

Will that be Leadership or Management Development?

Integrating the Right Hand with the Left Hand

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Introduction

During the 1990s, the topic of leadership took on new meaning and interest in organizations. As with many business fads (e.g. total quality management, business process reengineering, and knowledge management), the numbers of articles and books on leadership exploded to serve the insatiable appetites of business people, HR practitioners, and the public in general. Interest in the field of management diminished, while people explored such topics as spiritual leadership; the learning organization concept and its implications for shared leadership; women as leaders; lessons from such notable individuals as Gandhi, Thatcher and Churchill; and Native teachings.

While the plethora of new books and articles on leadership has contributed in an important way to raising the level of awareness and understanding on the subject, it has also created confusion, and perhaps more importantly, relegated management as a discipline to the back burner. It is only in the past decade where some prominent thinkers and writers have begun to stress the importance of management practices in organizations and the need to integrate this discipline with that of leadership development. While the two are distinct, they are nevertheless interrelated.

In a period of what Charles Handy calls “discontinuous change” (that change is not smooth but rather comes in unpredictable bursts), the interlinking of management and leadership development is extremely important. No longer can organizations afford to address the two fields as separate silos. Instead, a systems approach is required to ensure that an organization’s managers develop good management practices and solid leadership abilities. Combined, the two fields will ensure that those in management positions are able to deal with discontinuous change, and that their staff possess the necessary competencies to learn continuously, explore opportunities, innovate, and serve clients to the highest degree possible.

The Question

Before an organization jumps into developing a management/leadership development model, it is essential that the question be asked: *who* is a leader in the organization? Is leadership specific to management positions? If so, then leadership is positional in the organizational hierarchy. Or is leadership seen by senior management as being more inclusive, in which employees throughout the organization are encouraged to develop their leadership abilities?

This is a key question to pose because it creates a common vocabulary and set of expectations in an organization. From this will emerge a culture that is defined on how leadership is *perceived* and *practiced*.

The issue of leadership versus management development becomes a moot point if leadership in an organization is defined as being the domain of management. As we will see below,

approaching the two fields as separate entities only further deepens the rift between them, contributing to misunderstandings throughout an organization, the ineffective use of training funds, and limited progress in creating effective managerial leaders.

If an organization chooses the path of participative leadership, as it recreates its corporate culture, the challenge will be how to create a model that reflects both management and leadership development. For employees in management positions, there is a rapidly growing need to have an approach (or program) that embraces *both* management and leadership competencies. For aspiring managers, these employees need to be factored into the process. The urgency for this is rising as the existing management cadre begins to retire in large numbers over the next few years. Those seeking to move into management are the succession pool, and hence require sustained attention in terms of their developmental needs.

For employees who do not aspire to be managers, or who will not progress to this level, the added challenge is how to encourage their leadership development, in the context of their participating more in decision-making and in taking more initiative. This assumes that senior management wishes to support the creation of a 'leaderful' organization because of the benefits this would bring.

The next section looks at what a number of leading thinkers are saying on management and leadership.

Insights on Management versus Leadership

John Kotter (2000) sees leadership and management as "...two distinctive and complementary systems of action." While each field has its own unique characteristics and functions, *both* are essential for managers if they are to operate successfully in complex organizations that are subject to discontinuous change. To focus on leadership development may produce strong leaders, but the consequence will be weak management. And the converse is true. How to combine strong leadership and strong management, so that there is balance, is the real challenge. As Kotter notes: "...Smart companies...rightly ignore the literature that says people cannot manage and lead."

Similarly, Drucker (1998) sees the interrelationship between the two. He does not believe that management and leadership can be separated. He states it is "...nonsense—as much nonsense as separating management from entrepreneurship. Those are part and parcel of the same job. They are different to be sure, but only as different as the right hand from the left or the nose from the mouth. They belong to the same body."

Chris Hodgkinson (1983) presents a similar view on 'administration' (his term for management) and leadership. "Administration *is* leadership. Leadership *is* administration." He states that the word leadership is used loosely and not well understood. It is "...as if it were a sort of increment to the administrative-management process which might or might not be present." He believes that leadership extends throughout an organization. Leadership and management go together. The individual cannot avoid one without avoiding the other. He sees leadership, therefore, as "...the effecting of policy, values, philosophy through collective organizational action."

The confusion that arises with the generally accepted definition of management (planning, directing, controlling, and coordinating) is addressed by Bolman and Deal (1997): “How does one reconcile the actual work of managers with the heroic imagery?” They note: “Control is an illusion and rationality an afterthought.” People will only follow provided they believe their leader is legitimate. Their voluntary “obedience” evaporates, along with the leader’s authority, when the leader loses legitimacy. Bolman and Deal support what Drucker says about the link between management and leadership when they observe that it is difficult to think of a highly effective manager as someone who is not an effective leader. But they follow this up with a comment that leadership should not be seen as being attached to senior positions.

This leads Sally Helgesen (1996) to make an important point on equating leadership to position. She states: “...our continued habit of linking leadership with position signals our inability to grasp how organizations are changing....in the future, our ideas about the nature of leadership will undergo a radical transformation.” What this new leadership will look like and what qualities it will embody are important issues. However, she also emphasizes that organizations that address how power is distributed will have moved forward in creating leadership at all levels. (In her book *The Female Advantage*, inspired by the early work of Henry Mintzberg, Helgesen interviewed senior female leaders of organizations.)

This brings us to the perspectives of McGill University management professor Henry Mintzberg, regarded as one of the leading management thinkers, and who has also conducted deep empirical research into what managers really do. In an interview with CBC’s *Ideas* in 1999, Mintzberg explained that managers “...sit between their organizations and the outside world....they manage information in order to encourage people to take action.”

He refers to the ‘myths’ of managers planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling, noting that when one observes managers at work, it’s difficult to determine if they are actually engaging in these activities. Managers get interrupted continually, and spend a lot more time talking to people than reading. They develop and maintain large people networks.

In discussing the role of management in organizations, Mintzberg observes that those managers who place more emphasis on building lateral relationships, compared to vertical relationships, are operating in a contemporary mode. The rise in importance of knowledge workers (the highly educated and skilled professional employee) means that managers can no longer treat their staff in ways that were once acceptable. Mintzberg’s introduction of the expression *lateral managerial relationships* introduces a new meaning to management, and especially its connection to leadership and the learning organization concept.

This redefinition of management, in terms of the people factor, leads Mintzberg to state that the ‘professionalization’ of management has undermined this discipline. By this, he means the formal training in business schools which allegedly produce ‘managers.’ He continues by noting that while management is critical for ensuring that organizations do what they are supposed to do, it is also important that we understand that our organizations exist for people, not the converse.

Where does leadership fit in his perspectives on organizations? The lists of attributes and characteristics of leaders, as described in countless books and articles, leads Mintzberg to state: “...Superman’s abilities are modest in comparison. We list everything imaginable.” For

Mintzberg, good leaders are candid, open, honest, and share information with people. The issue of truth is fundamental to Mintzberg's stand on leadership. "People have agendas," he notes, and consequently they hoard information and do not disclose their true feelings. The work of senior leaders becomes more difficult because they are often unable (or do not wish) to find out what is really going on in their organizations.

What this means for organizations is this: when one enters an organization that is functioning well, one is able to sense it. Some authors call this *the smell of the place*. It becomes very apparent in this type of organizational climate that there is abundant energy present, and that this energy is focused. People enjoy going to work everyday because they understand where they fit into the organization's vision and what their roles and responsibilities are. They are committed.

This is the challenge, therefore, of weaving together the roles of management and leadership so that they form a coherent whole, with respect to how the works get done in organizations. But what can we say about the key distinctions and complementarities between management and leadership? The next section summarizes the commonly agreed upon functions of management and leadership.

Management & Leadership as Functions

Kotter, as echoed by others since his early writings, states that management is about *dealing with complexity* in organizations and the surrounding environment. In the absence of good management practices, organizations fall into chaos, which in turn threatens their survival. Thus, one can say that management brings order to organizations and consistency to their products and services. Leadership, in contrast, involves *coping with change*. In a world experiencing discontinuous change, this key feature of leadership is becoming increasingly valuable to organizations.

These two features, coping with complexity and change, shape the functions of management and leadership. Kotter explains there are three primary tasks within organizations:

- 1) determining what work needs to be done,
- 2) forming the networks of people to do the work,
- 3) ensuring that the work gets done properly.

Management and leadership, while both addressing these tasks, approach them from different perspectives.

Planning

Planning, budgeting, and resource allocation are activities initiated through the *management* function in an effort to address the issue of complexity. As a management process, planning is about producing 'orderly' results, not about change. *Leadership*, on the other hand, involves *creating a vision* to chart a course for the organization. As part of this process, strategies are developed to initiate and sustain the needed changes to stay focused on the vision. *How* this is

done is critical to the success an organization will have in not necessarily achieving its vision but rather working progressively towards it (a vision serves as a beacon, pulling forth the organization).

This is where Peter Senge has contributed constructively to the ongoing discussion on corporate vision. Leadership, to Senge, is "...a collective, creative process." The heads of organizations do not change cultures—people do. Those leaders who are most vital at the start of a change process are the local line managers. "Real leadership occurs through a collaborative shared vision by groups of people who share aspirations." He explains that rather than pushing against resistance from within the organization as a result of a change effort, the effective managerial leader identifies the source of the resistance. The manager then focuses on addressing the behaviors and power relationships within which the values are contained.

As Kotter, Senge, and others have noted, leadership includes the ability to distill trends from patterns and what may seem as chaos. The ability to synthesize is critically important for effective leadership.

Organizing

To reach its goals, management *organizes* and *staffs*. This involves creating an organizational structure, including a set of jobs, that will enable the organization to achieve these goals. Through this process of organizing and staffing, management develops delegation authorities and monitoring systems. It also creates communication plans to ensure that employees understand what is taking place.

But the management function needs the opposing hand of leadership to assist it. The equivalent activity, as Kotter explains, is that of *aligning people*. A vitally important activity here is *communication*. One key aspect of this is ensuring that those who understand the vision, are able to build relationships and coalitions, and are committed to change receive this communication.

Senge, as well as others, contend that leadership is about more than just one-way communication of a corporate vision. True leadership is about 'enrolling' people in the creation of a shared vision, one that will withstand discontinuous change. The failure of senior leaders to enroll employees in a shared vision will produce 'compliance' to it.

Controlling

Management must also ensure that the plan is achieved, and it does this through *controlling and problem-solving*. Monitoring plays a key role here. In contrast, leadership requires that people are *motivated and inspired* to work towards a vision, despite setbacks and unforeseen problems. Senge adds further clarity to what Kotter describes. In addition to the need for senior leaders to create an inclusive vision, a key aspect of leadership is to *unleash the energy* of people in an organization and to *focus* it towards a shared vision.

The following quotation from Dee Hock (former head of VISA) helps synthesize the issues concerning the separate yet integrated roles of management and leadership:

The essential thing to remember, however, is not that we became a world of expert managers, but that the nature of our expertise became the creation and control of constants, uniformity and efficiency, while the need has become the understanding and coordination of variability, complexity and effectiveness.

What does this mean for Management/Leadership Development?

The preceding comparative analysis shows that while management and leadership do indeed possess some distinct differences, there is also a complementarity that is emerging. Mintzberg's comments on knowledge work and the expectations of people is changing not just the leadership that is required but also the management component. Work still needs to be planned, organized, directed, coordinated, monitored, etc. But the context is rapidly changing, both from an externally driven, discontinuous change perspective, and from within – the values people possess and what motivates and inspires them.

How organizations approach management and leadership development is critical to their eventual success, let alone their long-term survival. And as noted at the outset, one of the first questions that must be asked is *How do we define leadership in our organization?*

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