

LEICESTER CITY-CASE OF EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT-DR RANJITH P V

English Premier League, one of the most famous leagues, commenced with 20 clubs and operates as a corporation with the 20 member clubs as shareholders. The competition commenced after the decisions of clubs in the first division Football League start a new league. People from more than 200 countries watch the Premier League and it is highly popular. Traditionally clubs with history do well in the competition. But Leicester city was an exception. This case analyses the victory and its management lessons.

On 2 May 2016, Leicester City became champions of the English Premier League for the first time after Tottenham Hotspur failed to beat Chelsea .It was their 48th (nonconsecutive) season and they won the premier league which was unprecedented. They were not expected to reach anywhere close to the crown but won the trophy by beating the best of the lot. This was one of the biggest upsets as they were fighting relegation in the previous season

The victory is remarkable as the new management did not have too much time. The earlier manager of Leicester City, Nigel Pearson was sacked in June 2015. Claudio Ranieri was appointed as the new manager who oversaw Chelsea previously. Lot of people criticized the move to appoint Ranieri as the manager. Ranieri kept the staff in place, barring the addition of a fellow Italian Paolo Benetti. His own personality made a big difference. Leicester started in a great fashion. Jamie Vardy created a new record by scoring highest number of goals in four months. Leicester which was languishing at the bottom in the previous season became number one team in the league when they defeated Everton in December. They defeated Sunderland and they ensured the cup when Tottenham won 3 – 0 against Manchester United.

The Leicester City team was his most wonderful creation in a career spanning three decades and more than a dozen clubs. One of Leicester's distinctive traits has been their ability to recoil into defense before springing forward for a devastating offensive, thanks, to the speed of Jamie Vardy and Riyad Mahrez. Ranieri's previous teams had different attributes. He had to adapt, experiment, and figure out a success formula in each case. In Leicester, Ranieri had to be sensitive and tactful. He had inherited a squad that was sad about Nigel Pearson being sacked after leading the team to promotion from the lower division and then somehow surviving albeit via a frantic late surge out of the relegation zone. It was wrong to claim that Ranieri only had to realize that the team merely needed to keep on doing what it had done under his predecessor. Indeed, Ranieri had to adapt quicker to his new surrounds than Pearson did. The main reason Leicester got into

such difficulty in the last season was that Pearson was too slow to change tracks. Leicester were too open until Pearson switched from 4-4-2 for last season's run-in to 3-5-2, with play being dictated from front of the back three by Esteban Cambiasso. Ranieri stuck with that system and convinced the experienced Swiss international, Gökhan Inler, to replace the departed Cambiasso. That was a coup for Ranieri, but he did not let pride stop him from changing his plans when other players like N'Golo Kanté, Danny Drinkwater and Andy King – proved more dynamic than the Swiss.

The Leicester model suggests that non-league players with talent can come at lower prices and still create ripples in the tournament. Capability of management to turn around the team was the main reason behind the success. The team cost less than £50m but their tremendous run has underlined the importance of value for money. Traditional 4-4-2 format was ok if the team had stability and there was belief in the team that they can do well. Ranieri was able to utilize the team spirit, backroom staff and use his expertise to perform better than other managers. Through coaching and cajoling Ranieri helped the players to revel while staying tight, famously keeping his promise to take the whole squad out for a meal for the first clean sheet, after 10 games of the season. The team worked hard for the entire season and used their skills and hard work to the fullest extent. They got right people at the right position and culture in the team was excellent.

Ranieri built the culture further and he did not change the players, used in the same place and that helped the team to perform better. He used the resources better and gave credit of success to the players, supporting staff and management. He listened to the player and tried to bring best out of them by solving the problems with them rather than imposing on them.

It is remarkable that no player from the team was sent off and only two players have missed games through suspension. Ranieri did not speak about winning the crown so that players can play freely and motivated them in all possible ways. The Leicester team was full of players who had failed at their home-town clubs or playing at low leagues but now they were playing at the biggest stage.

Ranieri helped to improve the team morale. As already mentioned, the team had a settled look which helped the players as they were feeling secured. He also allowed them a week off in March which is rarely seen in the league. Through these morale boosting exercises, he made leaders out of his team through his leadership which ultimately helped the team to excel in the tournament and win it which was a huge bonus for a team which was facing relegation in the previous season.

He made the right decisions and had the right tactics. He used data analysis extensively to improve team performance. Players could understand their performances after every match including the tackles, tactical mistakes, runs made by them and mistakes made by them in the penalty box .Each of the training sessions were analyzed using technology to find out fitness levels of players . Overall, he was successful in motivating the players by using the right employee management strategies and improve the playing abilities by right tactics with the help of technology and data analysis.

Success was not easy to be repeated and it is not easy to be consistent. Leicester City was not able to replicate the success but their performance in the 2015-16 season is one to be cherished by the management, supporters, and football lovers. It happened because of the right players with the right management and because of the man management skills of Claudio Ranieri.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Claudio Ranieri improve motivation of employees?
2. What strategies were used by Ranieri which helped in the success of the team?
3. What are the management lessons from the case?

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