

LEADERSHIP VS. MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management go hand in hand, and yet they are two different functions based on different underlying philosophies. According to Toor & Ofori (2008), the first step in differentiating the two concepts is through the definitions. Toor & Okori (2008) define leadership as the process of guiding, "with reference to action and opinion; to bring by persuasion or counsel to or into a condition; to conduct by argument or representation to a conclusion; to induce to do something" (p. 64).

On the other hand, management is defined as, "organization, supervision, or direction; the application of skill or care in the manipulation, use, treatment, or control (of a thing or person), or in the conduct of something" (Toor & Okori, 2008 p. 64). Based on my personal experiences, I can say that a leader and a manager are quite different. A leader inspires people, and forges a way forward for the group to follow. A leader uses emotional intelligence to captivate the group. In my work experience, I have come across leaders who can inspire others to work hard, such leaders do not use their positional authority, and rather they motivate employees to be productive by creating a feeling of mutual goal. On the other hand, managers are task-oriented individuals; managers tend to stick by the structures in place and use their authority to make people deliver. My immediate supervisor at work is a typical manager, he uses power and sometimes threats to enforce compliance.

From my personal experience, a manager can be a leader, but that is not always the case. I have worked under managers who failed to inspire employees, and used their position to intimidate. Employees or the subordinates gladly follow the leader because they want to, not because they have to as seen in the case of managers. According to Murray (2011), a leader develops while a manager administers. Managers tend to stick to organizational rules, structures and policies in place, instead of creating new rules to change the game. Also, from experience I have realized that managers have a short-term view; their focus is on daily activities instead of looking at the big picture like leaders. Lastly, managers accept the status quo while leaders challenge it. Managers are content in their position, and they tend to take pleasure in the perks of their position. Leaders challenge the status quo, and they take it upon themselves to forge relationships with others, even those in the lowest positions in the organization.

Management and leadership must be applied effectively to attain organizational success. Lunenburg (2011), notes that in the new economy, value comes from the knowledge of people. Hence, managers should not just assign tasks, but they must create a sense of purpose for employees. Managers should not rely on the textbook managerial skills only, but they must utilize leadership skills, particularly motivation and communication. A manager that solely relies on managerial skills is likely to alienate employees, and suffer from increasing cases of absenteeism and low productivity. But a leader that lacks managerial skills will inspire people, but will fail to put in place the proper structures and measures to create an effective work environment.

Managers with the right leadership skills will challenge the status quo and interact with employees on a personal level to motivate them. Additionally, a leader will use the management skills to develop and maintain a functional workplace.

In conclusion, both leadership and managerial skills are crucial for the success of the organization. A leader-manager will build trust, nurture talent while putting in place proper organizational structures. The mixing of both leadership and management skills and behaviors are crucial ingredients for success in today's competitive business environment.

References

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