The Leading in Context™

Resource Collection

Case Studies #1:

Responsible Leadership Starts at the Top

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Resource Collection

#1: Responsible Leadership Starts at the Top

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Why are you doing this?
Because it's time we all led responsibly. And these materials may help.

The Situation

Many of the managers wanted to see change. They were secretly discussing how to get the senior management team on board. Why weren't the senior leaders listening when line managers told them their concerns about the company falling behind the competition and losing market share? It seemed as though they didn't want to hear the bad news. Even worse, in ignoring the bad news, they were also ignoring the line managers' concerns, which made the managers feel unimportant and helpless. When communication came out from the top, it was too vague to be useful, which added to the frustration. Customer complaints were starting to increase, and some of the customers were pretty upset about the quality of the products and the safety of the materials used to make them. The managers feared that the company would be sued if something didn't change soon.

Discussion Questions

What could be some reasons why the senior leaders are finding it hard to listen to the managers?

How is trust (or the lack of it) involved in this situation?

How is strategic communication involved in this situation?

Who's responsibility is it to correct the problem? What could each of the senior and line leaders involved do to help be part of the solution?

To what degree is keeping up with changing consumer expectations and changing product safety expectations part of ethical leadership?