

Leadership and Management: Mutually Inclusive Bedfellows?

Ahmed Shaikh
Paresh Soni
Nadeem Cassim

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In the previous submission on *Leadership Reconceptualised: Back to the Future*, a team anchored by Mr. Ahmed Shaikh (Chairperson of the Recurriculation Planning Team at Regent Business School) dealt with the perennial question of whether *leadership* could be learnt. In the final analysis, the team concluded that RBS would adopt a theoretical posture which fundamentally accepted that *leadership* could not be taught, but could be learnt, and that the *leadership* pedagogy and praxis at the institution would require a critical dispensation on the part of academia and students.

The authors also discovered that *leadership* was difficult to define and was an abstract and elusive term. For example, one could readily identify the key competencies and intrinsic values of leadership, but when it came to precise definitions, it became an issue of relativity – its meaning or value could only be established in relation to something else. It changed according to circumstances or context. It informed and was informed.

In literature on *management* and *leadership*, there has always been a persistent question which asks “What is the difference between *management* and *leadership*?” The frequent response is “The biggest difference between managers and leaders is the way they motivate the people who work or follow them”. This statement normally sets the tone for most other aspects of what they do.

Peter Drucker was one of the pioneering authors who argued that *leadership* and *management* were completely distinct concepts. He is now famous for suggesting that “Management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things.” As much as this ‘definition’ provides a sense of the fundamental differences between leaders and managers, it also provides an excellent starting point for a critical discussion on the rudiments of *leadership* and *management*.

In a sense, *leadership* and *management* share a symbiotic relationship. They are inextricably linked. They are not the same thing, but they are necessarily linked, and complementary. Any effort to separate the two is likely to lessen the true meaning of one or the other.

In Drucker’s statement providing a sense of direction is implicit in the roles of both *leadership* and *management*. A sense of control is implied with regard to *management* but not to *leadership*.

As mentioned previously, the processes of *leadership* and *management* do not operate in a vacuum. The world of work has undergone significant modifications in recent years, and it is important to understand these changes in order to gain perspective on the two processes.

Cary Cooper, for example, notes that towards the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s a major restructuring of work as we have never known it since the industrial revolution was beginning to take place. Organisations throughout world dramatically 'downsized', 'delayed', 'flattened' or 'right sized' themselves.

The prime purpose of this new phenomenon was to create leaner organisations and more in terms of new technologies. Pursuant to these new changes there have been a number of fundamental transformations in the way that businesses operate, especially those that affect *leadership* and *management* skills. According to Cooper, these include becoming more flexible and adaptable and outsourcing parts of the business. All of the modifications have fundamentally changed the size, shape and functioning of organisations.

As a result, it may be argued that both *leadership* and *management* skills have had to adapt so that organisations are able to survive. Clearly these new changes have had a profound impact on the types of leadership and management skills that are required in organisations of the 21st century.

What then are the competencies of good leaders and managers? Recent literature varies on the core skills of *leadership* and *management*. Some researchers have taken a more extreme view, stating that *leadership* and *management* perform activities that are almost opposite in nature. In this respect, John Kotter presented a framework for understanding key differences between leadership behaviour and management tasks.

For instance, Kotter suggests that while *leadership* is concerned with issues of aligning people, communicating goals, building teams, looking for commitment, focusing on solving of problems, creating solutions, defining incentives to reward good and motivating and inspiring people through empowerment, looking at how to satisfy unmet needs, and energising people, *management* is more concerned with seeking order and consistency, establishing agendas, setting timetables and allocating resources, establishing direction, clarifying the situation, creating a vision and determining strategies.

Globalisation and the new knowledge economy have further compounded the problem of defining the fundamental differences between *leadership* and *management*.

In the knowledge economy, where value emanates increasingly from the knowledge of people, and where workers are no longer undifferentiated cogs in an industrial machine, *leadership* and *management* are not easily separated.

Knowledge workers look to their managers, not just to assign them a task, but to define for them a purpose. Furthermore, managers must organise workers, not just to maximise efficiency, but to nurture skills, develop talent and inspire results. As Drucker had surmised, with the rise of the knowledge worker, “one does not manage people, the task is to lead people”. Consequently, the goal is to make productive the specific strengths and knowledge of every individual.

According to Kotter, the defining differences between *leadership* and *management* are also dependent, to a large extent, on the environment in which they mediate themselves. For example, if the organisation is not changing and management is doing well, then more leadership really is not essential.

On the other hand, Kotter also believed that “leadership is always about change: it's not about mobilising people to do what they've always done well to continue to do it well.” The world is always in a constant state of flux. Thus, in a globalised world with incessant political and economic crises, the question of leadership has never been more demanding.

From our previous discussions on *leadership*, we have come to realise that the success of an organisation is not simply about good *leadership* or *management*. It is about the collective of an organisation. *Leadership* needs to be clear and strategic, but it also needs to be collaborative both between and within organisations.

McKinnon points out that leadership is more about inspiration and steering where as management deals with overseeing and delegating. As a leader, one has to be able to alter the direction and the momentum of the company, something a manager cannot. If you want to start your own company, you need to be a leader. McKinnon reasons that "while management responsibilities can be delegated, leadership cannot, nor can company culture."

As leaders and managers, it is imperative that all senses are attuned to the collective of the organisation. Both leaders and managers have to be able to listen, to engage, to emphasise and to act decisively, yet compassionately. They need to be maintain a customer focus and growing the people around them.

In summary, it will be important to remember that one can become an excellent manager without becoming a good leader, but one cannot be an excellent leader without becoming a good manager.

We welcome any comments, suggestions or critique

Ahmed Shaikh is the Managing Director of REGENT Business School

Paresh Soni is Institutional Researcher at the Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA)

Nadeem Cassim is Head of Post Graduate Research at REGENT Business School

The authors can be contacted at www.regent.ac.za