

Business: Art of Leadership or Science of Management?

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The subject of leadership and management has been discussed and dialogued many times. Most are well verse in their definitions, differences and what each brings to the table.

One of the more famous quote on this subject was from Grace Hopper, a retired Navy admiral, 'You manage things; you lead people.'

Agree? Most do. It makes sense; people have feelings and leadership skew heavily on human connectivity. Views from some popular works on leadership such as The 8th Habit and The Leadership Challenge support this notion. But doesn't this quote sounds a bit idealistic?

Leadership alone is not enough; you need to combine leadership with management. Relying on leadership alone is like all sail and no rudder.

Peter Drucker: *"..as to separating management from leadership, that is nonsense – as much nonsense as separating management from entrepreneurship. They are part and parcel of the same job .They are different to be sure, but only as different as the right hand from the left or the nose from the mouth. They belong to same body"*

The question is: Where to strike the balance? How much of each do we use? More specially, how much of it do we use in **business**? To answer this question, let us first examine these following differences:

Art or Science

Art stimulate thoughts and emotions. You visit a museum, gaze through the painting and feel connected to some of them. Some painting attracts more, others, the odd 1 or 2. You visit the same work some time later, and some how it feels different. You can't explain why, it's just... the feeling, the connection. The same goes for leadership. Because of some unexplainable forces, some members feel more connected to a leader, while some, just don't get it! Leadership, in this sense, is more akin to art.



Science explains and predicts. Weather forecasting is science. Using patterns and data, geologists are able to predict the next storm. Putting a fire out is science. The fire stops burning because oxygen has been cut. Unlike art, science offers predictability and with it, consistency. Management involves controlling, working *in* system and seeking for consistency. In this sense, management is more parallel to science.

Possibility or Probability

Is there a distinction between possibility and probability? One school of thought says yes: possibility is either 'yes' or 'no' while probability covers everything in between the dichotomies (Odds and chances). The other school says no: they are the same, just that possibilities is not a term used in math. To support this article's argument, we will subscribe to the first belief

Edward De Bono, one of the leading authors in the field of creative thinking said, "Possibility' widens your perception, while 'Probability' narrows it'. In the context of creativity, divergence is good - The more ideas there are, the more chances of striking gold. But what about those ideas that didn't take off? For every 1 idea that lift-off, how many didn't even make it to the launch pad? How much resources were wasted on them?

Probability narrows the field and draws closures. As it narrows, there is less to focus, people become more ready, more prepared and in turn, better equip to make better decisions (think blackjack). The extra attentions that were given to prepare for any and everything can then be refocus on other matters.

Possibility gives one the sense that things are always open, that the tunnel has no or infinite ends. Probability gives people the feeling that they have control over how things will turn out, which door to open to exit the tunnel. Another way to look at these two terms: Risk Vs Calculated Risk.

Connecting the Dots

Leadership is an art, relying heavily on fate and possibilities. To a leader, everyone is possible, no one is impossible. Management in the other hand will say some are more probable than the others. Management is the science of increasing the probability of turning things out as intended.

Many argued that leadership elevates performance to a level management can never reach. This is true, but, such superior performance might be too inconsistent, too few and far between to rely on. Management on the other hand has often been attributed to the stifling of outstanding output but, it at least produces consistency. Leadership produces the occasional brilliance, management chunks out a predictable 7/10 every time. Most leaders will settle for the latter. I think.

Why do
organizations
subscribe to
fix lunch hour?

Red Tapes and Management

Often, we hear individuals complaining about how things are run in an organization, too much red tape, systems that stifles etc. Typically, these individuals are taking the bottom-

up approach, from an individual's perspective. Example: it is ok for me to be late, its just one person. Or, misusing \$5 of the company's money is ok because it is just, \$5!

Turn the table around, take a top-down approach and we will see things completely differently. In an organization of 100, if everyone is 30 minutes late, the company will lose 300 minutes of production, or, \$500 in misused fund.

Only with management can such events be prevented or more realistically, reduced. Management is synonymous with the word control (but not only!). In business, leaders need control elements to ensure resources are placed towards the right direction. *Not all procedures will be popular but they are necessary.* Red tapes and other management tools are designed to increase the probability of performance outcome *not* going below the acceptable range or, to increase the likelihood of performance turning out the way it was planned. Simply put it, management ensures what needed to be done is done.

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Summary

As an organization grows bigger, so will its complexity. Humans are more unpredictable than anything else. We are the most varied, most inconsistent of any variables. Only in fantasy can a leader solely on leadership because everyone will give their all, are fully committed and have all the know-how to perform their *many* tasks. In reality, management is the true quality that will offer predictability and consistency and when combined, heighten the probability of guarantees. With guarantees, life will become a lot easier. Imagine going to work everyday and there is no guarantee that the train will come.

...management alone is never enough... Leadership must never be discounted.

To manage more or to lead more depends on the members more than the leaders. Factors like level of competency and maturity dictate which of the 2 a leader uses more. As the employment number grows, so does the need to manage. Of course, management alone is never enough, it needs to work in tandem with leadership. Leadership must never be discounted.

In sports, a captain relies on leadership to bring the best out of the team. Sometimes the team responds and sometimes, no matter how hard the captain tries, the team just doesn't seem to move. In business, a leader can ill afford such kind of irregularities. Leaders need consistency and rely on probability for planning and decision making to run the business. Doing without



management, allowing everyone *absolute* free-play, leaving everything to possibilities is a virtue no organization can afford.

Business is a numbers game. Running a business requires more science than art, more management than leadership. How much more? I say, 60% Management, 40% Leadership.

Further Readings:

<http://www.leadershipworldconnect.com/linked/leadership%20vs%20management%202009.pdf>

http://www.leadershipworldconnect.com/Becoming_a_Holistic_Leader.pdf