

## Expert Tips & Tactics

### Leader or Manager?

Have you ever wondered if you are a manager or a leader? Or are you perhaps a bit of both? Was Patton a great leader or a phenomenal manager of his resources? Or was Patton a resource that was used effectively by his superiors? In order to ponder these questions let's look at the qualities of management and leadership.

I recently gave a presentation to a regional group of managers for a national restaurant chain. Last semester I gave a presentation to undergraduate engineering students at Mississippi State University and this semester I gave a presentation to a group of graduate teaching assistants in geology. The requested title of each presentation revolved around: "Effective leadership and management."

It was interesting to see the varying perspectives between the audiences: On the one hand were the lessons learned by business professionals who had been a part of the working world. On the other hand were the hopes, dreams and aspirations of the as yet, uninitiated students.

As a business owner and a highly-trained professional, you probably think of yourself as a leader. From another perspective, however, you manage the resources of your business to create the best possible outcome for its clients. So are you a leader and a manager? I have asked myself this question a lot. In the last few years, as my current business manager has taken on more of the role of a true human and business resource manager I have had more time to be a business strategist. I have become more of a leader and less of a manager as my program manager has become more of a manager and less of an employee (for me to manage). As my business has matured I have delegated more responsibility for resource management to my extremely capable program manager and have been able to take on more of the role of a leader. Together we make a pretty good team. I am the strategist, she is the tactician.

So what qualities must a leader have? I could give you a list of at least two-dozen traits, but I will chew it down to three: Vision, Hope, Fulfillment. First and foremost, leaders have a vision of the world as they see it. Managers believe in, and share the vision; they implement the plan, muster and deploy the necessary resources.

Leaders are eternally optimistic. They have a deep assurance that they will succeed in the long run, regardless of the obstacles along the way. Leaders are realists. They do not underestimate the enormity of their visions, but they do believe in the final outcome. No matter how tough things get, the final outcome sustains them. They are eternally hopeful. Managers will be effective to the degree to which they believe that their direct supervisors have a road plan. They will be infected by the hope and realistic optimism of the leaders. Managers make sure that the pieces of the plan are in play on a daily basis.

Leaders find fulfillment in the achievement of their goals. The vision itself has value, pure and simple. Managers gain fulfillment from seeing the positive effects of their efforts.

In the E Myth, Michael Gerber talks a lot about the difference between working *on* your business and working *in* your business. It is tough to lead when you are working in the business all the time. When you are busy doing the work every day, you have little time to get your head above water and look at the bigger picture. Our inability to provide strategic leadership at such times can threaten to consume both us and our businesses.

As your business evolves it will be necessary for you to step back and let others fill your shoes as you move upward and outward from the base of the business pyramid to the role of a true Chief *Executive* Officer. You began with a dream; you must eventually assume the role of leader. So are we leaders or managers? Sometimes we are more one than the other, sometimes we are a bit of both. Always it is important for us to know the difference...that too, is part of being a leader.

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