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Better Manager, Better Leader

Firstly, if you are a manager, be very clear on what you are accountable for. While a single EBIT % may be a core focus, think a little more broadly. You'll likely also be responsible for a range of intangibles, for example customer satisfaction and employee engagement.

Have the accountabilities conversation with your own manager, with a view to you wanting to 'own' them! It's likely to benefit both of you. An impact map, with line of site connection between goals and accountabilities, can be a very powerful tool.

Next, be crystal clear about accountabilities with your people. Too often boundaries are unclear and this is when things slip through the cracks. Lack of clarity is a management problem! Take action to resolve it.

As a manager, you'll also want to act as a leader as often as possible. People generally prefer the choice to follow over directives to comply. Leverage influence instead of formal authority when you can. The latter is always available as a last resort – exercise it when you need to.

Recent research cautions that no leader is 'complete – the world is too complex! We also know that followers judge leaders' ability to follow. Know when the time is right to allow, even encourage, others to step up. Then step back and act as an effective follower in the context. Remember though, being a follower does not absolve you of formal managerial accountability.

LEADING OR MANAGING – AND WHY THE DIFFERENCES MATTER

Leading and managing

Harry was deep in thought. "Just how much of our marketing budget should we commit to our new product?" The team, as always, had offered differing perspectives. This added richness to his decision-making, but increased complexity. There seemed to be so many alternatives to consider. Nevertheless, it was still his job to make the final call. Ultimately, Harry was also accountable for the results.

A short while earlier, he had managed the regular team meeting at which the marketing budget was discussed. Harry had pushed the team to stick to the agenda and also to the allocated timing. On reflection, this meant that he hadn't been paying sufficient attention to the contributions of all team members. Thankfully, Jenny had. At a critical point in the meeting she had persuasively insisted that Roger be given an opportunity to share his ideas. As it turns out, they were proving pivotal to the final decision. Harry was pleased that both Jenny and Roger had stepped up and exercised leadership, in exactly the way that was needed in the context.

Harry had participated in a variety of leadership training and management development opportunities during his career. Despite this, he seldom gave much thought to the nature of leading and managing. He just got on with the job. If Harry had been more alert to the differences between leading and managing, he may have been able to leverage both more effectively.

So what exactly is the difference?

How often do you hear the phrase "company leaders" being used to refer to senior managers? The implication is that the terms are synonymous. Leader equals manager. But there are a number of vital differences between leading and managing, even if the best managers are also capable leaders. Knowing the difference means we can apply each more effectively.

However, seeing them as competing notions is also unhelpful. Management scholar, Henry Mintzberg, observes that Peter Drucker put management on the map in the late 1950's, but "*leadership has since pushed it off the map*". While different, leadership and management are often inextricably linked, like the thin strand of dyed fibre spun into a twisted rope to identify the strands. You can't extract the coloured fibre without destroying the rope.

Management

The term management stems from the Italian term *maneggiare*, meaning to handle, especially a horse. Applied to organisations, Henry Fayol famously outlined forecasting and planning, commanding, organising, leading and controlling as the five

management functions he used to run his coal-and-iron business.

Many management studies have followed. Planning, leading, organising and controlling are currently considered the core management functions by many management texts. They're what managers do to achieve organisational goals.

From a broad perspective, planning involves goal setting. Organising relates to allocating resources. Leading deals with engaging people in work behaviours that achieve the identified goals. Controlling is about measuring and monitoring performance and standards, to ensure that efforts result in goal attainment.

Managers are appointed to their role and are usually accountable for specific goals. They are also commonly in charge of others, known as subordinates. There is nothing ugly or rude about the term – in short, it means that someone higher up 'carries the can'. Managers are liable to account for outcomes and actions.

Leadership

What about leadership? Initially, to lead was to go ahead or guide (a horse by the halter). Today, the commonly accepted definition of leadership is "*influencing others towards a common goal*". Leading involves initiating needed action or taking charge by exercising eight influencing behaviours (as outlined in previous briefings). Most important is that leadership occurs through influence. Unlike management, there is no formal authority.

Leaders only fill that role while they have followers. Leadership ceases when followers withdraw their support. In contrast, managers retain their role via formal appointment and specified accountabilities. They may not necessarily be accountable for people.

The advantage of making the distinction

By distinguishing between leading and managing, we can ensure that people occupying management roles develop a full repertoire of leadership and management skills. However, the real value comes in recognising that the much larger number of people, who are not managers, can (and do) exercise leadership. Anyone in an organisation, regardless of their formal authority, can be a leader – influencing others toward the common goals.

In the knowledge economy, leadership is a valuable catalyst. Research shows that teams and organisations that exercise more leadership outperform those where less leadership is displayed. To maximise leadership benefits, you need to recognise that it's different from management, that non-managers can lead and that managers can often usefully act in the follower role.