

WHAT MAKES A LEADER?

Leadership is not limited to the chairman. Leaders exist at all levels of the organization. Not all managers are leaders, however-only the good ones are. And not all leaders are managers.

Leaders are made, not born. Leadership is a mix of skills, attitude, will, and motivation. To become a leader, you must want it, work on it. It requires much effort to get there and remain there.

Managing, on the other hand, is an assignment-a job. A manager who is not a leader manages by title only. A leader-manager inspires people, sets an example, and builds trust. He or she:

- makes things happen
- is mentor and coach
- is respected and followed
- has a clear purpose
- single-mindedly pursues common goals, regard-less of obstacles or temporary setbacks
- leads people to accomplish what they thought impossible, freeing them from their inhibitions and limitations

Leaders don't compromise. They want the best. If they are satisfied with mediocre results, that is what they achieve. A good manager is a leader through personality, not position.

True leaders impact their organization. They are strong. They attract people and receive support from peers and employees. They draw followers by their ability to communicate vision and commitment. They make their ideas tangible and create positive feelings. They are reliable and effective. Two comments by a great leader, Sir Winston Churchill, come to mind:

Those who are not prepared to take unpopular decisions and to face up to challenges are not worthy of being Ministers of State in time of stress.

I cannot give you a form for success. But I can give you a sure-fire formula for failure: just try to please everyone.

A LEADER IS A CHANGE LEADER

A leader overcomes resistance to change from those who fear losing security, power, or status; and those who fear change because of limited skill, knowledge, or experience. A leader

- educates
- motivates
- communicates
- supports
- leads change
- turns every situation into a learning experience

A LEADER IS A COACH

A leader wants others to improve and guides, rather than controls, them. A leader is proud of the success of others, not jealous. He or she trusts people. Trust creates trust and loyalty. Who cannot be trusted must leave. A leader

- builds positive relationships and is frank and critical, but not threatening
- is a keen observer
- knows how to ask questions and evaluate answers

A leader develops people's potential, instead of judging their performance.

A LEADER MOTIVATES

He or she sets the strongest motivators in motion:

- Belonging: being a member of the team
- Achieving: reaching common goals-the more difficult, the greater the satisfaction
- Recognition: praise, promotion, rewards

William N. Yoeman' ranks the creation of a motivating environment among the most important functions of the leader. Motivation toward common goals strengthens emotional ties among members of a team and with their leader.

A LEADER COMMUNICATES AND LEADS CHANGE

A leader gives support, discusses goals, and influences by inspiration, not by imposition.

He or she

- is not embarrassed to ask for advice
- eliminates the we/they barrier between line and staff, production and sales, or competing locations
- is self-confident and does not need a "common enemy" to achieve unity
encourages creativity and innovation and is receptive to new ideas
- accepts mistakes, if not repeated, as opportunities to learn
- gets things done with or without direct authority

As a boss, a leader

- is an ally, not a competitor
- is generous with praise for a job well done

- makes his or her expectations clear
- is specific in criticism and gives honest feedback
- maintains personal and functional (rather than hierarchical) relationships
- welcomes differing points of view to help in finding best solutions
- Leads to reach common goals
- chooses the right people for the right job

A LEADER'S QUALITIES

To list all the qualities of a leader is an impossible task. Not only is the list long, but many of the qualities may seem to be mutually exclusive. A leader can be

- dynamic and/or patient
- forceful and/or sensitive
- creative and/or down to earth
- decisive and/or restrictive

In short, a leader combines creative dynamism with practicality.

THE EMERGING PROFILE OF A LEADER

He or she

- is authentic-sets examples and priorities
- is committed-coaches, motivates, communicates
- challenges conventional wisdom
- leads change and innovation
- trusts, and builds trust
- is courageous-knows right from wrong and does what's right, regardless of the consequences
- is results-oriented-fights resolutely for an idea
- is demanding, but fair-uses authority, but is not authoritarian
- is entrepreneurial
- is a team-builder-members have complementary skills
- sets trends-he or she is followed, not a follower
- is energetic

Alexander Hamilton, one of the fathers of the American Constitution said, "Energy in the

Executive is a leading character of good government, " - and of business enterprise.

THE PROFILE OF A DEMAGOGUE

What about sham leaders-dictators, or that person you know? He or she

- is usually charismatic
- is suspicious, building dependence, not trust
- feels threatened by the success of others
- is surrounded by "yes-men"
- submits to superiors, is harsh on subordinates
- is authoritarian, managing by intimidation

- plays to the public, saying what they want to hear
- creates an object of hate-a "common enemy"
- fights for personal interest, blaming others
- feels insecure and fearful
- gets results at any price

Such people think they are leaders. In fact, they are the opposite-nuisances at best, or even public enemies.

CHECKLIST

- Go back to the list in "The Emerging Profile of a Leader" and check off the qualities you possess.
- Of those you don't, select three you are keen to possess. Establish a time limit, say, twelve months. Start developing those qualities now.
- Rate your peers by the same measure. Assist them in improving. Everyone will benefit.

Leadership is the result of strong willpower, hard work, vision, and choosing the right priorities.

(Leadership pp.11-17, Set 4 of Management Master Series, Productivity Press, 1996)