



# Major Aspects of Management and Leadership

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Management and leadership and their confluence is a highly debated topic in management circles. Management deals with the process of controlling employees so that the work of the organization is done on time and in a correct manner. Leadership on the other hand is about inspiring the employees to not only work but look beyond their key performance areas and go the extra mile for the organization. As organizations find leadership to be a must skill in their managers, they put effort in training their managers by sponsoring them for leadership courses which are conducted by business schools all over India.

While leadership is considered to be a vital skill in managers, it is not necessary that all managers are natural leaders. However, they can learn to be one. A manager's task is to ensure that his team works on time and completes assignments as per the schedule and requirement of the job. He delegates work related responsibilities to his team members and ensures that they fulfill them. He also makes sure that the team members follow the rules and regulations of the organization.

A leader is much more than a manager. A leader has to inspire his team. He will motivate them and have them believe in themselves. As a leader, he will set standards of ethical behaviour at work. He will promote a culture of honesty and integrity. He treats himself as a support for his team and does not believe in a dictatorial style of working.

One of the key features of a leader is his excellent communication skills. A leader needs to get heard as well as listen carefully. He should speak in a way that connects with anyone at any level within the organization.

Good leadership skills make a manager more proficient to set clear goals for his team, give them challenging yet achievable targets and inspire them in various spheres of work. They are leaders and not just micro-managers. They give employees the space and the freedom to be more creative and productive at work. They monitor performance but do not stifle the growth of the employees.

Management and leadership are two different aspects. However, a combination of both of these styles leads to a workplace with a vision and a well-defined strategy. A manager who has good leadership skills is a great asset to his organization and his team.

Now, let us cover the aspects and relation between strategy and leadership.

Many books have stressed on the importance of leadership. And similarly, there are hordes of them explaining the importance and function of strategy. For a larger part, even though both these terms have received a lot of attention from academics and professionals in the management sector; most of this emphasis has been compartmentalized. The terms have not really been discussed as complementary.

In 2016, Harbir Singh and Michael Useem, professors from Wharton, wrote a book titled "The Strategic Leaders' Road Map: Six Steps for Integrating Leadership and Strategy." The book discusses how the marriage of these two aspects can lead to success in most typical business scenarios. They laid down six steps for the marriage of these aspects in a business setting.

The professors say that over the years, even they have taught the two topics independently. In fact, in an interview, Useem said that he taught for many years that strategy came first and leadership came second. However, he said that a couple of years ago, he, along with Singh, realized the importance of integrating the two concepts during a meeting with the then CEOs of Nissan and Renault.

During the meeting the two got to know of how the turnaround of Nissan, a company that was almost on the verge of disappearing, happened. The company always had a great turnaround strategy, but the top leadership was indecisive and incapable of making it work. It was only when Nissan took monetary help of \$4 billion from Renault and brought in the new CEO Carlos Ghosn, that things started to change for Nissan. This made the professors realize that just strategy wasn't enough unless there was great leadership to bring the strategy to fruition.

This is because any strategy is worth its weight only when executed. Companies that have strategies but poor execution often lose out the edge over their rivals. Execution is key to a company's success because at the end of the day what is done on ground brings in the results. However, execution is not merely following the orders or the vision of the leader blindly. When the team is completely involved in the process of creating and generating ideas that enhance the value of the key strategy, that is when execution and its results are unmatched.

Bringing the team together and getting them involved in the process is the task of a good leader. There might be a turnaround strategy and a process that might lead to the expected results. However, the results become extraordinary when there is a combined effort to enhance the value proposition for the customer. Such working and its results are owned by the entire team and not just a single person. A good leader knows this and his/her task is to put together such a team.

When Gillette was purchased by P&G it was assumed that there was little value in it as it was bought at a very high price in an auction. However, the strategy that P&G used changed the landscape for Gillette. By bringing in shaving creams and other products that went with shaving equipment P&G was able to enhance market capture for Gillette. The leadership ensured that the team focussed its energy and time in the right direction by keeping them on the right strategy.

These examples show how important it is to have a balance between leadership and strategy and how both are equally needed to achieve great results. For those starting out in their careers in any stream and hoping to move up the career ladder, it makes a lot of sense to take a leadership development certificate program or a mid-term one.

One may start out in strategy consulting or one may start out in the operations segment, initially, the requirement would be to focus on delivering on the assigned tasks. However, this is the period where new employees must also engage in reading and learning. For example, the book, "Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done" by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, is an excellent read for getting tips on how to stay focused on achieving your tasks.

Another important thing for new employees is to learn as much as possible from their mentors. In most organizations, a mentor is assigned to the newly recruited management trainees. The trainees must make full use of this opportunity and learn as much as possible from their mentors. Mentors often have more to share than simply work knowledge, they have experiences to share and those can give some real nuggets of wisdom to the trainee.

A third way to learn leadership and strategy skills is personal initiative. Employees looking to be at higher positions must offer their duties for tasks that require leadership and strategy skills. The best way to learn anything is on the job – one learns to tackle problems and the pressure that comes with it.

Leadership and strategy are both important and to create a balance, there is a need for leaders who have a strategic mindset. These two skills can be simultaneously developed and the process for doing so must begin early on in one's career.