



MANAGERS AND LEADERS – IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

More and more New Zealand Companies seem to be providing learning and development programmes that focus on 'Leadership training for Managers'. Is there a difference between being a leader and a manager – and if so how is this manifested?

There are many facets of management that incorporate leadership skills, but quite simply those who manage staff do not always have the attributes a leader does. Conversely, leadership is just one of the many skills that a manager must possess. Without this some negative effects on the company may be apparent. Be reassured by the fact that leadership can be taught and developed. There are some common qualities inherent in most leaders, but they are not a prerequisite to becoming one. These qualities are effectively a toolkit to get the job done successfully. All of these characteristics can be developed or taught. Not all leaders are born leaders - they can be made.

Some of the qualities leaders possess include:

- Using emotion
- Trusting intuition
- Questioning policy and methodology used
- Encouraging delegation and participation
- Preferring innovation to convention
- Having a visionary style of direction

The person, who uses leadership as a style, willingly commemorates success within the team and grants recognition when it is due. They also take responsibility when the project/incentive is unsuccessful.

The leader is also someone who seems to naturally attract followers.

A management style of working incorporates:

- Following Company policy
- Implementing administrative organisation
- Emphasising rationale and control
- Possessing a good knowledge of the workplace
- Using a formal method of supervision
- Expecting to be obeyed because of implied authority

The person who uses a managerial style of supervision does not focus on the individual or team morale. Instead, more task and outcome focused, they perceive emotions as undesirable and unnecessary. The manager will have power to control staff, but may encounter passive resistance to this.

In effect “Managers do things right, while Leaders do the right thing.” (1).

The most significant difference between the two styles of directing staff is in the area of motivation. Motivation can be viewed as the input staff are prepared to give. A leader motivates the people around them because of their way of being; they are naturally liked and respected, and instil passion into their work. Leaders naturally value accomplishment, recognition, accountability and career advancement - subsequently staff motivation is high. On the other hand, a manager has staff and conveys that authority to them often. They are told what to do and how to act. Staff can experience dissatisfaction if supervision and working conditions feel unfair. This then affects staff morale - accordingly staff motivation will be lower.

Interestingly managers are predisposed to coming from very stable home backgrounds, having experienced standard, happy lives. Consequently they are not comfortable with the possibility of change to their method of operating, and usually try to avoid conflict.

Leaders tend to have overcome some form of adversity in their backgrounds, such as suffering from a serious childhood illness or experiencing some form of trauma. As a result they expect to confront difficulties and are accepting of risks which they see as possible opportunities. They will happily operate ‘outside the square’ to accomplish what they need to.

The impact of Leaders and Manager’s at Work

Leaders appeal to the heart and use personal charisma to wield power. Their staff are followers and their style of persuasion is to sell and have excitement at work. Their energy is encompassed with passion. They take risks, break rules and take full responsibility when things don’t work.

Managers appeal to the head and use formal authority to wield power. They have subordinates and their energy is fuelled by control. Their style of persuasion is to tell staff what to do, and the reward is getting money for work. They minimise risks, make rules and blame others when things don’t work.

In Conclusion

When considering the style of Management you want at your place of work, it is important to consider the type of culture that exists, and the balance between employer expectation and rewards. Although people are there to work, it is important that Management are perceived as working together with them - rather than pushing them from behind. If staff feel important and respected, completion of tasks and the well-being of the group are guaranteed as successful.

References

(1) Richard Pascale, “Managing on the Edge”, Penguin Book, pp65, 1990.

By Gloria Masters
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