

Leadership and Management Applications

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The terms leader and manager are often used by the layman interchangeably. The astute scholar, however, will note the varying connotations and differences between usages of each term. To summarize each in general terms, management is task and goal oriented while leadership is people oriented. A manager operates on a spectrum, ranging from telling his subordinates what tasks they will need to accomplish, to telling them the specific steps he would like them to take and how to go about doing their job. These descriptors indicate that it is all about control. In his quest to maintain the status quo, he focuses on minimizing risks while meeting expectations with his eyes firmly affixed on the bottom line. Often he follows existing models and merely approves work being performed by subordinates. For him it is all about administration. He preoccupies himself with managing time and human resources (Lyon A., 2017).

Distinct from the manager, the leader is people-oriented. He inspires trust, influences, and persuades. A leader will be inspirational; he will set direction and chart a course that leads into new organizational- and professional- growth for the team and for each member. His eyes are ever on the horizon and he is thinking long-term. He is a visionary (Laureate Education, 2019). He is concerned with his team of people and with motivating them. He is attentive to building relationships, that includes coaching, teaching and mentoring (Lyon A., 2017). Sadly, too much management and not enough leadership results in short-term thinking and a general lack of planning or preparation for contingencies. Although the terms are different and distinct, they are inextricably linked and a successful individual will learn to channel both (Murray, A., 2009).

In 1964 Robert Blake and James Mouton theorized what has become known today as the leadership, or managerial, grid. The grid functions in similar fashion to the first quadrant of a

standard cartesian plane, charting from minimal to maximum production on its horizontal axis and interpersonal skill on its vertical axis.

On the grid, Blake and Mouton placed five management styles. First, I will review a country club manager. He possesses maximum interpersonal relational skill and minimum production value. This person would make a really great boss and create an amazing work atmosphere. They trust in their subordinates to do their work and avoid write-ups or any form of punishment for poor production value in their team because they do not want to injure the relationships they have formed. Still, seemingly minimum work is produced. This seems to be common in government positions but is detrimental.

Highest on the production scale and lowest in interpersonal management was termed produce or perish management (Jackson, S., 2015) in one scholarly source I reviewed and as authority-compliance management (Lussier, R. N., 2017) in another source I referred to in my preparation of this paper. They are bossy managers. They have an expectation that subordinates will do as instructed and not question the reason or the authority. This high-production, result-producing expectation is not fertile ground for the development of working relationships. These sorts only last in environments with self-motivated and skilled staff and even then they are not well liked. They could be best suited in managing a team of surgeons.

Henceforth I will examine management styles that have a proportionate balance of production and interpersonal value. Most lacking in equal measure of each is the impoverished manager. He will assign tasks to subordinates and seem to disappear. He is so detached from his team that he is not even aware when disagreements occur amongst his staff or the lack of interoperability in the work force. I could only see this type of manager being effective in a blue-

collar line of work that requires minimal intervention, has few qualification requirements for its unskilled workforce and perhaps in an assembly line job.

Vested with both mediocre interpersonal skill and production value was classified as the middle of the road manager. They produce adequate results but their team feels uninspired by them. There is no sense of camaraderie among staff and management and little trust or personal relationship. The communications are strictly business and professional and there is a lack of vision. I believe this is the manager we always see that put on a good show during his interview and put out a nice, clean and presentable resume, but after he was hired he just turned out to be a dud. This kind of behavior seems detrimental to any work force and I expect workers will replicate the behavior.

Most effective of all of the styles of management that Blake and Mouton covered is that of the team leader. This is the ideal workplace manager and leader as he possesses superior metrics in production-value and interpersonal-relationship with his team. These managers lead by example. There is a strong feeling of camaraderie felt among the team and he exemplifies all of the traits I described in paragraph two above and is seen by his staff as a mentor and by the organization as a visionary. He establishes personal relationships quickly and deftly but is able to separate business from personal when it is time to counsel a staff member or make organizational adjustments. Elon Musk comes to mind. I believe we are seeing this style crop up more in more in California in finance and tech startup companies and it is the style of leadership we all should ascribe to and seek for our own selves.

References

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