

To be a good manager, it is important to understand and implement the qualities it takes to be a good leader.

Management vs. leadership: What's the difference?

Over the years I have observed experienced managers who manage as well as those who lead. Given the choice, I would prefer working for a leader versus a manager. This seems like a no brainer and I think most of us would given the choice. However, after many years it is still surprising to me that most managers do their jobs well but are poor leaders.

It is interesting and sad that most of us with management responsibility truly believe that we are also very good leaders. But this is wrong. Most of us are fooling ourselves. We continually confuse managing a situation with leading people in the process.

These two elements of business—situation management and people leadership—run both in opposition and in parallel with one another and the result being constant blurring the results thus confusing all parties down the line as well as many times, at the peer level.

MANAGEMENT

Managing any situation requires a clear vision of the results needed. This foresight is mandatory and elements that support or detract from those results must be constantly reviewed, massaged, changed or eliminated in the process. Those elements could be people, systems, policies, practices and other tools being used in the situation.

Managers must avoid emotional exercises and force all critical decision points into an intellectual one. Marty Clarke, in his book "Leadership Landmines," coined the phrase "business before people," which sums up this theme. The point is that in management people cannot get in the way of the business results.

In fact, Clarke says this in practical applications of this philosophy. "When puzzled by a decision a manager needs to ask the following questions in the following order 1) What is best for the business? 2) What is best for this

person/these people?"

LEADERSHIP

It is important to understand that when managers do anything they send signals to their team of people, who are paying attention more than they think. This includes the way they dress to the functions they attend socially to the decisions they make everyday.

Every one of their moves sends a memorandum that shapes their confidence in their manager. As subordinates they need influencers and peers ask themselves:

- Is he/she smart?
- Is he/she making a worthwhile contribution?
- Is he/she worth listening to?
- Is he/she worth following?
- Is he/she fair in your dealings?
- Is he/she credible?
- Can I have confidence in him/her?
- Does he/she have a backbone?
- Does he/she care?
- Does he/she have a hidden agenda?
- Do I trust him/her?

These are a few examples of the many questions that are running through the minds of the people managers are trying to lead. All these questions distill down to the last question, which is the most important: Do I trust him/her? In fact, I like to refer to leadership as a five-letter word called trust. Leadership is nothing more or nothing less than trust. That's what it comes down to.

How is leadership trust observed, perceived and processed by those experience it? Somebody said when considering a goal, "I'll know it when I see it!" The same philosophy can be applied to real leadership and trust. People know it when they experience it in others.

The following two concepts have been tested over many years and seem to capture the qual-

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ities that draw people to leaders.

- **Consistency.** Consistency of action and decision-making communicates to people that a plan is in place and that the leader’s head is in the game.
- **Conviction.** Conviction tells people that the leader believes in what he/she is doing and that their emotion is invested in the pursuit as well.

These two leadership elements cannot be faked or compromised. Remember, people are paying attention not to the manager, but instead to his/her record of consistency and whether or not he/she is convincing.

If you are a manager, look in the mirror every morning and ask yourself if you are a consistent and convincing leader. **CW**

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230 N.Bennett St., Ste. 3 • Southern Pines, NC 28387
 910-692-2492 • E-mail: phillips@chemarkconsulting.net
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