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A FORCE FOR CHANGE

变革的力量

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How Leadership Differs
From Management

JOHN P. KOTTER

约翰·科特 著



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Differs from Management

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Preface

This book is the product of a research program in managerial/executive behavior which began with my doctoral dissertation on big city mayors.¹ Other parts of that program have focused on the major contextual factors that shape the way in which managers act,² executive careers,³ both the organizational⁴ and the power and influence⁵ aspects of managerial work, the history and behavior of a group of successful general managers,⁶ and corporate efforts to create a leadership capacity in their management hierarchies.⁷

This latest project began in August 1986 with questions about the nature of leadership and its relationship to management that were raised, but not answered, by my last book. The most fundamental of these questions: Is leadership really different from management and, if so, exactly how? Two phases of data gathering addressed these issues, using the usual array of methods employed throughout this program: interviews, supplemented by questionnaires, archival documents, and, to a lesser degree, observation.

Phase I was a survey designed in the summer of 1986 and conducted between October of that year and June 1987. In that study, nearly 200 senior executives in a very diverse group of twelve well-known and successful corporations either filled out a ten-page questionnaire or were interviewed at length. In either case, they were systematically asked a variety of questions about leadership and management, about people they knew who were very effective at one or both of these processes, about how well the rest of their fellow executives were handling those challenges, and about what their corpora-

tions would need from management in order to prosper over the next five to ten years.

Phase II began in June 1987 and was completed in October 1988. During this effort, a number of incidents were identified in a wide variety of settings which first-hand observers labeled "highly effective leadership in business."⁸ Each of these stories was subsequently studied in some detail with the assistance of the corporations involved: American Express, ARCO, ConAgra, Digital Equipment Corporation, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Eastman Kodak, Mary Kay Cosmetics, NCR, Pepsi-Cola, Procter & Gamble, and SAS. The focus in each case study was both on facts, what specifically happened and when, as well as on opinions regarding what the facts tell us about "effective leadership." Data gathering was reasonably extensive: over a thousand pages of documents were collected, 137 interviews were conducted, individuals and their situations were observed systematically for about forty hours. (For a more detailed description of this research, see the Appendix.)

Information from these two studies was analyzed in the second half of 1988 and throughout 1989, a period in which James Leahey worked as my research assistant and was extraordinarily helpful. This analytical aspect of the project began with a search for themes in the responses to two of the questions asked in Phase I. Those inquiries were worded as such: 1) Think of someone you know personally who, in your opinion, has done an excellent job of providing his or her organization with effective management, and tell us, in as much detail as possible, what that person actually has done which constitutes "highly effective management." 2) Now think of someone you know personally who, again in your opinion, has done an excellent job of providing effective leadership to the people and activities around him or her, and tell us, in detail, what the person has done which constitutes "highly effective leadership." After completing a thematic analysis of some 200 lengthy responses to these questions, further analytical work was performed on the remaining questionnaire data. The stories from Phase II were used to test and refine the ideas that emerged from these efforts. Eventually, this manuscript was prepared.

All of this work has led me to conclude that leadership in complex organizations is an increasingly important yet often confusing topic which can be further illuminated by exploring its relationship to management, a very different sort of activity and one that is much better understood today. Such a comparison helps clarify the function, the

process, the structure, and the origins of leadership. In the first chapter of this book, that comparison begins, along with the general argument that a) leadership and management are both very important processes, and the notion that leadership is "good" and management is "bad" is most certainly wrong, b) despite differences that can create conflict, the two processes can work together very successfully, and furthermore, some people can be very effective leaders and managers, and c) for a variety of reasons, many firms today lack sufficient leadership, a deficiency which is increasingly costly, yet often correctable.

In Chapter 2, the case of NCR's ATM business is presented. It is a classic example of effective leadership in business and clearly shows the essential function of leadership: to produce adaptive or useful change. The case illustrates many of the points made in Chapter 1 and implicitly raises a variety of questions which will be explored throughout the remainder of this book.

One centrally important aspect of leadership is direction setting, which people frequently confuse with planning or long-range planning. In Chapter 3, I argue that planning is a managerial process that is not the same as, nor ever a substitute for, the direction-setting aspect of leadership, a process that produces vision and strategies, not plans. Vision is defined, and the NCR situation, plus cases from American Express (its TRS business) and SAS, is used to illustrate what vision looks like in practice and how it is created.

A second core aspect of leadership is alignment: the process of getting people to understand, accept, and line up in the chosen direction. In Chapter 4, I argue that alignment is a complicated communications challenge that is very different from the design problem associated with the managerial process of organizing. How effective leadership deals with this communications problem is described and illustrated with examples from NCR, American Express, and SAS, along with the case of Kodak's copier products business.

In efforts to produce change in complex organizations, sizable barriers of some sort (political, bureaucratic, resource) are always encountered. Overcoming these barriers often takes herculean effort, which only comes from highly energized people. This is why motivation and inspiration are central aspects of leadership. In Chapter 5, we look at basic human nature to see what motivates people, and at a variety of cases (starting with Mary Kay Cosmetics and ending with an episode at Kentucky Fried Chicken) to illustrate how leadership inspires.

Many people tend to think of the structure of leadership (roles and relationships) in extremely simple terms; there is a leader (one role) who sets the direction, aligns followers, and motivates them. In Chapter 6, I argue that reality is more complicated, out of necessity; providing leadership on most issues in a complex organization is far too difficult and time-consuming for any one person, no matter how talented. Two cases, one at ARCO and one at Digital Equipment, are used to illustrate a variety of leadership roles.

Initiatives from people in different leadership positions do not have to converge. Instead, they can easily conflict, unless something binds them together. Traditional management coordinating mechanisms (e.g., the hierarchy, plans, job descriptions) are inadequate, at least by themselves, because of the sheer amount of non-routine coordination needed in a change effort. How thick networks of relationships fit the bill is discussed in Chapter 7 and demonstrated primarily with a case from Procter & Gamble—a story that also serves to illustrate much of the discussion from the previous six chapters.

The capacity of an individual to handle big leadership roles effectively is probably influenced by that person's early experiences. How this happens is explored in Chapter 8, the most speculative piece in the book. The limited data from this project that is applicable here is supplemented with information from two of my previous books: *The General Managers* and *The Leadership Factor*.

Adult experiences clearly influence a person's capacity to lead. The basic ways in which this happens are identified in Chapter 9, and a prototypical career of a business leader is described in some detail. This chapter also looks at how career experiences often undermine the development of leadership potential, and examines how some firms (Morgan Guaranty, Hewlett-Packard) work to systematically avoid this problem.

An organization's norms and values can encourage or limit leadership in a number of powerful ways. Chapter 10, probably the second most speculative piece in the book, discusses the case of ConAgra, where a CEO developed a corporate culture that helped create strong leadership and management both up and down the hierarchy. I conclude by arguing that the ultimate act of leadership in an organization is creating a leadership-oriented culture that continues after the creator has gone.

The book ends with a Postscript which summarizes much of the material found in all of the chapters. The reader who prefers seeing

detailed conclusions at the onset should probably examine this Postscript before starting Chapter 1.

All the cases described in this book show effective leadership. In selecting them, I am not suggesting that we can learn only from positive examples. Cases of failed leadership can be very instructive; indeed, such stories from my previous work were used during the analytical phase of this project. I chose not to report those ineffective situations here simply because I think we have all seen (or read about) far more cases of failure than of successful leadership.

Early drafts of this manuscript were critiqued by a number of individuals whose comments were most helpful. These people included: Jerry Abarbanel, Chris Argyris, Dale Bennett, Jan Blakslee, Richard Boyatzis, Nancy Dearman, Bob Eccles, Russ Eisenstat, Alan Frohman, Ray Goldberg, Richard Hackman, Jim Heskett, Julie Johnson, Bob Lambrix, Mike Lombardo, Jay Lorsch, Morgan McCall, Tom Mithen, Charlie Newton, Barbara Rice, Vijay Sathe, Len Schlesinger, Robert Steed, Warren Wilhelm, and Doug Yaeger. An even greater number of people assisted me in the data-gathering phases of this project. Most of their names are listed elsewhere in this book. My sincere thanks goes to them all.



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PART

I

Introduction

1

Management and Leadership

The word leadership is used in two very different ways in every day conversation. Sometimes it refers to a process that helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas; we say, for example, that Fred is providing leadership on the such and such project. At other times it refers to a group of people in formal positions where leadership, in the first sense of the word, is expected; we say that the leadership of the firm is made up of ten people, including George, Alice, etc.

In this book, I will use the word almost exclusively in the first sense. The second usage contributes greatly to the confusion surrounding this subject because it subtly suggests that everyone in a leadership position actually provides leadership.¹ This is obviously not true; some such people lead well, some lead poorly, and some do not lead at all. Since most of the people who are in positions of leadership today are called managers, the second usage also suggests that leadership and management are the same thing, or at least closely related. They are not.

Leadership is an ageless topic. That which we call management is largely the product of the last 100 years,² a response to one of the most significant developments of the twentieth century: the emergence of large numbers of complex organizations.³ Modern management was invented, in a sense, to help the new railroads, steel mills, and auto companies achieve what legendary entrepreneurs created them for. Without such management, these complex enterprises

tended to become chaotic in ways that threatened their very existence. Good management brought a degree of order and consistency to key dimensions like the quality and profitability of products.

In the past century, literally thousands of managers, consultants, and management educators have developed and refined the processes which make up the core of modern management. These processes, summarized briefly, involve:⁴

1. Planning and budgeting—setting targets or goals for the future, typically for the next month or year; establishing detailed steps for achieving those targets, steps that might include timetables and guidelines; and then allocating resources to accomplish those plans
2. Organizing and staffing—establishing an organizational structure and set of jobs for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing the jobs with qualified individuals, communicating the plan to those people, delegating responsibility for carrying out the plan, and establishing systems to monitor implementation
3. Controlling and problem solving—monitoring results versus plan in some detail, both formally and informally, by means of reports, meetings, etc.; identifying deviations, which are usually called “problems”; and then planning and organizing to solve the problems

These processes produce a degree of consistency and order. Unfortunately, as we have witnessed all too frequently in the last half century, they can produce order on dimensions as meaningless as the size of the typeface on executive memoranda. But that was never the intent of the pioneers who invented modern management. They were trying to produce consistent results on key dimensions expected by customers, stockholders, employees, and other organizational constituencies, despite the complexity caused by large size, modern technologies, and geographic dispersion. They created management to help keep a complex organization on time and on budget. That has been, and still is, its primary function.⁵

Leadership is very different. It does not produce consistency and order, as the word itself implies; it produces movement. Throughout the ages, individuals who have been seen as leaders have created change, sometimes for the better and sometimes not.^{6 7} They have done so in a variety of ways, though their actions often seem to boil

down to establishing where a group of people should go, getting them lined up in that direction and committed to movement, and then energizing them to overcome the inevitable obstacles they will encounter along the way.

What constitutes good leadership has been a subject of debate for centuries. In general, we usually label leadership “good” or “effective” when it moves people to a place in which both they and those who depend upon them are genuinely better off, and when it does so without trampling on the rights of others.⁸ The function implicit in this belief is *constructive or adaptive change*.

Leadership within a complex organization achieves this function through three subprocesses which, as we will see in further detail later on in this book, can briefly be described as such:⁹

1. Establishing direction—developing a vision of the future, often the distant future, along with strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision
2. Aligning people—communicating the direction to those whose cooperation may be needed so as to create coalitions that understand the vision and that are committed to its achievement
3. Motivating and inspiring—keeping people moving in the right direction despite major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by appealing to very basic, but often untapped, human needs, values, and emotions

Exhibit 1.1 compares these summaries of both management and leadership within complex organizations.¹⁰

Management and leadership, so defined, are clearly in some ways similar. They both involve deciding what needs to be done, creating networks of people and relationships that can accomplish an agenda, and then trying to ensure that those people actually get the job done. They are both, in this sense, complete action systems; neither is simply one aspect of the other. People who think of management as being only the implementation part of leadership ignore the fact that leadership has its own implementation processes: aligning people to new directions and then inspiring them to make it happen. Similarly, people who think of leadership as only part of the implementation aspect of management (the motivational part) ignore the direction-setting aspect of leadership.

But despite some similarities, differences exist which make manage-

Exhibit 1.1 *Comparing Management and Leadership*

	<i>Management</i>	<i>Leadership</i>
<i>Creating an agenda</i>	Planning and Budgeting—establishing detailed steps and timetables for achieving needed results, and then allocating the resources necessary to make that happen	Establishing Direction—developing a vision of the future, often the distant future, and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision
<i>Developing a human network for achieving the agenda</i>	Organizing and Staffing—establishing some structure for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing that structure with individuals, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying out the plan, providing policies and procedures to help guide people, and creating methods or systems to monitor implementation	Aligning People—communicating the direction by words and deeds to all those whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies, and accept their validity
<i>Execution</i>	Controlling and Problem Solving—monitoring results vs. plan in some detail, identifying deviations, and then planning and organizing to solve these problems	Motivating and Inspiring—energizing people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying very basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs
<i>Outcomes</i>	Produces a degree of predictability and order, and has the potential of consistently producing key results expected by various stakeholders (e.g., for customers, always being on time; for stockholders, being on budget)	Produces change, often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential of producing extremely useful change (e.g., new products that customers want, new approaches to labor relations that help make a firm more competitive)

ment and leadership very distinct. The planning and budgeting processes of management tend to focus on time frames ranging from a few months to a few years, on details, on eliminating risks, and on instrumental rationality. By contrast, as shown in the chapters that follow, that part of the leadership process which establishes a direction often focuses on longer time frames, the big picture, strategies that take calculated risks, and people's values. In a similar way, organizing and staffing tend to focus on specialization, getting the right person into or trained for the right job, and compliance; while aligning people tends to focus on integration, getting the whole group lined up in the right direction, and commitment. Controlling and problem solving usually focus on containment, control, and predict-