

## **LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP**

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### **1. Leadership – trends in actual management**

The development of actual managerial theories drove to a series of changes within the organizations, as well as to an alteration of the practice used by those organizations in leading peoples and groups of work. This fact resulted in managerial trends changes within organizations and imposed leaders, managers with leadership abilities, on the managerial level.

The leadership represents an attribute which is desirable and even required to managers by the organizations they lead. This is a leaders' characteristic based on the fundamental idea that leaders are self-reliant and bring confidence to the team members. Led by true leaders, the employees feel more competent, find the work more attractive and, consequently, their results are better. The leadership is in direct connection with the ability to influence peoples' behavior.

In order to explain how leadership forms, a series of theories were presented along the years. The principal issue was whether leaders had inborn qualities or their becoming was influenced by a situational, circumstantial factor. Some experts consider that the leadership is the result of charisma, while others assert the leadership is the sum of acquirable or/and learnable behaviors. But although some abilities related to leadership can be acquired, the attempt to train those person who think they don't have to improve such abilities shall fail.

The complex question of leadership represents an important point for some decades now. Experts' research aimed to define leaders, to define those who were able to impose their own vision on, and to influence important activities of, the organizations or structures they led. In order to profoundly know this subject, has been also sought the answer to the dilemma: the qualities required to a leader are inborn or can be acquired and developed. To identify leaders' characteristics, important organization managers were analyzed, but patterns corresponding to all of those having leader' qualities could not be relieved.

It is noteworthy the fact that the accent is not upon personal characteristics, but on behaviors leaders adopt while performing their activities, actions or positions. The advantage of such approach consists of considering as irrelevant the inborn characteristics, being important, in turn, the observable behaviors.

Therefore, if the behavior providing efficiency in leadership is identified, such behavior can be learnt, and in case inborn qualities are required, people having such qualities will be chosen, the training becoming irrelevant. An interesting study performed for a better knowledge of the above-mentioned elements was made by William Bennis in early '90s of the last century. Bennis established a test-group of 60 leaders of some important corporations. The average age of the test-group was 56. 48 persons in the test-group were white males, 6 were females and 6 were black males. All of them were married - first marriage – and family adepts. By interviewing them, Bennis singularized four skills common to all members of the test-group. These skills are:

- attention management referring to the leader's ability to:
  - attract people by creating a vision;
  - communicate such vision to the others;
  - determine people, through the power of personal example, to try to achieve together the said vision;
- significance management representing the leader's ability to convey his own vision to the others so that the last-ones to be able to get the significance of objectives, directions, aims or aspects this vision involves; the leaders have the ability to integrate facts, concepts and anecdotes in significances that others easily understand;
- trust management; this refers to the leaders' ability to make other people having confidence in them; an important element in building the trust is the stability, reliability and consistency of this feeling; people want to follow leaders they can rely on (even if they do not share their points of view) and not leaders they agree with, but who are changing their opinion; the trust implies also the leader's capacity to keep his promises, to keep the confidentiality of the entrusted information and to maintain the established values system;
- self-management is the characteristics deriving from the concept that efficient leaders understand themselves (they know their strengths and their weaknesses) and act

within the limits of their abilities; due to this fact, the leaders are self-confident and do not consider errors as failures.

Bennis reached the conclusion that the leaders were those who determined people they led to acquire some characteristics for their own benefit, as well as for the benefit of the organization they are working with. Thus, the leaders make people feel important and competent; they stimulate individual's self-confidence, strengthen the feeling of making part of a team and consider work as an interesting challenge.

## **2. The leader – promoter of the leadership**

After several studies performed by experts, resulted that successful leaders give a greater importance to particular managerial activities such as planning or training and have more trust in their subordinates, being strongly people-focused. The leaders are concerned with their employees' needs and interests, as well as with their job satisfaction.

Due to the fact that the organization success depends mostly on managers' efficiency, almost all organizations offer to their managers training and development programs focused on leadership. This is based on the idea that people can change their behavior and improve their ability to work with other people.

To which extent the training programs can significantly affect the behavior is still an opened question. Thus, some scholars (mainly F. Fiedler from the University of Washington) claim most adults are strongly bound to their personality and behavior. This is the reason why the main concern should be the harmonization between individual attributes and job requirements. Other experts consider people can learn and can change their behavior provided that they attend the adequate training program.

The question is, considering the results obtained by a leader, what can generate his failure and which are the effects of this failure. A possible answer to this question has been given based on a study carried out by North Carolina Creative Leadership Center, on a representative test-group including large companies. It has been analyzed a number of company's leaders who, after being promoted within the organization, failed (had been fired, moved down or had not been allowed to promote). People knowing those leaders have been interviewed and a behavioral pattern have been identified.

The conclusion was that no individual failed due to a single factor influence. The most frequent reasons of leaders' failure, arranged according to their importance, were the following:

- insensitivity towards the others and an intimidating character;
- distance, standoffishness and arrogance;
- betrayal of trust by not keeping the undertakings;
- extreme ambition, determination to get on top at any price;
- failing to solve certain problems related to performance, trying to hide the failure or to blame someone else;
- "over-managing" or inability to delegate or to build a team;
- inability to select and train subordinated employees;
- inability to think strategically on macro-level and paying too much attention to details and technical problems;
- inability to accommodate to his superior's different managerial style;
- over-dependence upon chief or mentor.

An essential factor of these individuals' failure was the inability to actively work with people. The leaders need a basis in order to have the power to promote. This power is the expression of their ability to influence other people's behavior on pre-set directions.

From this point of view, intelligent leaders give special attention to supporting networks that allows them to get results. Failing leaders ruin individuals' support and endanger their careers. None of the ten principal reasons of leaders' failure involves strictly professional incompetence. As individuals achieve higher managerial levels, they pass from performing technical attributes towards solving individuals-related problems, from the interest in small tasks towards complex administrative problems. Failing leaders were not able to make such change.

### **3. Leader or manager ?**

Some experts consider that manager and leader are synonymous and, consequently, they use those terms alternatively. But the management and leadership represent, in fact, distinctive dimensions of the companies' managing staff. Thus, the manager is that individual who ensures the company's objective achievement through planning, organizing and focusing

the activity towards completeness, while the leader has the capacity to make people act in that manner he thinks most appropriate. As a consequence, one individual may be a competent manager without having the abilities of a leader.

For this reason, actual trends in getting a managerial position are focused on a specific general purpose: that of finding individuals with leadership abilities, not only good managers but true leaders who convey culture, who are “social architects” of the organizations and who create and maintain values. The leaders are those individuals who make the appropriate things; the managers are those individuals who make things appropriately. Both tasks are essential, but profoundly different.

This, in order to underline the two directions: the managerial-one (specific to managers) and the leadership (specific to leaders) a series of parallels between managers’ and leaders’ way of thinking and acting are specified below, in table 1:

*Table 1*

<b>Manager</b>	<b>Leader</b>
• makes things right	• makes right things
• is conservator	• is innovator
• wants stability	• wants variety
• imitates	• is original
• focuses on the system	• focuses on individuals
• his/her decisions depend on costs	• his/her decisions are based on confidence
• maintains	• develops

It is thought that there are interferences between the two situations as to the capacity of each of them to solve problems related to their positions. Considering this, we should mention the fact that a manager may have special abilities in forecasting, organizing and controlling the activity but without having the ability to efficiently run the subordinated staff, similar to the case when a leader does not possess forecasting, organizing and controlling abilities. But these differences rather refer to personal abilities than to tasks related to the position they hold.

The great difference between the two of them is the fact that the leader has the ability to determine people to work out of conviction, while the manager's directing activity falls into rational field. The last-one asks employees to perform certain tasks, relying on a certain logic that may be opposite to employees' interest. From this point of view, the "brain", the rational human aspect is associated to the manager, while the leader is associated with "the soul". Table 2: reports a parallel between the managers' and leaders' characteristics, according to this approach.

Table 2

Manager (brain)	Leader (soul)
• rational	• visionary
• perseverant	• creative
• imperative	• experimenter
• stabilizer	• independent
• prudent	• daring
• conservator	• innovator
• organized	• imaginative

In the last decade, a greater importance is given to the orientation of managers towards leadership. We should mention that leadership is a characteristic that all organizations want to find in their managers due to superior results obtained by using this way of managerial approach. For this reason, the leaders' managerial methods and specific characteristics are imposed. These are:

- the orientation of his subordinates, by creating a particular vision upon problems, vision they convey to the same;
- inspire the staff with trust and are self-confident;
- have enough experience to see errors in an original way, as another distraction from the way towards success;
- give employees the possibility to use their personal abilities in an optimum manner;
- they promote the new and implement innovating ideas;
- make people feel more powerful around them; people feel more competent, appreciated and self-confident, considering the task assigned to them as provocative.

In analyzing the leadership, the starting point was the attempt to observe: what exactly the efficient leaders do, what positions they hold in order to ensure the achievement of the objectives and which are the methods they use to motivate people.

#### **4. The leadership – a fusion of interest in results and concern for people**

An important practical problem in leadership is that of integrating the interest in production and results with the concern for people. From this point of view, Blake and Mouton, two American researchers, have identified a system of possible combination between the two orientations: towards results and towards people. These possibilities are the following:

1. 9 – 1 implying a strong interest in results and a poor concern for people; the problem that rises is that of integration, meaning that the interest in results should not determine a disregard of individuals who are to obtain such results;
2. 1 – 9 embodied in a strong concern for people and a poor interest in results; the unbalance occurs contrariwise, as too much attention is paid to people, to the detriment of production activities progress and results achievement;
3. 1 – 1 has the meaning of a passive or sluggish leadership, this type is characterized by a poor concern both for people and production;
4. 5 – 5 is the most used managerial technique in Europe and The United States, representing a compromise approach where a part of each dimension is given up in order to maintain the status quo;
5. 9 – 9 is the perfect type, being highly-efficient; in this case, the leader tries, by stimulating the effort of the entire team, to solve at the same time the problems raised by both dimensions; in turn, not only the leader, but the entire team, and each member of it, is concerned with the two dimensions.

Within the system specified by Blake and Mouton, the favorite managerial style in almost all situations is 9 – 9. The team's productivity and moral are situated at an optimal balance point. This highly balance situation is usually achieved by creating a team where all members are involved. At the same time, the work is divided and the managers involve a great number of persons in planning, goals-setting and decision-taking. Also, the team members are provided with all relevant information, important tasks are assigned to them ad

they feel useful and needed. This kind of managerial pattern involves a certain “philosophy” upon the significance of the terms management and leadership as well as an efficient strategy for implementing such philosophy.

## 5. Instead of conclusion

Extending and perhaps even overstating the importance of leadership, two experts in the field, T. Peters and N. Austin, touching upon the issue of actual changes in nowadays managerial directions, extend the idea of leadership, getting to assert that: “The concept of leadership is crucial for this revolution – so important that we consider that the term management should be abandoned.”

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