

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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THE DEATH OF LEADERSHIP IN MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Management and leadership are two entirely different subjects in today's corporate America. Although many people confuse the two and often act as if they are the same topic, management and leadership are not synonymous. However, a truly gifted manager is not only a manager but also a leader. It is the leadership component that the best managers have and the mediocre managers strive for and do not know how to attain. In this section, the process of personnel management versus process or project management will be discussed. The traits of a leader have been and can be argued. Many times it depends on the situation. Therefore, one set of leadership traits for all management functions would be very difficult to articulate. In summary, the management of personnel takes a special person with unique characteristics. The traits of a true leader are vast and change with the situation and personalities involved. The basic truths, however, will always remain the same. A leader should be a good, caring person. S/he will be genuine, have vision and take care of their people. Clarity of direction will be a benchmark of a true leader and they will also be willing to listen to the concerns of their crew. Finally, the greatest leaders will lead by example and be the perfect model to follow.

KEYWORDS

leadership, management.

INTRODUCTION

Management and leadership are two entirely different subjects in today's corporate America. Although many people confuse the two and often act as if they are the same topic, management and leadership are not synonymous. However, a truly gifted manager is not only a manager but also a leader. It is the leadership component that the best managers have and the mediocre managers strive for and do not know how to attain.

A search for the meaning or definition of a manager or leader will reveal so very many different views on what makes a good leader. It will often depend on the opinion of the author of the definition or possibly the particular circumstances the leader is faced with. It may be possible that the wide variety of views on leadership are based on the fact that there are so many different aspects or traits to consider. One simple definition could not possibly encompass all the traits of a good leader. Management is, according to Merriam-Webster, "the act or art of managing: the conducting or supervising of something." Leadership is defined as "the act or an instance of leading" and a leader is "a person who has commanding authority or influence". The difference is that a manager supervises some activities and as a result some individuals, meanwhile a leader influences individuals and earns their loyalty so that the individuals willingly follow their lead. A manager is not always willingly followed.

Today's manager is generally someone who is selected or appointed. Many times whether the person has the ability to lead or not is irrelevant. The selection is, in most cases, based on seniority and politics. Many managers are selected based on superior technical ability, which is a plus in understanding the job but does not assist the manager in understanding the individuals s/he supervises. A true leader (and therefore a good manager) is one who has the inherent ability to influence people, based on genuine respect that has been earned (not demanded) and as a result of that respect, encourages and enables the team to "get the job done".

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

In this section, the process of personnel management versus process or project management will be discussed. The differences between process/project management are quite revealing. Many times, someone who may flourish in project management, may not do so well when managing people.

The management of personnel is a lot more involved and takes more experience, effort and skill than the management of processes or projects. Process management is a very simple task compared to personnel management because personnel management requires the manager to be knowledgeable in related fields such as psychology, organizational culture, and motivational techniques to name a few. Some managers intuitively understand these fields and know how to relate to people; others do not. It takes a special breed of person to have what it takes to properly manage personnel.

LEADERSHIP TRAITS

The traits of a leader have been and can be argued. Many times it depends on the situation. Therefore, one set of leadership traits for all management functions would be very difficult to articulate. For example, the traits that a leader of a combat unit would require may very well be different from those of a leader of a medical team or business unit. First and foremost, probably one of the most important leadership traits, and coincidentally one which is not seen in any management book, a manager must be a genuinely good person. They have to care, not only about the mission or the company but also about the individuals on the team. Below is an attempt to surmise the leadership traits that should be common in all leadership positions.

Set the Example: After being a good person, "Leadership by Example" is the most important trait of a leader. It is unreasonable for leaders to expect anyone who is under their leadership to do something they would not do themselves or vice versa. If a manager expects someone to stay late for a project, that manager should be willing to stay late (not that the manager will have the opportunity to stay late every time but it should be well known to the manager's staff that he/she has no problem doing so based on the manager's actions and history).

"The real leader has no need to lead-- he is content to point the way."

INTEGRITY

"Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code." Ethics are talked about, taught and preached quite readily in Corporate America today but rarely are they enforced or adhered to. Ethics are taught because it's a "requirement," however; it does little to no good at all to teach ethics if they are not readily enforced.

As far as morals are concerned, it is not popular to suggest that someone actually should have moral character in order to be a leader. Nevertheless, the true leader, the leader that enjoys genuine respect, will be one of integrity. He or she will be radiant with moral and ethical character. rprint = AF19 FA27 2F94 998D FDB5 DE3D F8B5 06E4 A169 4E46

HONOR

This is one of the three Core Values of the United States Navy. According to Wikipedia, "Honor is the evaluation of a person's trustworthiness and social status based on that individual's espousals and actions. Honor is deemed exactly what determines a person's character: whether or not the person reflects honesty, respect, integrity, or fairness.

TRUTHFULNESS

This is so important. All it takes is one lie before a leader is no longer trusted by those they lead. In most cases the manager does not even necessarily have to be caught in a lie. People know or strongly suspect. Some managers, however, have become so good at lying their way through situations that they can do it regularly without detection. In time, these lies will be revealed. To be a good liar also requires an incredible memory; the majority of individuals do not have a memory that detailed and are inevitably caught.

COURAGE

This author personally defines courage as the ability to do the right thing in the face of adversity. Wikipedia describes it as: "Courage, also known as bravery and fortitude, is the ability to confront fear, pain, danger, uncertainty or intimidation. It can be divided into two categories: (1) physical courage (i.e., in face of physical pain, hardship, and threat of death) and (2) moral courage (i.e., in the face of shame, scandal, and discouragement).

COMMITMENT

Wikipedia defines commitment as "an interaction dominated by obligations. These obligations may be mutual, or self-imposed, or explicitly stated, or may not. Distinction is often made between commitment as a member of an organization, such as a sporting team, a religion, or as an employee."

From a management perspective, it is important to be committed to the people the manager is responsible as well as to the mission. To commit to a position of leadership means that the leader is willing to do what it takes to support his/her people in accomplishing the mission/goal of the organization.

HONESTY

This character trait, although sometimes very hard to comply with, is a must in dealing with everyone. The people individuals work with, the people individuals work for and especially with people who are working for an individual. A lot of times dishonesty is resorted to in order to save face or to keep from hurting someone's feelings. This is not a very good practice because people can usually tell when someone is dishonest. Even if they can't tell, eventually it will be revealed and all will be lost. Managers will quickly lose the respect of their people as well as that of the people they work with and for. Word spreads quickly on this as well.

LOYALTY

Loyalty is all but dead in America today; especially in Corporate America. There were still traces of loyalty in the military before the author retired but it was fading there too. It is very important for the leader to be loyal to his or her subordinates, to be loyal to the organization and to be loyal to their leadership. The problem is it really needs to go both ways (up and down the organization) or it will quickly fade. The important thing is, it needs to start with leadership. If it starts there it will foster loyalty throughout the organization be it big or small.

KNOW YOURSELF

It is very important for a leader to know him or herself. A leader needs to know their strengths and, more importantly, their weaknesses. Leaders need to understand what is needed to effectively manage the team as well as the mission they have been assigned to manage. Recognizing weaknesses early will allow the leader to dedicate the appropriate amount of time to strengthen skills in those areas. In some cases, when weaknesses are recognized, a leader can assign someone from their team to assist in that area while the leader hones his/her skills.

A leader should never consider him/herself to have arrived at perfection. Leaders, people are always learning. Always be willing to listen to people when they offer constructive criticism. This criticism can come from anyone, not just those who are peers or seniors. Leaders can learn just as much about themselves from people junior to them as from those who are seniors. This constructive criticism does not always have to be accepted or acted upon but should be considered.

KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

As important as it is for a leader to know him/herself, it is even more important for a leader to know his/her people. Not just the basics like their name or what town they live in. Really get to know who they are. Getting to know what motivates subordinates allows a leader to assign projects that would best benefit the subordinates' needs as well as those of the organization. Know what type of person they are (Are they fast paced? Are they more concerned with results or with relationships? Are they a perfectionist? Are they an introvert or extrovert?). Knowing what their short term and long term goals are allows a leader to guide their subordinates down the path to achieving their goals while the leader is, at the same time, reaching company goals. Know their strengths and weaknesses. Know their family and what their family situation is. Even know what kind of hobbies and interests they have. Managers don't seem to take the time to get to know their people in this day and age but it is very important.

At the same time a leader is getting to know his/her people, they are getting to know the leader. This fosters a healthy relationship and builds upon the genuine respect a leader should be striving for. The more a leader builds these relationships, the more successful he/she will be in guiding their people down the road to success and accomplishing the goals of the organization. Again, this has to be real. People will know if it's not.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the management of personnel takes a special person with unique characteristics. The traits of a true leader are vast and change with the situation and personalities involved. The basic truths, however, will always remain the same. A leader should be a good, caring person. S/he will be genuine, have vision and take care of their people. Clarity of direction will be a benchmark of a true leader and they will also be willing to listen to the concerns of their crew. Finally, the greatest leaders will lead by example and be the perfect model to follow.

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