

Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?

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Managers and leaders are very different kinds of people. They differ in motivation, in personality and in how they think and act. Managers embrace process, seek stability and control, and instinctively try to resolve problems quickly - sometimes before they fully understand a problem's significance. Managers emphasize rationality and control and are essentially problem solvers. Leaders, in contrast, tolerate chaos and lack of structure and are willing to delay closure in order to understand the issues more fully.

Managerial goals arise out of necessities rather than desires and are deeply embedded in their organization's history and culture. Leaders are active instead of reactive, shaping ideas instead of responding to them. Leaders change the way people think about what is desirable, possible and necessary.

Managers tend to view work as an enabling process involving some combination of people and ideas interacting to establish strategies and make decisions. They help the process along by anticipating opposition, planning when controversial issues should surface, and reducing tensions. They are good at coordinating and balancing opposing views. Managers look at solutions as acceptable compromises among conflicting viewpoints. Leaders work in the opposite direction. Where managers act to limit choices, leaders develop fresh approaches to long-standing problems and generate new options.

For managers, a survival instinct dominates the need for risk. Leaders are often temperamentally disposed to seek out risk and danger, especially where the chance of opportunity and reward appears promising. Managers have an ability to tolerate mundane, practical work. Not so for leaders.

Managers prefer to work with people. They avoid solitary activity because it makes them anxious. At the same time, managers maintain a low level of emotional involvement in those relationships. Managers may lack empathy or the capacity to sense intuitively the thoughts and feelings of those around them. Leaders, who are concerned with ideas, relate to people in more intuitive and empathetic ways. Managers focus on how to get things done and leaders on what the events and decisions mean to participants.

William James described two basic personality types, "once-born" and "twice-born." Once born people are those for whom adjustments to life have been

straightforward and whose lives have been steady and peaceful since birth. Twice-borns, on the other hand, have not had an easy time of it. Their lives are marked by a continual struggle to attain some sense of order. Unlike once-borns, they cannot take things for granted. For a once-born personality, the sense of self derives from a feeling of being at home and in harmony with one's environment. For a twice-born, the sense of self derives from a feeling of profound separateness.

Managers see themselves as conservators and regulators of an existing order of affairs. A manager's sense of self-worth is enhanced by perpetuating and strengthening existing institutions: Managers see themselves as performing in a role that is in harmony with the ideals of duty and responsibility.

Leaders tend to be twice-born personalities, people who feel separate from their environment. They may work in organizations, but they never belong to them. Their sense of who they are does not depend on memberships, work roles, or other social indicators of identity. Leaders seek opportunities for change. The methods they use may be technological, political, or ideological, but they are all the time trying to profoundly alter human, economic, and political relationships.