

LEADERSHIP Excellence

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—KEVIN CASHMAN, CEO, LEADERSOURCE
AND AUTHOR OF LEADERSHIP FROM THE INSIDE OUT

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Measure of a Leader

What followers say about effectiveness.



by Aubrey Daniels and James Daniels

WE PROPOSE A NEW MODEL to identify and train effective leaders. We look at the followers to determine the quality of leadership. We are not examining leadership in terms of a person's position. *We examine the effect that any one person has on the behavior of others.*

You are a leader only if you have followers. Thus, the focus of any study of leadership should be on the relationship between the leader and the followers. Follower behavior, not leader behavior, defines leadership.

Four criteria of the followers' behavior define leadership:

1. *Followers deliver discretionary behavior directed toward the leader's goals.* Followers make sacrifices for the leader's cause. The most effective leaders get more out of their followers than they are required to give. In essence, individuals donate some of their time and energy to the leader's cause.

2. *Followers make sacrifices to advance the leader's cause.* This implies a commitment to the leader and his cause and is an example of a voluntary choice rather than a forced one.

3. *Followers reinforce or correct others so that they also conform to the leader's teachings and example.* This criterion talks about the relationship the followers have with each other as a result of the leader's example. They agree that the leader and his objectives are worthy enough that they will be supportive of one another.

4. *Followers set guidelines for their own personal behavior based on their perceived estimate of that which the leader would approve or disapprove.* The follower and the leader respect each other for what each contributes to the cause.

Much of leadership is to be found in the context. Would Churchill have been considered a great leader without World War II? Probably not. Yet Churchill did not change his personality so much as did the situation.

Three Factors

In a historical sense, we judge the *greatness* of a leader by three factors:

1. Magnitude of their impact.

Leaders are judged by the vigor and growth of their message and by the pervasive influence of that message. When others base their life decisions on the example or teachings of a leader, one condition of greatness is met.

2. *Duration of their impact.* Great leaders produce disciples who extend their message and example beyond their immediate role. How long the leader remains an influence to others is part of the leader's legacy. Some leaders may be judged as *great* by their contemporaries but leaders' legacies



depend on how people in the future recount their stories.

3. *Number of followers.* The number of followers is also significant. Fame and notoriety are indicators of the numbers of people impacted by the words or example of a leader.

Greatness as a leader assumes effectiveness. Since *greatness* is such a fragile designation, we talk about *effective* leaders. While we may refer to people that history has denoted as great leaders, we focus on those who lead others in any venture or cause, regardless of its magnitude, duration, or impact.

We caution you not to value leadership over management. Both roles are equally valuable. The durability of the leader's vision depends on the quality of management. In fact, one role of a leader is to ensure the quality of management—that there are systems and

processes in place that will outlive personalities and ensure the leader's legacy.

In effective organizations leadership and management are complementary. Both functions must be fulfilled. The better you see the differences, the more effective you can be in both roles.

One challenge for managers is learning how to be leaders. Many mistake the form for the essence. It is normal for managers to look to prominent, successful leaders as their models. Too often, however, they copy the behavior that is an impediment to their model's success rather than a cause. They are seduced by what they see and usually what they see is only a small sample of the leader's behavior.

Just as looking to the North Star permits the Captain to guide his ship, looking at the behavior of followers permits leaders to develop their skills.

Traditionally leaders are measured by their impact in three dimensions: Did they grow the enterprise? Did the enterprise achieve prominence? Did the leader leave a positive legacy?

One's accomplishments, however, can slip away at any time, or they can be cancelled by some significant failure.

The only disadvantage of measures that are based on long-term results is that they give little guidance to anyone seeking to grow leadership skills. Real-time measures are more meaningful.

Measurement in leadership serves its greatest function when it is used to establish causal relationships between leader behavior and follower behavior. Measurement should help the leader answer the questions, "What must I do to cause this number to change?" This assumes that you can count something, since a judgment does not offer you the same benefit. Judgments are indirect measures and subject to interpretation. Actual counts are preferred.

When we measure leadership, we use numbers that pertain to follower behavior. Our questions then become: "How do I get more people to do X?"

The best predictors of leadership are to be found in the behavior of the leader's followers: How do the followers respond to the leader's direction? How focused are the followers on the leader's goals? How do the followers relate to each other? How do the followers react to the leader himself?

These indicators provide the best forecast of the leader's impact. **LE**

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ACTION: Measure your effectiveness.