

Are you a Manager or a Leader? What's the Difference?



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It's an interesting question isn't it? Often we are promoted to managers because we are the most skilled employee, smartest or the most dedicated. But none of those skills that make us a great employee translate to competence as a manager, let alone allowing us to be great leaders. A great leader can inspire an employee to soar beyond their own abilities or motivate someone to achieve at a level they never knew possible.

How do you make your staff feel? Studies show that employees will stay longer and try harder if the relationship with their immediate supervisor is important to them. This is even more important to employees than money, not that money doesn't matter but people won't stay just for money, they need to feel good about who they work with and their value to their supervisor.

How do you define a great leader? Take a few moments and think of the people who inspired or mentored you. What do you remember about them? Write down the three attributes of the person/people you felt were instrumental in helping you succeed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What made it on your list? Why did it make your list? Often the items on your list are more about how you feel about that person than their technical skills or intelligence.

Look over this list; place an "L" next to the attributes you believe are required of a leader and a "B" by those of a boss:

COLUMN A

Create fear

Drive people
Say "do"
Relies on authority
Fix blame
Knows all
Makes work drudgery
Say "I"

Create confidence
Guide people
Say, "Let's do"
Relies on cooperation
Correct mistakes
Ask questions
Make work interesting
Say "We"

COLUMN B

As you look over the list – evaluate your own behavior. Do your actions fall into column A or column B? A bit of both? One more than the other? The more your own behavior falls into column "A" the more work you have cut out for yourself. Those column "A" answers are your "to do" list. Column "B" is who you want to be!

What must you develop in yourself to become a leader? Can you transition to becoming a great leader? Do you know what that involves? Do you feel prepared for the role? Do you know how to grow and develop your team?

Let's utilize your superior commitment and intelligence and apply those skills to begin making you a great leader.

Start with the first item in column B,

Creating confidence - Think about the attributes in a confident person:

Self-assured
Works well without supervision
Takes initiative
Poise
Loyal
Supportive of others

How do you create confidence in someone else? This first step is to be affirming, give praise regularly, don't place blame when something goes wrong, look for positives, and then recognize them. Your goal is to recognize someone every day.

Guide people:

Teach others how you use your assessment skills and educate them on possible solutions for reoccurring scenarios. Then let them be the lead person to deal with a situation. They may not get it just right the first time but with encouragement and practice, they will. Start with one person and build on their success.

Say, "Let's do":

Who wants to file? Get in there as a team and knock it out in twenty minutes. Don't leave one person back there alone feeling like the lowest person on the ladder. Chip in occasionally and help and recognize staff when they do it without being asked.

Relies on cooperation:

Next time something needs to be done, ask for volunteers and new ideas. Set up a team to tackle a problem situation and come to you with a list of ideas.

Correct mistakes:

Why do we always ask, "Who did this" and then shockingly no one knows! It doesn't benefit the situation to know "who", prioritize preventing problems by asking for solutions. This also can be assigned to a team but mix up the groups and get different people and personalities working together.

Ask questions:

Ask for answers staff, don't always be the one too be right. You'll be surprised how often they have a great perspective. This process may take time especially if you have a history of being the person who is the "know-it-all"; the staff is not used to being asked. Give them time to come back to you with ideas.

Make work interesting:

How do you respond when a new task comes up? Do you moan and groan and talk about your heavy work load? Or do you get excited about a new challenge? Doesn't matter what you feel inside but to the staff you have to make it fun, exciting, challenging. Consider setting a goal and then celebrate when you achieve it. Converting to EMR is the one that comes to mind right now. OK, who wants to scan charts? Pizza when we through the "A's"! Gifts cards when we make it to "Q".

Say "we"

How many of you say "my staff" or "the girls"? That doesn't really feel inclusive; it's minimizing or even demeaning. Make sure everyone knows their position, has an appropriate descriptive title and then knows a second position that they can fully back up. Create the "we" by valuing everyone.

Take a moment right now and write down the name of each your staff members then indicate which of the above development would most benefit them.

This takes time, in particular if you are changing a culture, think of it as a career path not a destination. By being your determined self, you can change lives, not just your own, but staff, patients and the doctor. Now that is an impressive goal for 2013.

If you need help, PEN will be providing a series of Office Leader programs beginning in 2013 for those of you who would like additional help and guidance; we're here to make sure you are successful!

Keep up the good work!

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