

MANAGEMENT VERSUS LEADERSHIP



WALTER BELLIN DRAWS A DISTINCTION BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP, AND EXPLAINS WHY DEVELOPING BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SKILLS IS VITAL.

In most organisations, when people are hired or promoted into leadership positions, their job title is usually 'executive' or 'manager'. Yet they are expected to play two roles: leadership and management.

While the same person plays both, the two roles are very different. The management role typically focuses on the development of business processes and systems, organisational structure, detailed business planning, budgeting, monitoring and achieving specific outputs and financial objectives. Management is largely a technical, administrative type of role.

By contrast, the leadership role is first and foremost about creating and communicating an inspiring vision of the future that the organisation or team wishes to create. It involves communicating the values around which the organisation intends to build and maintain its culture. The vision provides employees of the organisation with a sense of the larger purpose to which their work contributes, which makes their work meaningful. The values provide the guidelines for the way they will communicate and work with one another, the quality of service they will provide to clients or customers, and the relationship they should have with other stakeholders. Leaders are responsible for influencing people to align with and embrace the values in the vision.

To achieve this, leaders must have good people skills, be good at cultivating positive working relationships and be capable of keeping levels of trust and morale high among the staff they lead. They must be skilled at bonding people into effective teams and encouraging collaboration within and between teams.

Leaders must be role models who authentically embody the vision and values they espouse by 'walking the talk', by speaking and behaving in ways that are congruent with the vision and values. Ultimately, people will be influenced more by what leaders do than what they say.

In many teams, executives and managers tend to give much more time to the management role than the leadership role for two reasons:

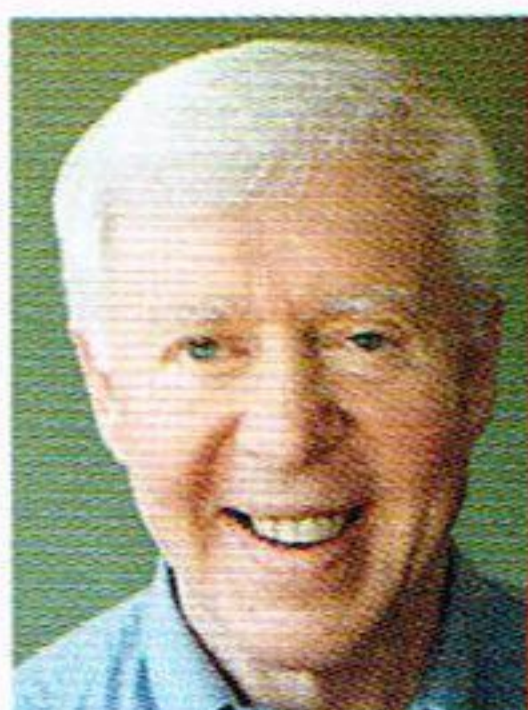
- The numerous communication and people skills that good leaders require are not as natural or comfortable for many of them as management activities.
- Leadership cannot be learned through textbooks or didactic methods. In contrast, management skills can be very easily learned by an intelligent person from a textbook or through classroom teaching. Essentially, these are technical skills, and any technical skill can be learned in this way.

Learning to be a good leader is an adaptive human development process. The leadership skill set I've described can only be acquired through the development of a number of human character traits and capabilities. These include deep and accurate self-awareness; the ability to manage your emotions and behaviour; deep and accurate insight into others, what motivates them and their natural strengths and current limitations; and the ability to assist them to master these limitations. This list could go on for several paragraphs.

Thus, to assist executives and managers to successfully fulfil their leadership role, it is extremely important to have an ongoing leadership program based on adaptive, human development approaches. This type of program will inevitably take some participants out of their comfort zone, but the pay-off in the end will be worth it.

The leadership role is key to building the organisation's culture, creating the inner spirit of the organisation, and winning over people's hearts and minds and gaining their loyalty and commitment.

Ultimately, it is the organisation's culture that drives superior performance and also provides the resilience and adaptability the organisation needs for undergoing continuous change in a rapidly changing business environment. [O]



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