



Being able to identify and hire leaders can make the difference between a thriving business, and one that barely turns a profit. Managers watch over preexisting processes. It is their job to make sure 'things get done right'. However, doing things right doesn't equal 'doing the right things'. Leaders must do things in a way that prepares and positions their company for long-term success. Being a leader is far more complex than a 'one size fits all' management style.

What is Leadership?

First, let's define leadership. Leadership is a process by which an individual influences a group/team to successfully accomplish a set of goals (Hughes, Ginnett, Curphy, 2009). The person doing the influencing is of course, the leader. However there are two other elements to consider the leader must first build a team and then influence them so they successfully perform in a specific set of circumstances.

Many organizations make the mistake of thinking the leader is the most important part of the leadership equation. However, the idiosyncrasies of those being led and the circumstances of the situation also take part in determining success or failure. Considering this, leaders must learn to use a variety of tactics, actions, and behaviors to be successful. There are at least three major areas a leader should focus on:

- 1) Leadership Skills/Competencies
- 2) Experience on the Job
- 3) Knowledge of their Business

LEADERSHIP: Managing is not enough

For years, organizations have tried to answer questions on leadership such as: What are the differences between leaders and managers? Can a manager also be a leader? If so, what qualities would distinguish them as a leader? What traits, characteristics, and behaviors make a good leader and why?

What Makes a Competent Leader?

Competent leaders build teams to get results and thereby have sustainable performance. Studies show that only 25% of leaders in Corporate America are competent. That means that 75% of leaders fall into the first three categories of incompetent leaders below:

- 1) Cheerleaders – get no results, have happy employees
- 2) In Title Only – get no results, have unhappy employees
- 3) By the Numbers – get short-term unsustainable results, have unhappy employees
- 4) Competent Leaders – get sustainable results, build teams, have happy employees

Leaders Are Made Not Born

So what can be done? Research has proven that leaders are not born they are made. There are even certain traits and characteristics, which may predict who in your organization, can become a good leader and consequently those that won't. Whether an organization hires a consulting firm, enrolls its managers in formal leadership classes, or asks them to obtain an MBA, education is what develops the skills and competencies that are required to be a competent leader.

Identifying or Hiring a Good Leader

There are typically six building blocks that make up a competent leader. On the first level, there are foundations which all other leadership competencies rest upon. These *three* areas are difficult to change because they are

a part of the person's mental, physical, and emotional being.

- 1) Intelligence
- 2) Personality
- 3) Values

When picking out potential leaders, the first thing that should be done is to evaluate the person's intelligence, personality, and values to see if there is a fit for a leadership role and with the organizations values. If there is not a fit, the person will most likely fail. Stop here. Although it is difficult to change the basic building blocks it can be done. One thing to consider is that hiring leaders with different personalities than the current staff can be advantageous. This helps bring new perspectives into an organization and can help uncover blind areas.

If the potential leader is a fit at the foundational level, the next step is to make sure that their knowledge and skills are current. Experience alone may not be a good guide when picking a leader. Unfortunately, many people especially those who simply manage, fail to keep their skill set and business knowledge current. A leader must help guide a company into the future, a stale skill set and/or knowledge base prevents them from doing so. However, remember that knowledge and skills are easily obtained. Just make sure that the person has the motivation to be a life-long learner. [h](#)

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