

GST 224

LEADERSHIP SKILLS



LESSON 4

Understanding Leading vs. Managing

People often confuse management and leadership. Managers may fail to lead and then wonder why they are having difficulty getting people to work at their best ability. Similarly, leaders may fail to manage and then not understand why they can't seem to get jobs done on schedule or on budget. Management skills and leadership skills are both needed to perform optimally in an organization.

Differentiating between Management Skills and Leadership Skills

Management skills: required to manage resources in order to deliver a task, assignment, or service.

Leadership skills: required to engage with, motivate, or persuade people to buy-in to a vision, or goal.

SN	A MANAGER	A LEADER
1	Thinks short term	Thinks long term
2	Thinks tactics	Thinks strategy
3	Plans how and when	Asks what and why
4	Looks at the bottom line	Looks to the horizon
5	Builds success through quality	Builds success through followers
6	Supervises	Influences
7	Apply authority from his/her position	Apply authority from his/her behaviour
8	Manage tasks	Lead people
9	Knows what to do to get something done	Knows how to get others to help get something done

Differentiating between a mission statement and a vision statement

A Mission Statement

This states the main purpose and objectives of an organization. The mission statement is written for organization members and the leadership team. It defines those key actions and measures that can be used to determine whether or not an organization is a success. In other words, it defines what an organization does.

A Vision Statement

This addresses the purpose of an organization, but denotes the values of the organization as well. Whereas a mission statement defines what an organization does, a vision statement helps to delineate how that work should be done or carried out. Vision statement speaks to the members of the organization as well as people outside the organization who mostly relates with the organization.

Perception of leadership

The most effective leaders are those who can successfully influence the way other people influence themselves.

It is our usual habit to think of those at the top levels as leaders. But the truth is there are true leaders among the workers who demonstrate to their fellow workers how to perform their jobs safely and efficiently. Leaders do not always hold a job title or wear a suit and tie. Although our culture tends to look to those who bear the distinctive titles as the leaders, however a leader can be the person picking up the garbage because he is conscientious about cleaning up anything that hits the ground instead of leaving it there – call him the ‘servant leader’.

Leadership and Philosophical Reasoning

The 'Allegory of The Cave' is a theory put forward by Plato, concerning human perception. Plato claimed that knowledge gained through the senses is no more than opinion and that, in order to have real knowledge, we must gain it through philosophical reasoning. This is essential for effective leadership.

'The Allegory of the Cave' by Plato

In the Allegory of the Cave, Plato distinguishes between people who mistake sensory knowledge for the truth and people who really do see the truth. It goes like this:

The Cave

- Imagine a cave, in which there are three prisoners. The prisoners are tied to some rocks, their arms and legs are bound and their head is tied so that they cannot look at anything but the stonewall in front of them.
- These prisoners have been here since birth and have never seen outside of the cave.
- Behind the prisoners is a fire, and between them is a raised walkway.
- People outside the cave walk along this walkway carrying things on their head including; animals, plants, wood and stone.

The Shadows

- So, imagine that you are one of the prisoners. You cannot look at anything behind or to the side of you – you must look at the wall in front of you.
- When people walk along the walkway, you can see shadows of the objects they are carrying cast on to the wall.
- If you had never seen the real objects ever before, you would believe that the shadows of objects were 'real.'

The Game

- Plato suggests that the prisoners would begin a 'game' of guessing which shadow would appear next.
- If one of the prisoners were to correctly guess, the others would praise him as clever and say that he were a master of nature.

The Escape

- One of the prisoners then escapes from their bindings and leaves the cave.
- He is shocked at the world he discovers outside the cave and does not believe it can be real.
- As he becomes used to his new surroundings, he realizes that his former view of reality was wrong.
- He begins to understand his new world, and sees that the Sun is the source of life and goes on an intellectual journey where he discovers beauty and meaning
- He sees that his former life, and the guessing game they played is useless.

The Return

- The prisoner returns to the cave, to inform the other prisoners of his findings.
- They do not believe him and threaten to kill him if he tries to set them free.

A leader should reason like the returned prisoner.