

Leadership, Management, or Both?

For more than 20 years, we have worked with individuals who have critical roles in a variety of organizations, helping them do their jobs better. In that time, two things have become very clear:

1. Most organizations are not getting the leadership they need;
2. Those who should be leading often don't know what leadership really is.

The people we work with are, by and large, talented, energetic, and committed to doing the best they can. In spite of that, and the good job they may be doing as managers, they often are not doing what their organizations need most—they are not leading.

We don't distinguish management from leadership to suggest one is "better" than the other. Both are needed for an organization to succeed. And, the distinction is not trivial. Managers and leaders do different things, for different reasons, and impact organizations in different ways. Failure to appreciate these differences is often at the root of unsuccessful efforts to build leadership capability.

Traditionally, management has dominated organizations. The business environment once was more predictable, and relatively constant. Command and control were key to stability. Hierarchical structures put authority in the hands of a few to compensate for the limited education and dedication of the many. Powerful managers made decisions in back rooms; everyone else was expected to comply.

Today, good managers keep an organization running smoothly, headed down its chosen path. They plan, organize, direct, control, and problem solve. Their efforts ensure order and predictability in the short term so that things happen on schedule, on budget and according to standards—important success factors for customers and investors.

The business environment has changed though. Events move fast, often unpredictably. Stakeholders expect more; the value they seek is constantly in flux. The way value is created changes quickly with new technology and innovation. Gradual improvement is not enough. What served well in the past is seldom suited to the future you face, or the future you hope to create.

As important, the people in the organization have changed. They are better educated, with more rounded skills and an orientation to continuous learning—they have more to offer. They also expect to be more involved in the business.

Management that helps you stay the course is not sufficient in these conditions. Someone must see the need for course change to adapt to the environment. People at every level should be quickly engaged in making needed change happen.

Leadership is about change and people. In essence, leaders do two things. They...

Pathfind—size up the current reality of an organization, internal and external, envision a successful future, then clarify the path forward.

Empower—release the unique capabilities in each individual and the synergy in teams, and enable their efforts to contribute to the organization's success.

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Leaders take a long term view, creating then re-creating organizations for sustainable success. Their focus is change, rather than constancy. While managers operate, leaders navigate.

Organizations choose managers, but followers choose leaders. A leader's influence is rooted in their person, rather than their position. By focusing on empowering people rather than working the plan, leaders inspire energy and engagement—just what's needed when a change encounters inevitable barriers and problems.

So why isn't enough leadership happening?

History plays a part—especially a successful history. When what we are doing stops working, most of us, individuals and organizations, redouble our efforts. We do more of what made us successful in the past. That often means more management. But if lack of leadership is the real problem, managing harder or faster won't help.

Leadership also fails to emerge if potential leaders do not have a clear definition of what leadership is and why it is important. They won't assess their own capabilities accurately, and will not be proactive in pursuit of leadership opportunities.

Finally, organizations often do little to help leaders emerge, and may even get in their way. Leadership potential is barely considered in many management hiring decisions, little relevant training is offered, and role models are few and far between. Worse, anyone who steps up to lead risks the wrath of management for any errors or missteps.

Consider what's happening in your organization...

Are you getting the leadership you need?

What is getting in the way of potential leaders?

Learning Activity: The Balance of Leadership and Management in Your Organization

An organization needs both managers and leaders to succeed. Management has been the dominant force, but future success seems to depend on the emergence of strong leadership. The table below summarizes some distinctions between management and leadership made by a number of well-known authors in the field.

Take a few moments to review these distinctions, then consider, “What is the current status of management and leadership in your organization: high management, high leadership or an appropriate balance of both?”

	<i>Management</i>	What is your balance?					<i>Leadership</i>
		High	Balanced	High	High	High	
Seeks	Stability and continuity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Change and renewal
Goal	Efficiency— doing things right	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Effectiveness— doing the right things
Power Base	Position and authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Relationship and influence
Staff Control	Compliance and consistency with policy and standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Commitment and consensus regarding shared goals.
Skills	Planning Organizing Controlling Delegating Directing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Envisioning Focusing Empowering Developing Influencing
People	Assets to be deployed in pursuit of the organization’s goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Critical contributors to be developed
Planning	Tactics Logistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	The ‘Big Picture’ Strategy
Decision Making	Analytical Risk-averse Rational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Intuitive Risk-taking Inventive
Staffing	Qualifications and proven experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Shared values and commitment to learn
Performance Emphasis	Direct Rewards Discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Support Personal satisfaction Self correction
Interaction	Transactional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Transformational
Negotiation	Exchange and compromise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Persuasion and creativity
Orientation	Things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	People
Valued Resources	Physical Financial Technical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Human Informational Intellectual
Change Focus	Implementing improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Imagining possibilities
Definition of Success	Quality, Stability, Efficiency, Completing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Value, Dynamism, Effectiveness, Beginning
Strives to Avoid	Anarchy, Employee Distraction, Surprise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Inertia, Lack of Motivation, Boredom
Is Failing When You See...	Insubordination Resistance to plans Low performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Frustration Confusion about direction Failed initiatives