



Leadership ...Art Form or Science?

By: Donald Hahn

Each of us possesses unique qualities based upon our life experiences, our outlook and resulting attitudes. Based on our experience and perspective we have each developed leadership qualities, which must be exercised or like an injured limb, will atrophy. Leadership begins with attitude rather than action. It's all about vision and has more to do with coaching than "traditional management". Leadership is about "sweating the small stuff", not the tasks, but the emotions and the attitudes of your people. Leadership is all about moving the team forward with a shared vision, focus and passion directed at the individuals, which combine to make up the TEAM. Leadership is all about recognizing and believing that all human beings are to be treated with respect and decency, challenged to stretch beyond their comfort zone, and empowered to make it happen. Leaders recognize that people are infinitely more important than tasks.

I am convinced that there is far too much management in corporate America and far too little leadership. One way to view the differences between leadership and management is to explore the prime objectives of each position. You see leadership serves to inspire, align and empower, whereas the focus of management is to complete key objectives in an efficient manner. Supervision is yet more rudimentary and insures oversight of the tactical plan to insure it is administered in an efficient manner (on-time and in spec) the primary differences between these roles are summarized in the chart below.

Role	Responsibility	Focus	Answers
Leadership	Vision	Inspiration / Alignment	Why
Management	Strategy / Tactics	Effectiveness	Who / When
Supervisor	Tactics / Through-put	Efficiency	What / How / Where

Leadership is derived from authority. There are two basic forms leadership; the first form of leadership comes when authority is expressly given to one based on their position or rank. We call this "express leadership" and while a degree of power is derived from this type of leadership, it does not necessarily lead to authentic leadership, which is earned through one's deeds and action and is derived from trust and respect. Express leadership is short-lived and can only be sustained by turning that given leadership into authentic leadership, which has lasting value. Authentic leadership inspires others to follow and is the only **real** form of leadership. As such the remainder of this discussion will revolve around this concept of authentic leadership.

Michael Jordan missed 27 game-winning shots in his career. Mickey Mantle admittedly spent 5 years in the major leagues “striking out.” But, when the chips were down, their teams relied on them to make it happen... and they rarely disappointed. So what are the qualities of a great leader, and how can each of us reach that “leader within” and bring those qualities to the surface? Here is what I have found through my travels and observations to be some key qualities of authentic leaders, and although this certainly is not an exhaustive list... it makes for a great beginning...

Passion: A powerful emotion or appetite. A leader with great passion and few skills will always outperform a person with great skills and little passion.

Pride: A sense of one’s own proper dignity or value; self respect. Leaders know that their signature is a mark of excellence in everything they do.

Purpose: The object toward which one strives, or for which something exists; goal, aim. Great leaders have a clear destination in mind, and translate that destination into short-term goals. (See Visualization)

Visualization: To form a mental image. Leaders are able to bring their goals and aspirations into the present by seeing things as they EXPECT them to be.

Focus: Adjustment for distinctness or clarity. Effective leaders enable their team to stay focused on the short-term tasks, which will capture the long-term goal.

Commitment: The state of being bound emotionally to a course of action. Leaders possess an UNCONDITIONAL commitment to reach their destination. Leader wannabe’s place CONDITIONS on that commitment.

Courage: The ability to face danger with confidence and resolution; bravery. Leaders acknowledge the challenge, embrace it and resolve to conquer it. (See Commitment)

Generosity: A behavior demonstrating Amplitude or Abundance. Great leaders embrace a philosophy of selflessness, knowing that “my candle loses nothing when it lights another.”

Responsibility: The quality of being accountable for ones actions and direction. Leaders assume 100% responsibility for the result of their actions (or inactions).

Servant hood: The act of expressing submission, recognizance or debt to another. Leaders have a wonderful perspective on their “Position in Life”. They realize it’s all about the other person and they approach every relationship with that perspective.

Consistency: Steadfast adherence to the same principles, course or form. Agreement, harmony or compatibility.

Genuine: Having the reputed or apparent qualities or character as represented.

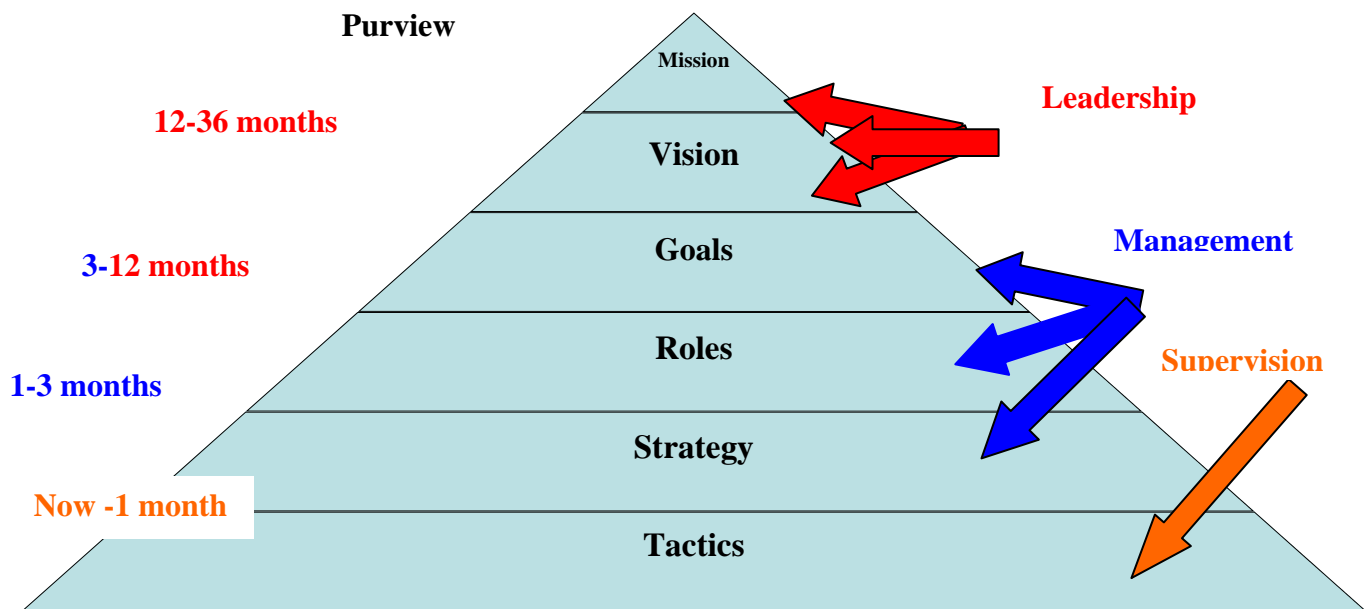
Trust: Complete confidence in a person.

The Leader's Role: Leaders do not focus on how things must be done, nor do they determine the sequence of events or who it is that is expected to do the task. That is left to managers and supervisors. An effective leader is focused on aligning the corporate resources to the long term initiatives and communicating those initiatives in a manner which is motivating and empowering. Leaders will determine that which is valued in the organization. They will set the pace and facilitate a culture in which people can be most effective. To leaders, Human Capital is far and away their single greatest asset. They value and respect their employees and genuinely care. People are motivated by where they are going and why they are going there. Motivated people have a clear picture of the end result and sense of purpose. Additionally they can visualize how their role contributes to the final outcome. The greatest leaders focus on vision and alignment, they attract people with a common vision and common set of values. They create a following because of their belief system and the manner in which they communicate those beliefs.

Leaders and Culture: Perhaps the greatest role of a leader is to establish an empowered culture which is aligned with the corporate values that embody the organization and provide a sense of focus which supports the critical vision and mission of the enterprise. In all instances the enterprise will take on the persona of its leader. Plato said it best when he stated”

*“What is honored in a country will be cultivated there”
~ Plato*

Consider the greatest leaders who have been able to inspire others to action. John F Kennedy's vision of placing a man on the moon, Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" Gandhi's passive resistance movement. Each of these leaders offered a sense of purpose, a rallying point. Kennedy did not speak about HOW we were going to get to the moon, he eloquently pointed out WHY we needed to win the technology race, citing Sputnik as our rallying point. Martin Luther King did not provide a roadmap outlining HOW the civil rights movement should proceed forward; he simply shared his dream and inspired others to follow his vision. Gandhi's values were harmony and respect. He lived those values, and in doing so caused others with similar values to align themselves with his movement. These leaders dealt with vision, mission and alignment, not strategy and tactics. Those they left to followers who shared their vision. A depiction of the relationship of leaders, managers and supervisors follows:



Leaders have a broader and more expansive purview. Management links the vision and mission with the goals and strategies, thus influencing tactics whereas supervisors insure the strategies are accomplished through the efficient completion of the tasks.

“But I’m a manager and I do not have the position of authority to make a difference.”

This statement only applies if you are overseen by a task manager who has express authority but does not value human capital. If this is the case and you do not see relief on the horizon, I suggest you reevaluate your employment decision. In fact each of us in a management or supervisor role has a leadership responsibility. In addition to overseeing the how who and what, we must also inspire people as to the WHY. Management and supervision become much simpler if we first and very importantly start exercising our leadership skills. By understanding WHY, people are much more accepting of the who, what, where, and how. This inspires them to strive for uncommon results and as a result you will achieve consistently better quality outcomes.

Granted, you are responsible for attaining your objectives such as margins, customer satisfaction, output, sales goals, ROI, turnaround times, etc. Given these objectives managers often times put their head down and manage to the metrics. If this is the primary focus, however, what happens when adversity strikes; a key player is out or a circumstance arises that challenges the organization, or you face a major technology setback. Managers will scramble to find short term alternatives. A leader on the other hand, has built a team that shares a vision and purpose and is empowered to act, knows their ultimate goal and collaborates to overcome the setback. The leader is better able to overcome the setback and her team will come up with better contingency plans moving forward to prevent a similar outcome in the future. A leader prepares the team to overcome adversity.

I often hear from management that they must “drive” results. I am certain they do not intend the comment to be belittling but, “drive” is a term also used by cowboys in describing a cattle drive, in which they drove their cattle hundreds of miles to the slaughterhouses. We must alter this way of thinking because humans are not cattle and we cannot herd people. Human beings have a need for belonging, a need for accomplishment and a desire to contribute. Because we as managers have a need to attain objectives we must approach our jobs with the knowledge that in the end results are achieved through people.

Many organizations have established scorecards or dashboards which focus on tangible, measureable results. This is clearly important. However I would challenge you as a manager to add a human element to your dashboard:

- How frequently are you coaching your personnel?
- Do you have a plan by which you will top grade* your organization?
- Do you have the proper metrics and measurements to manage both the quality and quantity of your people’s results (and are they held strictly to those standards)?
- How do you communicate the strategic plan to your people?
- Do you have an effective feedback mechanism which helps your people focus on their personal improvement?

* Top grade: a continuous improvement process in which you are always seeking to replace your poorer performers with Top performers

Is leadership an art form or science? The answer is both. Recognize that if we focus on our people they will achieve the results. Effective leadership will improve one’s effectiveness tenfold as your ideals will cascade throughout the organization leading to a motivated empowered and accomplished team. It starts with your attitude toward human capital. If you embrace human capital as your greatest asset, you have the proper paradigm. From this you must learn how to stay out of the weeds and, understanding human behaviors, genuinely seek to grow your people. Wake up each morning and determine what you must do to connect and focus your people. Once you have this as a foundation, you must hone your skills:

- Get an executive coach.
- Devote a minimum of one hour a week to your own professional and personal growth.
- Learn from the greatest leaders of our time:
 - John Maxwell, Jim Collins, Colin Powell, Stephen Covey, Marcus Buckingham, John Wooden, etc.

Hahn Training Challenges the status quo, knowing that current management practices, while comfortable and familiar, will lead to common results. We are committed to achieving uncommon results by encouraging companies to reinvent themselves and become champions of their cause, their people and their clients.