ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A MANAGER OR A LEADER?

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

Since the beginning of man's development on this planet, we, as small groups of people, tribes and even societies relied on leaders to emerge from the group, with their personal charisma and drive, and take charge of events.

We relied on these leaders for everything. We expected them to stand alone above the group, take charge, lead the way, make decisions, maintain order and to be all-knowing and all-wise. If no leader emerged, then no one took charge and events were left in the hands of other groups to take over.

But with the coming of the industrial revolution in the late 1700s, we began to see the need for more organization. Managing large groups of people in a controlled environment made for a more reliable method of production.

In the early 1900s Henry Ford accomplished his marvel of the industrial production line. It became apparent that a more highly managed, closely supported workforce created the most efficient, low-cost and error free method of producing large quantities of products.

But one leader, one person could not possibly monitor and facilitate all those hundreds of people and operations. It would take many people with organizational abilities to be installed into the system to do that.

This, then was the emergence of that much envied, often loved, sometimes hated, but oh-so valuable group of people we call managers. These would be the people who would take on the responsibility to "get the job done" and to accomplish the company's goals.

We see how leaders came to be and we see how managers came to be. Do they seem to be cut from the same cloth? Are they interchangeable? We want them to be, but in fact, they are not. They are two different kinds of people with different skill sets and different purposes.

One good definition of those differences goes like this:

Managers are about getting things done. Leaders are about what gets done.

But these are not the only differences. Forests of trees have been cut down to produce the thousands of books written on leadership. But few have analyzed the differences between leaders and managers in the same way that Abraham Zeleznik did in an article he wrote for the Harvard Business Review (HBR) in 1977. Zelesnik, a psychoanalyst and author of 14 books including many on leadership, recently updated his world famous article for HBR. In that article he reports his findings on the differences between leaders and managers on several important characteristic norms:

- Personality
- Attitudes towards goals
- Conceptions of work
- Relations with others
- Sense of self

Personality

Managers emphasize rationality, logic, order and control. Wherever his/her energies are directed, the manager will be a problem solver. The manager asks, "What problems have to be solved and how can we solve them in a way that will cause people to participate and contribute."

They tend to be persistent, tough minded, intelligent and analytical. They believe in hard work. They are usually people who are tolerant and of good will. They mix well with other people and have many casual friends. They focus narrowly and concentrate on the issue at hand.

Leaders are great communicators. They are emotional, intuitive and often driven. They tend to be brilliant and can be lonely. They like to have only a few close friends. Leaders do not like control and do not rely on logic as much as on emotional conviction. They are restless and tend to create emotion charged peaks and valleys and will avoid reaching a consensus. They do not mind upsetting other people's apple carts. They willingly tolerate chaos and lack of structure.

They prefer to prolong and encourage discussion and debate rather than to reach conclusions. They see more value in the firing up of ideas than in the solutions that end the process.

Attitudes Towards Goals

Managers are impersonal, almost passive towards their goals. Managerial goals arise out of necessities not desires or emotions. They react to needs and ideas.

Leaders are emotionally committed to their own ideas. They adopt a personal and active attitude towards their goals. They are pro-active about their desires and objectives.

Conceptions Of Work

Managers see work as an enabling process that involves a combination of people and ideas all coming together to establish strategies and make decisions. They facilitate the process by anticipating difficulties, heading them off and reducing tensions. They are enablers, they negotiate, coordinate, bargain and use rewards and punishment when necessary to get the job done. They tend to focus more so on the goals and tasks and see people as the way to get them done.

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Managers approach problems conservatively with a desire to avoid conflict.

Leaders project their ideas as images that excite people. They incite tension. They do not like to negotiate or compromise. To them second place is the first loser. They are not trying to solve problems as much as they are trying to create horizons. They need people to react to them. Acknowledgement, admiration, greatness and a sense of changing things are the rewards used and sought by the leader.

Leaders approach issues with a need to seek risks. They find that raising the expectations and emotions of others with all the dangers of risk and failure will produce new thinking and creative ideas.

Relations With Others

Managers prefer to work with people. They avoid solitary activity because they need to collaborate with others. They seek to stand out by being in the center of things.

In training sessions managers, when asked to write stories about a given subject, will write stories populated with people. They will focus on human activities but with very low levels of emotional involvement. People will achieve goals, be rewarded and respected by others. Neither tragedy nor ambiguity, have a place in the manager's stories.

Managers normally do not use intuition to sense the feelings or thoughts of others. Such things are often seen as hindrances or barriers to the job at hand.

In difficult situations managers will seek to accomplish a balance of power and will use tactics to accomplish a win-win result

for all parties. Those tactics will be designed to help get *this* decision made as opposed to finding new problems or new solutions. Subordinates however, often interpret all this as being inscrutable, detached and manipulative.

Managers sometimes see leaders as unfocused, disorganized, self centered and not very productive.

Managers are the creators of the phrase "if it ain't broke don't fix it!"

Leaders prefer to work with ideas, and in doing so they will relate to people in intuitive and empathetic ways. They are usually more about the exiting process of announcing the goal, designing the vision and inciting change rather than accepting someone else's goal, finding the solution and ending the process.

Leaders, when writing a story, will write about personal commitment, facing great odds, struggling to find a sense of balance they cannot achieve. Their characters are often in situations of emotional chaos, and electrified environments that produce exiting results. New discoveries and great changes are the results in their stories. .

In difficult situations leaders are seeking a win-lose result. They win and the other side loses. They can accomplish this by raising strong feelings of identity or even love and hate. Leader dominated groups often appear turbulent, intense and even disorganized. But such an atmosphere is often the breeding ground for individual motivation and creative, courageous, risky unanticipated outcomes.

Leaders sometimes see managers as mundane, unimaginative and to quick to

solve problems that may not have the best solution or even be the right problem.

Leaders might say, "When it ain't broke may be the only time you can fix it!"

Sense Of Self

Managers tend to see themselves as people who have had some control over their lives. They have adjusted to life and see the world as more harmonious and orderly than most.

They see themselves as conservators and regulators in a world in which they see and understand orderliness. They identify themselves as a part of that world and see the rewards to be gained there. Their sense of self worth is enhanced by supporting and strengthening the institutions of which they are a part. They feel that they are performing a role that is in harmony with their ideals of duty and responsibility.

Managers are orchestra leaders.

Leaders see themselves as people who feel separated from their environments. They may work in organizations, but they never belong to them. Their sense of who they are does not depend on memberships, work roles, or other social indicators of identity. They identify with a need to profoundly change the ways things are.

They do not see an organized world with rewards for harmony. They see disorder and feel a drive to change it. They want to achieve a sense of balance and they see change as the way to pursue it.

Leaders are artists.

Motivation

Managers are motivated by accomplishments, by getting things done. Perfection is not their goal, completion and the satisfaction of upper management, peers and subordinates is. You motivate and work with managers by getting to the point quickly, offering them a limited selection of choices and helping them get things done. They are influenced by facts, logic, and comparative values.

Leaders Are motivated by acknowledgement of their leadership, praise, freedom from restraint and order, and by recognizing and supporting their vision. They are influenced by debate, enthusiasm, unlimited trust and the endorsements of recognized leaders. They are not influenced by peers or by group learning sessions.

To develop young leaders, assign them as an apprentice type to a recognized leader. To further develop existing leaders, assign them as a mentor to an apprentice type. Such close working relationships build leadership. And they encourage both the tolerance of others competitive impulses as well as they promote the eagerness to challenge ideas.

Failing to recognize such differences could result in a leader with no vision, taking his company nowhere or a manager actively promoting chaos in the organization.

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