

From Roo to You



June 2010

From Manager to Leader: Surprise!

A few weeks ago I was asked to speak to a “Leaders Alliance” group consisting primarily of mid-level operations managers. It was not surprising that I was asked to speak to the topic of “leadership competencies”. Nor was it surprising that most attendees at times felt overwhelmed by the day to day management and fire fighting, despite the desire to focus on more strategic responsibilities. The participants were perhaps a bit surprised that so little organizational focus is given to defining and developing leadership competencies, which differ from management skills. However, the biggest and most concerning surprise was that most of these leaders were measured and rewarded primarily, if not exclusively, according to their management skills and metrics. If we do not define and reward leadership, what then is its significance in organizations? What does “success” look like for a leader, and is she evaluated according to these skills and results? While some managers with titles, staff and budgetary responsibility are also great leaders, others never make the leap. Likewise, there are some leaders in organizations that may or may not have a title or formal authority; nonetheless, they are sought after for their guidance, vision and inspiration.

We hope this month’s newsletter highlights meaningful distinctions between management and leadership competencies that support your development efforts and refine your understanding of your “best fit.” Perhaps it may even prompt you to get a bit uncomfortable in order to “stretch” in a new direction. Organizationally, we hope you consider the value of clearly defining the expectations and behaviors expected of all employees, as well as those skills results uniquely emphasized at the employee, manager and leadership levels. Once identified, invest the time to align your best recruitment, selection and development activities with these competencies and intended outcomes. As always, we welcome your input, insights and stories.



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For You: Manager, Leader or both?

Both individuals and organizations we have been stretched to do more with less during the economic recovery, and we have varying levels of organizational support and readiness to succeed. We likely have taken on new or different responsibilities. For some this means additional functional and staff responsibility. For others, this may have meant a transition out of an organization, a change from a formal leadership to individual contributor role or some other scope change. These changes have been challenging and often frustrating, yet provide opportunities for each of us to develop and redefine our goals. We each approach new responsibilities in different ways with varying levels of enthusiasm! Managers and leaders share many common skill sets, including business acumen, functional knowledge and communication skills. However, there are also important distinctions:

Managers	Leaders
<input type="checkbox"/> Work in the business	<input type="checkbox"/> Work on the business
<input type="checkbox"/> Inward focus	<input type="checkbox"/> External focus
<input type="checkbox"/> Functional expertise	<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational savvy
<input type="checkbox"/> Manage activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncover opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Refine & improve	<input type="checkbox"/> Create and envision
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure consistency	<input type="checkbox"/> Inspire new thinking
<input type="checkbox"/> Manage projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop talent

Organizations need both skills sets to varying degrees, but these traits are not always found in the same person. As you consider career growth, take a few moments to clarify your niche. Consider your strengths, development opportunities and preferences.

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Suggestions For You:

Where you are you today? Where do you want to be?

Take 5 minutes to evaluate yourself for each of the criteria listed above. Use and A, B, C ranking or +, √, -. Are your strengths important to success and utilized in your current role? If yes, celebrate, and consider areas you still want to develop or help others develop these skills. If these strengths are not important in your role, or need to be developed, brainstorm with a colleague or leader about how to develop these skills on or off the job. Finally, truly think about whether you want to be a manager – a more clearly defined role, with authority, accountability and metrics. Alternatively, or in addition to, do you enjoy leading? Do you thrive despite ambiguity and enjoy creative vision, guiding strategy and engaging the workforce in this pursuit? Does it matter if you have direct reports, or are you happy leading projects or contributing individually without the “headaches” of leading others? Now, narrow your focus. From the list above:

1. Circle your 3 strongest “likes”
2. Cross out your 3 “dislikes”
3. Lather, rinse, repeat

For additional support, consider a leadership or 360 assessments, speak with your manager or peers to solicit their perceptions of your strength or suggestions for professional development.

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For Your Organization:

Common expectations, customized development

A common lament in organizations is the lack of clarity regarding the criteria for success or promotion; this leads to perceptions of favoritism and mistrust. As a management team, dedicate a few hours to clearly articulate the core competencies and behaviors expected of all employees, as well as the primary focus of these roles. For example:

	Expectations	Results Orientation	Time Horizon
Employees	Do	Individual	Present
		Team	Near future
Managers	Do	Individual	Present
	Manage	Functional	Mid-range
Leaders	Manage	Functional	Analyze present
	Lead	Organizational	Secure the future

A few hours up front will save you hours of employee relations frustrations later. Base your job descriptions on these criteria, and then your performance evaluation criteria. Consider common development focus areas for each employee group. Whether you subscribe to the idea of the “right person in the right seat” (Good to Great), whether people “get it, want it, are capable of doing it” (EOS process) or another talent evaluation and development process, take time today to invest in the organization’s future.

For additional strategies for creating role clarity, common performance expectations, and leadership development, ask us about our leadership workshops and talent development systems