



Are managers too insecure to be leaders?

That I think depends entirely on the organisational culture surrounding them. Most corporate organisations seem to promote those who get the job done and get the results. Until recently it seemed that people were expendable. Lose one, get another. In Aus there is a skill shortage and I think that we finally understand that it is sound business practice to mentor and coach your managers into leaders. To review behavior and team satisfaction as part of performance.

If the culture supports this then most managers if they have the desire can become leaders. There are ways of organizing your time to ensure that you coach and mentor your staff. I worked from home one day a week and that was my 'closed door time' my time to work on the business. The rest of my time was spent working with my staff.

Our mission, vision and values clearly articulate that our people come first. My staff can't care for clients if they don't feel cared for themselves.

If the culture doesn't understand the value of leadership over management then this will be seen as weak and time wasting.

Jennifer Weller

All too often we try to place a religious or emotional face on leaders. It's counterproductive and counterintuitive to do so unless they are Boy Scout leaders. In business, it is imperative that leaders understand that they are here to make money, not friends.

Bob Schecter

Managing is different than leading. To figure out why, read the definitions:

Lead: - to show the way by going in advance; conduct; escort; direct.

Manage: - to exert control over; make submissive to one's authority, discipline, or persuasion.

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

Just reading the definitions shows the different temperament types that are attracted to the different rolls. One of the big problems for companies is that far too many senior business executives are managers and not leaders thus keep looking for people with skills sets like their own.

HR departments spend a great deal of time looking at what you've done, and very little at what you are capable of thus people in a management position who have little opportunity



to demonstrate leadership potential WILL be overlooked in your search for leaders, yet be the ideal candidate.

Allen Laudenslager

Managers are leaders by definition. I refer to them as coercive leaders since their power is directly derived from their ability to coerce people into following them by manipulating rewards (salary, bonus, etc.) and punishment (firing, bad work assignments, etc.).

The other type of leader is an inspirational leader. When a follower thinks that following the guidance of another person will help him/her better achieve his/her personal goals, that other person are an inspirational leader. Usually when we talk of "leadership" in a philosophical sense, we are talking about the characteristics of inspirational leaders. On the other hand, when people talk of leadership in a corporate sense, they are usually referring to the characteristics of coercive leaders.

Coercive leadership characteristics and inspirational leadership characteristics are mutually exclusive. A manager cannot be an inspirational leader and an inspirational leader cannot be a manager.

John Brooks

I believe that, in this day and age of job insecurity, managers cannot be effective unless they are willing to realize that their job is not secure no matter what and just be a good leader. My observations are that most people in today's business climate are managed for failure rather than for success. Managers don't groom the people below them on the ladder for promotions because they are afraid that they will be replaced by those people if they are cheaper. Managers don't stand up for the people they are managing when higher ups are unreasonable because they are too afraid to lose their own jobs.

There will always be people who believe that you can only lead out of fear and those that believe you can only lead out of love/respect. Either way, some are good and some are bad. What is important is a climate where people are treated with respect and no one feels that their job is in jeopardy 24/7.

Rama Beerfas

Interesting question.

Leading and managing are two different roles with different skill sets needed to be effective. Most people in positions where leadership and/or management skills are called for have some combination of competency for these roles.

This means while some people can effectively lead and manage, others can only do one or the other effectively, and some people will do neither very well. There are lots of variations



on this theme, dependent on the individual's background, education, experience, behavioral preferences, and cultural context and so on.

What you are describing sound like a Theory X manager (does not trust others to work effectively without negative motivation), and my experience is that most people are less drastic than the example. Fear, by the way, does not guarantee success, in my opinion. It just induces compliance for a period of time.

John E. Smith

In reading your response, I have to admit that I disagree with a couple of premises:

1) That a critical requirement for a leader is to be loved. I think that one of the most critical aspects of leadership is providing a vision that other people want to be part of. In this case, the leader needs to be respected, credible and authentic. Some may be loved, some perhaps not.

2) That managers can only thrive in a fear-led organization. Fear is not a good way to manage and leads people to primarily operate by covering their backsides. The best managers are very interested in the success of their employees and understand how to take the vision from above and execute it effectively through their staff. The staff looks to the managers to look out for their careers, by providing them opportunities for new training and advancement, recognizing their accomplishments and being fair.

Finally, from my perspective, some managers can lead (and some cannot). Likewise there are some leaders that can manage (and some that cannot). There are separate talents and skill sets that are needed to accomplish these separate tasks. Some of this is innate and some of it is learned. However, the most effective leaders (or managers) are skilled in the other disciplines. These individuals have the full picture and are more likely to be comfortable in many different roles in an organization.

Jeffrey Otto

Doing the things right, rather than doing the right things is - in my view - the very first difference between respectively a Manager... and a Leader.

In other words, being a Manager does not imply to be/become a Leader.

Ludovic Petit, CISSP

From previous responses I would agree most with Jeffrey.
I fully agree that true leader have to be respected, if they are loved this could be a bonus.

For managers I agree there are different skills required, however they should also earn respect in order to accomplish their goals. Unfortunately most of manager I know and I



even known are not leaders. The worst part is that they are not leaders, even if they could have been because not this is expected from them.

In my opinion the most fundamental problem in the respect of this topic is the huge pressure on pure management skills and lack of requirements for leadership skills in high level management area. It seems that most companies require from CEO to be an excellent accountant... not a business leader and definitely not a visionary.

I also understand by a leader, a person having a business vision, willing to assume risks, set direction, take decisions. It seems for me that these are exactly the opposite of what are asked now from high management.

Managers should understand risks, including those related to job insecurity better than others. They should know that higher you get, lower is job security and they should assume this. In real life you cannot ask for high reward with minimum risks.

I agree however with one initial assumption, "all the pressure to deliver, please their superiors". Unfortunately a huge amount of manager's effort is spent to please superiors. Just that, not pleasing superiors by delivering better results, which would be normal.

As a side note, I've received once a compliment which has pleased me a lot, even if it was intended to be a warning: that high management is keeping me in a certain position only because they need me. That implied that they don't like me, personally. The "strange" part was that almost all my colleagues and friend considered this as a thread... something to be avoided.

I don't intend to be disliked by high management, but whenever I have to choose between being liked or being useful I'll choose the last one.

Do you think this would be applicable to most managers?

Daniel Suciu

Managers who

- are team players
 - have a sound understanding of their role and it's technical nature
 - have the capacity to learn from failures
 - are able to manage both personal and professional lives
- would be the prime candidate for leadership role.

Else they would be actually parasites in the professional world.

Randeep Singh





Just imagine the ideal manager as a football coach.

Have they ever played football? Some yes, others don't.

Is it a guarantee that you would be a good coach if you have been a very good and recognized player in the past? No.

Is it usual to fire a football player? No.

Is it usual to fire a coacher? Yes, so, play risky.

What do they have to do? Organize a team in order to be a winner team.

Do they feel fear from inside the team, i.e., a player can fear their place? No. They have different roles and responsibilities.

So, in my opinion well succeeding companies are the ones which have managers who are inspired and are allowed to behave this way, which are a very few of them.

Sandeep K Sood

I agree with John Smith and Jeffrey. I believe a true leader is one who is not a leader out of fear.

I believe it is not necessary that all good managers r going to be good leaders too but i think a good leader has to be a good manager too, a good manager of humans, otherwise howsoever good vision or foresight one has, he/she can never be a good and successful leader.

Sérgio A.S. Fernandes

Suggesting, as some do, that managers should only be concerned with the bottom line is why they are managers and not leaders. Leaders help everyone get what they want. All relationships should be mutually beneficial ones in which all parties grow and gain reward. Managers can manage facts. Leaders lead people.

Kevin Harville

A leader is a very dangerous person, especially if he or she is a particularly charismatic one. A leader can propagate ideologies, reinforce delusions and potentially can lead the organisation to doom. Such a leader whether love-led or fear-driven must be avoided. Your question seems to be based on the premise that a leader is a hero, a messiah, someone that people in an organisation can put their faith unto.



Good organisations do not have hero managers. They have a culture that continuously creates leaders, people who lead at various levels and grow to operate at higher levels. Such leaders reflect the ethos of the organisations and having proven themselves to their bosses, peers and followers are not driven by fear, nor they need "love" to succeed. In my experience good managers developing into leaders have more success and happiness compared to the "wannabe leader" types.

Pankaj Rai Mehta

A Managers job is to manage, being a leader is optional and being loved not tenable.

Sure, reports have feared, but only because of fairness. Middle Managers are being replaced by automation and the work environment should not be a social club.

Phil Lauro

I totally disagree with the idea that fear-led organisations guarantee success - in fact it's totally the opposite! But it is true that whenever managers are being judged based on short-term financial results only, they have a very strong incentive to create such an environment - and can we blame them?

Managers are people, only people, and human beings have always gone for the easy option...so when the incentive is in the wrong place, and the easy-way is there, why would they be expected to take the hard path and make people follow them out of respect and love, as you say.

There is a lovely book called "Leading Change Management" published this year by Stanford, written by Herold & Fedor, that clearly explains why fear and even good reputation are not long-term guarantees that people will follow; it's only the quality of relationships that make leaders effective on medium and long term.

Personally I've never met a leader that based his work on fear and lasted more than 1-2 years; I have met the opposite: leaders who have built companies by using the relationships created with their followers.

Cristina Mihai

Manager does not equal leader.

Leaders are created by their followers and managers are created by their superiors.

Annie Pettit

