-confidence, that many women are subject to within their careers. Giving women the confidence to believe in themselves and that they are capable of achieving their goals demonstrates the *Expectancy Theory* in Sandberg’s book. Further, social media has increased communication between other females and has opened new avenues for support among online communities (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 102).

Which type and schedule of reinforcement will help women advance in business?

Positive reinforcement offering rewards, such as increase in pay or a promotion is necessary to bring women’s pay in line with that of men. Equal pay for equal work will assist in the *Equity Theory*, giving women a goal to work towards that will help meet Maslow’s physiological needs, ensuring that those that typically struggle [financially] are not left out of the equation.

Larger than pay, *Giving Praise* is possibly the “most powerful, simplest, least costly, and yet most underused motivational technique there is” (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 96). Giving praise can help to develop a strong positive self-concept (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 96) in women, adding to the *Expectancy Theory*. This will encourage more women to follow through because they believe they have the ability to do so. “*Continuous Reinforcement* is generally better at sustaining desired behavior” (Lussier & Achua, 2016, p. 96) and when it is coupled with praise, will continue to build up a woman’s confidence, making the journey to a more equal employment a certainty.

References

Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2016). *Leadership: theory, application & skill development*. Boston, MA, USA: Cengage Learning.