



## FOCUSED FEATURES

### A BLUEPRINT FOR GAINING CLARITY IN LEADERSHIP

For the past 50+ years, there's been a bit of confusion about the concepts of "management" and "leadership." Even though these terms go hand in hand, they are not synonymous or interchangeable.

So, what's the difference between "management" and "leadership?" You may know, but do your managers have a clear understanding of these words and how they impact their role in your organization? Seasoned and less experienced managers alike sometimes feel the lines between leadership and management are blurred. And, many times they are, especially when we have not been clear about what we expect from them in their role as a leader.

Where they seem to get stuck is not just in the understanding of the two words, but in the execution of what the two words represent. Face it, we promote high achievers into leadership positions, i.e. top sales person into sales manager, and expect them to automatically accelerate their performance by leading others. When we do this without adequate training and tools to support the development of their leadership skills, we risk disappointment and failure.

Think of it this way – you wouldn't risk employee safety by purchasing a new piece of equipment and making it available for them to use without being properly trained. Yet, time-after-time we appoint a new manager, place them in a key role, expect them to lead others, overload them with "management" duties, which then limits their available time for leadership development. In both situations, training becomes the quickest way to significantly reduce the risk of failure.

To help your managers gain a clear perspective of what leadership represents in your organization, establish a blueprint designed to develop their leadership skills.



#### 1. Provide a clear vision of what leadership and management represents.

- **Leadership** is a process of social (not authority based) influence, where one individual demonstrates the ability to maximize the efforts of others to achieve a common goal. Leadership is also a *mindset* that engages an individual's character traits and interpersonal skills. *"The key to successful leadership is influence, not authority."* – Kenneth H. Blanchard
- **Management** focuses on systems and structure, planning, organizing, coordinating, performing tasks and managing process. *"Management is about arranging and telling. Leadership is about nurturing and enhancing."* – Tom Peters

#### 2. Select the right person for the right role.

- Not every manager is suited for leadership. Some managers are interested in managing details and not taking risks associated with leadership. And, that's ok. Not everyone needs to be a leader.



## FOCUSED FEATURES



- Help managers and supervisors stretch, but avoid forcing them into a role in which they have no interest.
- Discuss the skills and competencies needed for a career as a successful leader. In Warren Bennis' book "*On Becoming a Leader*," he offers a very concise list of how he sees the differences between managers and leaders.

3. Be clear about your expectations of the new manager, and ask what their expectations are of you. By keeping this a two-way dialog, it will make the conversation more realistic and valued for both of you.

- When expectations are clear and concise, it leaves little room for assumptions.
- When talking about expectations, address damaging misconceptions. Helping them recognize they are embarking on the *first* leg of a new journey, will quickly dispel the myth that they have "made it," or "arrived" just because of their new title, new office or their name on the door. The title and physical space are nice perks, but they don't support the deeds. The new leaders' team will want to know they are being guided by a person they can trust and follow.

Talk openly and often about their thoughts on the meaning of leadership, where and how they are adding value to their role, and what you can do to support them.

4. Share your thoughts about how and why they've earned the promotion, and what *you* have found to be successful traits for effective leadership. Those traits (*soft skills*) may include:

- Making others feel engaged, important and valued.
- Keeping your word.
- Being honest and fair-minded.
- Clearly outlining your vision.
- Developing a plan to accomplish that vision.
- Admitting mistakes.
- Staying close to the action.
- Knowing the people you lead.



## FOCUSED FEATURES

5. Acknowledge the new manager's promotion throughout the organization – make it public.
  - Congratulate the individual in a company newsletter, staff meeting, email blast or other forms of internal communication. If you keep the promotion quiet, it may send a message to employees that the promotion was not important or has no value to the organization.
6. Provide resource materials and training.
  - Share books and articles that you found valuable in your leadership journey.
  - Discuss learning objectives and set a method of measurement for training outcomes. The training and learning is not a single event, and should never stop.
7. Meet regularly to discuss challenges and how they can be, or have been overcome.
  - Build on best practices.
8. Support the new leader at every possible opportunity.
  - Provide specific and direct feedback.
  - Support their decisions.
  - Let them learn from their mistakes.

Leadership development can be as rewarding as it is challenging. Don't be disappointed if a new leader doesn't rise to the "head of the class" in the first few weeks of their new role. If you are confident you've made the right choice, be patient. Their moment of discovery will happen sooner rather than later.

### KEY NOTES:

- Management and leadership go hand in hand, but have very different meanings, and use different skill sets.
- You don't have to be a manager to be a leader, and you don't have to be a leader to be a manager. But, the best successes happen when the individual can demonstrate both.