

What's the Real Difference Between Leadership and Management?

Entrepreneur | Tiffany Gaines | September 3, 2021



The distinctions between managing and leading people impact your professional purpose. Here are five aspects that set them apart.

Having managed a roster of entertainers and public figures for over a decade, I know firsthand what it is to delegate and advise based on what I consider is best for the client's overall growth, foundation and structure.

But coaching and mentoring nearly 5,000 musicians, producers and managers and over 50 record-label owners to ensure they learn the fundamentals of how to succeed in the music industry changes the tone of my role altogether. The first scenario allows me to manage situations as they arise by directing solutions to a team or individual whereas the latter requires vision and action developed with the client.

Now, let's consider the obvious differences between leadership and management. Here are five key distinctions between the two and how you can learn to make your role lean in favor of purpose.

1. Leaders inspire and teach while managers give direction

Leaders lead with purpose and perception. Prior to mentoring or teaching their mentees, many have a goal already set in their minds to inspire a team or an individual to turn his or her vision into a reality. Leaders tend to think outside the box and ignite the same passion within their mentees through insight, creativity and intuition.

Managers focus mostly on calculated results that can typically be measured. They set goals by creating situations and solutions to help reach or exceed their targeted objectives.

2. Leaders adapt well to change while managers remain creatures of habit

Leaders embrace change and lean toward the power of transformation. Even amid a storm, when everything seems to be going wrong, they see beyond the issues, and instead of staggering in pessimism, they deviate toward possible solutions. They are innovators focusing more on new methods of advancement in areas of decision-making.

Managers tend to rely on expertise, knowledge and skillset to fulfill their given tasks, many times, but not always, based on a leader or leader's vision. They aim to stick with what they know and typically don't adjust well to change.

3. Leaders seek to learn more while managers repeat proven skills

Leaders, like entrepreneurs, are constantly looking for ways to add to their world of expertise. They tend to enjoy reading, researching and connecting with like-minded individuals; they constantly aim to grow. They are usually open-minded and seek opportunities that challenge them to expand their level of thinking, which in turn leads to developing more solutions to problems that may arise.

Managers, many times, rely on existing knowledge and skills by repeating proven strategies or behaviors that may have worked in the past to help maintain a steady track record within their field of success with clients.

4. Leaders constantly network while managers build procedures, operations and structure

Leaders are always networking. By doing so, they are creating a support system that can help encourage and influence their vision. They engage often with their team to ensure they are satisfied and tend to over-deliver on their promise. This is done with the intention of building trust and support, which benefits everyone in the long haul, especially when it comes to supporting the leader's vision.

Managers focus on the arrangement and structure of the system, procedures and techniques needed to set and achieve certain goals. They aim to ensure everything is in place to reach the desired outcomes. While they too work with their team or individual clients to ensure goals are reached, they focus more on directing than teaching.

5. Leaders create diehard fanatics while managers maintain followers

Leaders inspire, teach, encourage, motivate, invigorate and do so much more for an individual or team. They create reason and promote passion and willpower for those who may have lost hope in themselves. Leaders create trust and bonds between their mentees that go beyond expression or definition. Their mentees become raving fanatics willing to go above and beyond the usual scope of supporting their leader in achieving his or her mission. In the long run, the overwhelming support from his or her fanatics helps increase the value and credibility of the leader.

On the other hand, managers direct, delegate, enforce and advise either an individual or group that typically represents a brand or organization looking for direction. Followers do as they are told and rarely ask questions. They aim to please the manager in hopes that their advice and expertise will keep the foundation or brand intact. As long as the manager is delivering, they are complying.

Now, as a professional who continues to play both roles, I'm not here to encourage you to think one is better than the other, but I do feel that leaders and managers should be recognized for the unique powers they hold. Ultimately, we as leaders and managers are needed in all aspects of life. The existence of both seems to foster a helpful sort of balance.

But when it comes to purpose, I prefer to keep an open mind. I embrace change, love to inspire and look forward to advancements in everyday life. And for me to deliver at my best, I have found that regardless of whether I'm acting in the role of a manager or leader, there still lies true significance in the act of working together for the best interest of the team.

When we all play as a team, practicing support and accountability across the field, managing with a leader mentality is vital, and being willing to shift between roles is the key to a purpose-driven life filled with impactful leadership and management.