

Leader vs Manager- Who do you Choose to be?

Leaders have people who follow them, and Managers have people who work for them. It is often believed that managers are not leaders, and leaders are not managers. Although managers are responsible for planning, coordinating and organizing tasks and activities within an organization, their role certainly demands leadership skills at some point in their careers.

Leader

Some of the key characteristics are:

- **Honesty & Integrity:** are crucial to get your people to believe you and buy in to the journey you are taking them on.
- **Vision:** know where you are, where you want to go and enrol your team in charting a path for the future.
- **Inspiration:** inspire your team to be all they can by making sure they understand their role in the bigger picture.
- **Ability to Challenge:** do not be afraid to challenge the status quo, do things differently and have the courage to think outside the box.
- **Communication Skills:** keep your team informed of the journey, where you are, where you are heading and share any roadblocks you may encounter along the way.



Manager

Key characteristics are:

- **Being Able to Execute a Vision:** take a strategic vision and break it down into a roadmap to be followed by the team.
- **Ability to Direct:** day-to-day work efforts, review resources needed and anticipate needs along the way.
- **Process Management:** establish work rules, processes, standards and operating procedures.
- **People Focused:** look after your people, their needs, listen to them and involve them.



Leading and managing are two different roles that require different orientations and skills. Very few people are innately good at both. However, it does not necessarily mean that managers cannot become leaders. Leadership demands a few soft skills, which when inculcated, empowers managers.

A leader is one who influences the behaviour and work of others in group efforts towards achievement of specified goals in a given situation. On the other hand, manager can be a true manager only if he has got traits of leader in him. Manager at all levels are expected to be the leaders of work groups so that subordinates willingly carry instructions and accept their guidance. A person can be a leader by virtue of all qualities in him.

Leaders and Managers can be compared on the following basis:

<u>Basis</u>	<u>Manager</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Origin	A person becomes a manager by virtue of his position.	A person becomes a leader on basis of his personal qualities.
Formal Rights	Manager has got formal rights in an organization because of his status.	Rights are not available to a leader.
Followers	The subordinates are the followers of managers.	The group of employees whom the leader leads are his followers.
Functions	A manager performs all five functions of management.	Leader influences people to work willingly for group objectives.
Necessity	A manager is very essential to a concern.	A leader is required to create cordial relation between person working in and for organization.
Stability	It is more stable.	Leadership is temporary.
Mutual Relationship	All managers are leaders.	All leaders are not managers.
Accountability	Manager is accountable for self and subordinates' behaviour and performance.	Leaders have no well-defined accountability.
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Accountability	Manager is accountable for self and subordinates' behaviour and performance.	Leaders have no well-defined accountability.
Concern	A manager's concern is organizational goals.	A leader's concern is group goals and member's satisfaction.
Followers	People follow manager by virtue of job description.	People follow them on voluntary basis.
Role continuation	A manager can continue in office till he performs his duties satisfactorily in congruence with organizational goals.	A leader can maintain his position only through day to day wishes of followers.
Sanctions	Manager has command over allocation and distribution of sanctions.	A leader has command over different sanctions and related task records. These sanctions are essentially of informal nature.

What can managers do to become leaders?

"Natural managers" can start taking the following actions to transform themselves into better leaders.

1. Stop micromanaging

Managing people is good, but micro managing people is bad. As a part of the same team, managers should provide more autonomy to employees. They should trust their team members and create more room for creative thinking and active participation in the organization.

Providing autonomy gives employees the freedom to think freely and bring better ideas to the table. Such ideas can be used toward increasing productivity and efficiency of the organization. Therefore, managers should motivate employees to contribute more toward organizational growth.

2. Become good communicators

Leaders are excellent communicators. They ensure that the right message reaches the right person in the right way. In order to become good leaders, managers need to develop the art of communication. They make time to speak, but in a way that the message has an impact on the listener.

Merely doing the talking will not help. Managers also have to listen to others in order to become a good leader. Leadership is not a one-person show. Therefore, managers should take everyone's perspective into consideration while making major transformational business decisions.

3. Provide timely feedback

A leader provides constructive feedback to subordinates so they perform better. Annual reviews are good and necessary, but employees need regular feedback for both personal and organizational growth. Feedback helps employees understand what worked and what did not.

Managers should take the time to provide feedback at regular intervals so that employees are not disappointed at the end of the year when their performance is reviewed. Ongoing feedback closes loopholes in processes and improves the overall performance of people and the company.

4. Celebrate diversity

An organization does not comprise people from only one particular race, sex or background. It is a group of diverse people coming together to achieve a common goal or mission. As such, it is necessary for managers to welcome people irrespective of societal and cultural factors.

Diversity helps in pooling various resources and skills for achieving organizational goals. A manager should celebrate diversity in order to become a good leader. He or she shouldn't discriminate on the basis of religion, sexual orientation, race or any characteristic.

5. Make self-reflection a routine

Last but not least, managers should take the time to reflect on their own actions and decisions. A leader is always conscious of their actions and has clarity of thought. Instead of dwelling on the past, they look ahead and think positive.

Managers should be aware of mistakes committed in the past, so they don't repeat them again. Inculcating the habit of self-reflection enables managers to transform and become better leaders.

In order for you to engage your staff in providing the best service to your guests, clients or partners, you must enrol them in your vision and align their perceptions and behaviours. You need to get them excited about where you are taking them while making sure they know what's in it for them. The challenge lies in making sure you are both leading your team as well as managing your day to day operation. Those who are able to do both, will create a competitive advantage.

After going through the above, what do you feel about yourself? Are you a Manager or a Leader or a package of both? It is your choice which makes the difference and that's how you can create your signature.