

Leadership And Management

What is leadership, and what is the difference between leadership and management?

In a nutshell, the difference between leadership and management is:

- Leadership is setting a new direction or vision for a group that they follow, ie: a leader is the spearhead for that new direction
- Management controls or directs people/resources in a group according to principles or values that have already been established.

The difference between leadership and management can be illustrated by considering what happens when you have one without the other.

Leadership Without Management

...sets a direction or vision that others follow, without considering too much how the new direction is going to be achieved. Other people then have to work hard in the trail that is left behind, picking up the pieces and making it work. Eg: in Lord of the Rings, at the council of Elrond, Frodo Baggins rescues the council from conflict by taking responsibility for the quest of destroying the ring - but most of the management of the group comes from others.

Management Without Leadership

...controls resources to maintain the status quo or ensure things happen according to already-established plans. Eg: a referee manages a sports game, but does not usually provide "leadership" because there is no new change, no new direction - the referee is controlling resources to ensure that the laws of the game are followed and status quo is maintained.

Leadership Combined With Management

...does both - it both sets a new direction and manages the resources to achieve it. Eg: a newly elected president or prime minister.

Some Potential Confusions...

The absence of leadership/management is not to be confused with participatory or facilitative management, which can be a very effective form of leadership.

Also, the absence of leadership should not be confused with the type of leadership that calls for 'no action' to be taken. For example, Gandhi's calls for protests to stop demonstrated great leadership, because taking no action was a new direction for the Indian people at that time.

Symbolic Leadership

When a leader acts as a figure-head without setting any direction, technically this is not leadership. However, the figure head may be viewed as a leader. For example, in the UK, the monarch is often viewed as a leader, but actually provides very little leadership (most of the 'leadership' in the UK comes from political figures).

However, if a new group sets a direction of its own accord, it will often express that new direction in the form of a leader. For example, Nelson Mandela was regarded as a great leader even though he was in prison and unable to communicate with his followers! And he had been historically classified as a "terrorist"! Yet his symbolic power grew across the world. This was because he was a symbolic spearhead of the anti-apartheid movement.

However, Nelson Mandela was more than just a symbolic leader. When he was released from prison, he showed great leadership in the statesmanship he showed, and in reaching out a hand of friendship to his oppressors. This landed a double-whammy blow against the apartheid regime, because:

- During the period when Nelson Mandela was imprisoned (when his ability to provide personal, direct leadership was limited) he continued to grow in power and influence as the *symbolic* leader for the anti-apartheid movement.
- Following his release from prison, he demonstrated *actual* leadership.

Leadership And Management Summary

Leadership is about setting a new direction for a group; management is about directing and controlling according to established principles. However, someone can be a symbolic leader if they emerge as the spearhead of a direction the group sets for itself