

THE LADDER DIVIDE: A LOOK INTO LEADERSHIP FROM BOTH THE INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR AND MANAGER PERSPECTIVE

by

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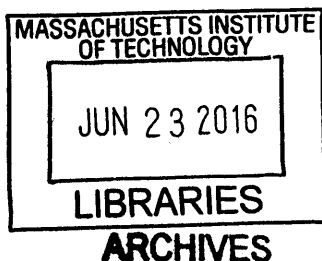
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ABSTRACT

There is a common misconception that equates management to leadership. There is also a common school of thought that believes in order to lead one has to traverse the corporate ladder from individual contributor to the people manager side. There is also the common thought that an exceptional individual contributor will always make a good leader and/or manager. Misunderstandings along these schools of thought tend to lead to traversal of the corporate ladder either too soon, or incorrectly selecting a path which ultimately can lead to failure in the role. We will expand on these schools of thought and provide a better understanding to inform these decisions moving forward.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
LIST OF FIGURES	7
LIST OF TABLES	8
1. MOTIVATING PROFESSIONALS	9
1.1. HIERARCHY OF NEEDS.....	10
1.2. THE THREE RS	13
1.2.1. <i>Provide them with challenging work</i>	15
1.2.2. <i>Give them rope</i>	15
1.2.3. <i>Recognize their contributions</i>	16
2. LEADERSHIP VS. MANAGEMENT	16
2.1. INTERVIEWS	17
2.1.1. <i>Low Level Manager</i>	20
2.1.2. <i>Individual Contributors</i>	20
2.1.3. <i>Executives</i>	21
2.2. HUMILITY IS A VIRTUE	24
3. QUINTESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP	26
3.1. LESSON 1: BEING RESPONSIBLE SOMETIMES MEANS PISSING PEOPLE OFF.....	27
3.2. LESSON 2: THE DAY SOLDIERS STOP BRINGIN YOU THEIR PROBLEMS IS THE DAY YOU HAVE STOPPED LEADING THEM.....	28
3.3. LESSON 3: DON'T BE BUFFALOED BY EXPERTS AND ELITES. EXPERTS OFTEN POSSESS MORE DATA THAN JUDGEMENT.....	30
3.4. LESSON 4: DON'T BE AFRAID TO CHALLENGE THE PROS, EVEN IN THEIR OWN BACKYARD.....	31

3.5. LESSON 6: YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH UNTIL YOU TRY.	32
3.6. LESSON 8: ORGANIZATION SUCCESS.....	33
3.7. LESSON 9: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS AND FANCY TITLES COUNT FOR NEXT TO NOTHING.....	34
3.8. LESSON 11: FIT NO STEREOTYPES.....	35
3.9. SIMPLIFICATION VIA LEADERSHIP	36
3.10. MANAGING FROM AN IVORY TOWER	37
3.11. LEADERSHIP DEFINED.....	39
4. INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR VS. MANAGER	40
4.1. INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR.....	40
4.2. THE PEOPLE MANAGER.....	41
5. CONCLUSION.....	41
5.1. TRAVERSING THE LADDER	41
5.2. WRAP.....	43
APPENDIX A COLIN POWELL LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES	44
6. WORKS CITED	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.....	11
Figure 2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Applied to Employee Engagement	12
Figure 3 Glassdoor's 25/50 Highest Rated CEOs list for 2014.....	24
Figure 4 Microsoft Fictional Org Chart.....	29
Figure 6 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 2	45
Figure 7 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 3	46
Figure 8 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 4.....	47
Figure 9 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 5	48
Figure 10 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 6	49
Figure 11 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 7	50
Figure 12 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 8.....	51
Figure 13 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 9	52
Figure 14 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 10	53
Figure 15 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 11	54
Figure 16 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 12	55
Figure 17 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 13	56
Figure 18 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 14.....	57
Figure 19 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 15	58
Figure 20 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 16.....	59
Figure 21 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 17	60
Figure 22 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 18.....	61

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 The Three Rs for Motivating Professionals..... 14
Table 2 Career Level Definitions..... 18
Table 3 Leaders vs. Manager Characteristics 19

1. MOTIVATING PROFESSIONALS

Motivation, while inherently impossible to quantify, is of tantamount importance when it comes to professionals reaching their full potential. Environments that have motivated individuals/teams tend to be more innovative in nature. Highly motivated individuals and teams tend to push themselves to not only meet goals, but to exceed them. They are the consummate overachievers.

To quote Ralph Katz, "As leaders gain experience, they soon realize that to get creative ideas and innovative advances commercialized more quickly and successfully, through organizational systems they are much better off having technical professionals with *A-rated* motivations and *B-rated* capabilities than the other way around." Or, as Thomas Edison once remarked: "I have more respect for the person who gets there than for the brilliant person with a thousand ideas who does nothing."

1.1. HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Now, while motivation is not easily quantifiable, there have been attempts to simplify it's understanding. While motivation is inherently psychological, it is important to take into consideration that leadership is as well. We'll expound on this a bit later, however.

Abraham Harold Maslow (1908 -1970), an American born psychologist, was known for his research into motivation. Ultimately he stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When one need is fulfilled, a person seeks to fulfill the next and so on. He made a five-stage model of motivational needs:

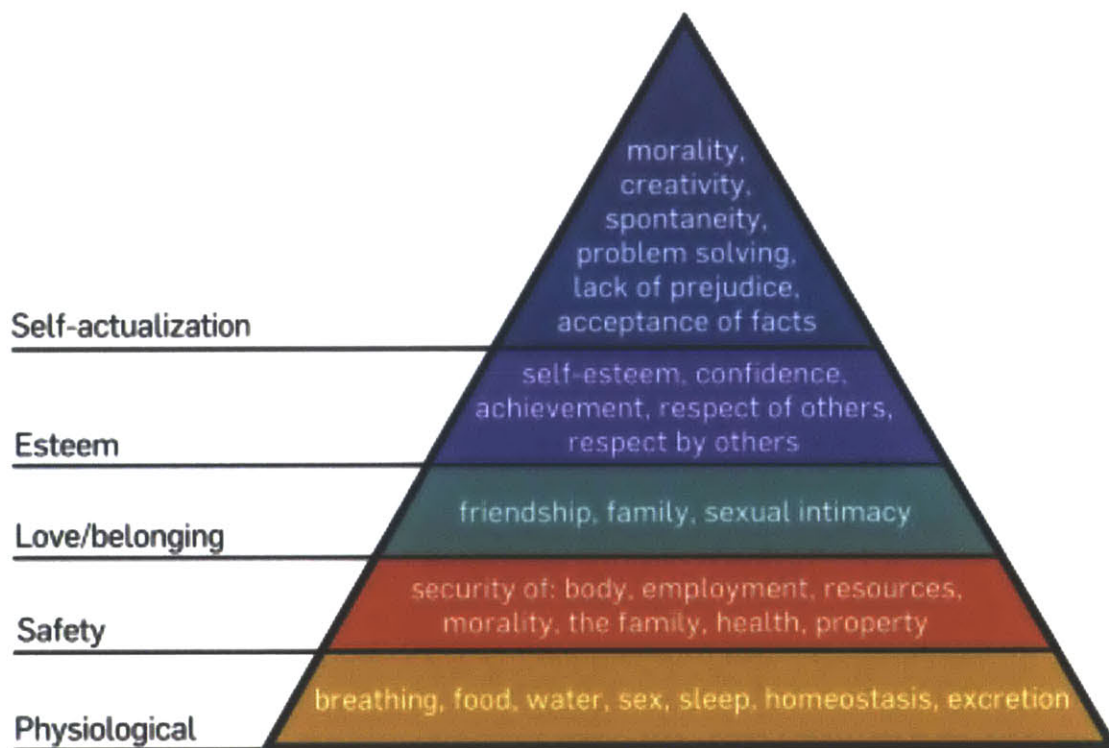


Figure 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

:

He further categorized these needs into basic/deficiency (If these needs were not met you would be motivated into action to fulfill those needs. The need to fulfill these needs become stronger the longer they are denied.). These basic needs are the first 4 in the hierarchy (Physiological, Safety, Love/Belonging, and Esteem). The 5th and last (Self-actualization) was designated a growth need.

As of late, this research has become even more relevant as it pertains to companies that have been looking into better ways to engage their employees. These efforts are of course not only met to enable a better connection with the staff, but to foster an innovative environment where the staff feels that their contributions play an integral part in the company's success and vision.

Let's take a look at this research in action:

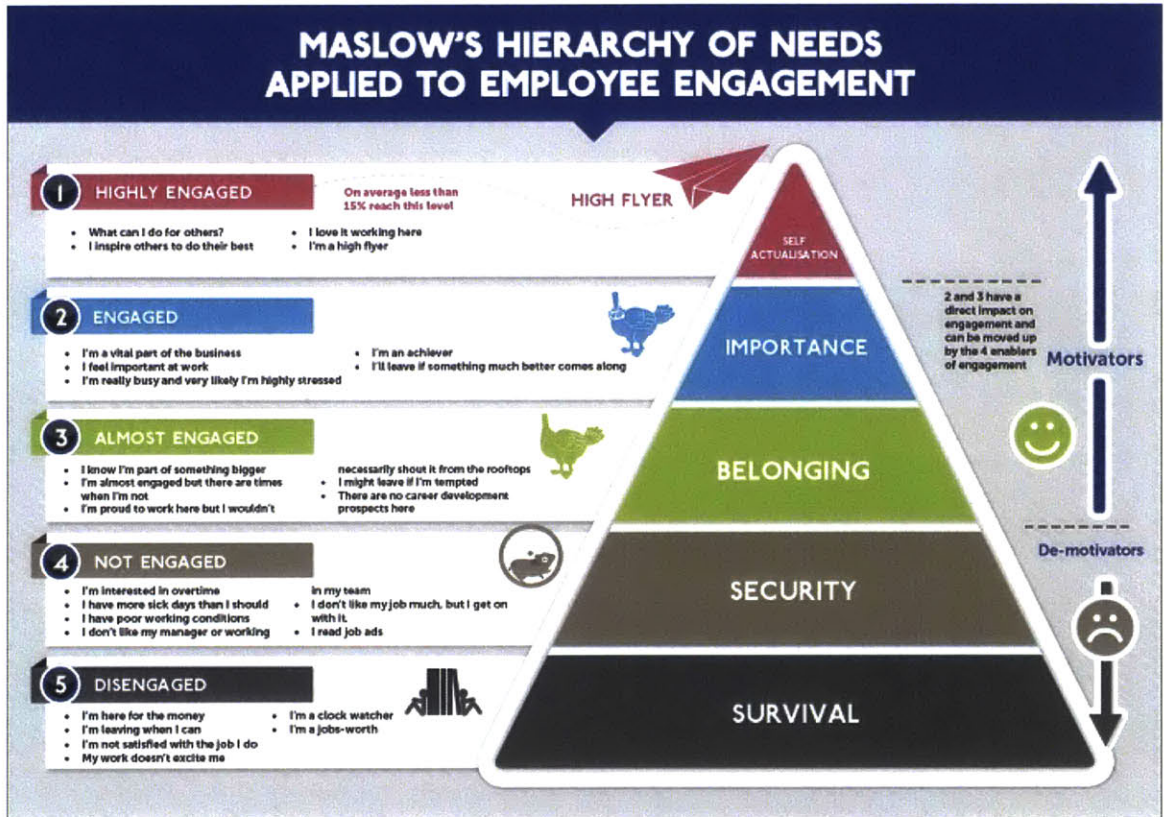


Figure 2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Applied to Employee Engagement

The basic premise behind this particular depiction is that just getting by (or Survival) doesn't keep employees engaged. They need to have a sense of security, belonging, and importance to the company. This all leads to the self-actualization, which in turn to highly engaged, high-performing staffers.

1.2. THE THREE RS

Some actually believe that there is a formula for motivation of professionals. Helm and Associates, which has at its helm a psychologist by the name of Kurt G. Helm, studies and consults with companies on the matter of motivating their workforces. They have done extensive work in the proper use of tests (aptly named *Helm Tests*) to assist in the hiring, promotion, and placement processes in organizations. For the purpose of this paper in particular we will focus on their work regarding motivation in the workplace.

While it may be obvious to most, it is important that it is established that there are two general types of motivation. They are *positive* and *negative*. Negative of course is not generally a preferred/adopted method for long-term/sustained behavior changes. It would be generally used for extreme cases when you need a behavior changed in a short timeframe and are not looking at the long term.

Positive motivation, however, encourages sustained improvements in behavior. In essence you are rewarding incremental changes, which lead to an overall behavior change for the best. Helm and Associates actually have somewhat of a formula when it comes to this. They call it *The Three Rs of Motivation for Professionals*. The three Rs are:

1.	Recognize	Recognition of effort, not only upon completion of effort, but upon in-
----	------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------

		cremental completion is of tantamount importance as the effort itself in most cases. Too many times are there supposed “leaders” that only comment or provide negative feedback and don’t even acknowledge efforts otherwise. This of course leads to a lack of motivation to proactively do anything in fear that the effort won’t be recognized at all.
2.	Reward	All levels of success should be rewarded. Though they shouldn’t all be rewarded in the same fashion, they should be rewarded nonetheless. Large successes of course tend to be fewer and farther between as compared to smaller successes. As such the frequency for acknowledgement and reward is a lot smaller if the focus is merely on the larger ones. These extended periods without reward may lead decreased morale.
3.	Reinforce	The basic premise here is to be sure to laud the smaller efforts that lead toward success of the overall effort. Sometimes hearing that the steps they have taken along the way are appreciated are even more satisfying than the praise received at the completion of the overarching effort. Positive reinforcement along the way can prove to be of immeasurable importance as it pertains to building and sustaining morale.

Table 1 The Three Rs for Motivating Professionals

All this said, however, it has become evident to me that professionals receive a great deal of satisfaction from their work. The best reward that they can receive is the work itself. They tend to have work as a centerpiece for their life as a whole. This is to say that professionals don't necessarily leave work at work.

This is a key differentiator between professionals and nonprofessionals. Professionals have a sense of ownership, which makes it a lot harder to "flip the switch" as they say. Whereas nonprofessionals may be working and paid for work on an hourly basis, with motivation being monetary. That is, however a whole other problem in and of itself that I will not be exploring in this particular paper.

So, how do we motivate professionals? All signs point to:

1.2.1. Provide them with challenging work

- Challenging work tends to stimulate out of the box thinking and innovation. This work to professionals tends to lead to a higher level of fulfillment upon completion as opposed to that of less challenging work.

1.2.2. Give them rope.

- Not to hang themselves of course. Workers with a sense of autonomy tend to feel a better sense of ownership and be more innovative in their approaches. This leads to more opportunities to learn and grow in and ultimately out of their roles if that is a goal.

1.2.3. Recognize their contributions.

- Don't only point out when there is something that they either did wrong or could have done better. Be sure to also laud them on occasion to show that you appreciate their efforts and overall contributions to the success of the team.

2. LEADERSHIP VS. MANAGEMENT

What is the difference between management and leadership? There is an obvious answer right? Not so much. At least that is what my research has shown.

2.1. INTERVIEWS

You see, I surveyed professionals ranging in roles from individual contributor to execs from fortune 500 companies and was astounded by what I found. I was amazed to find that the vast majority of low-level managers defined management and leadership as almost being analogous in nature with only slight variations. The sample size for the professionals surveyed was 95 spanning multiple corporations and countries.. The sample included:

- CEOs
- VPs
- Software Engineers
- Program Mangers
- Software Development Managers
- Engineering Directors
- General Managers
- 3rd Party Vendors
- Engineering Managers

Before I compare and contrast the responses between the different groups I surveyed let me define the various levels of management that I queried for the purposes of my research.

Career Level	Years experience	Title
Individual Contributor	Varying years of experience	Engineer, Member of Tech

	w/ no direct reports	Staff, etc.
Low-Level Manager	Up to 10 years with direct subordinates	Lead/Supervisor/ Manager
Executive	Generally 10 years or more w/ direct and indirect reports	Director level or above

Table 2 Career Level Definitions

Now, I will also point out that the interviews I held between all groups were very informal in nature. The question that was asked was "How would you define management/leadership?", and let them go with it. I wanted honest responses and didn't want to lead them in any way to assume that the two terms were either mutually exclusive or analogous. I wanted them to make the determination on their own. After posing the question I just listened for keywords.

In terms of evaluation of answers that were received from those interviewed I used the following matrix depicting characteristics that typically differentiate managers from leaders:

Subject	Leader	Manager
Essence	Change	Stability
Focus	Leading people	Managing work
Have	Followers	Subordinates
Horizon	Long-term	Short-term
Seeks	Vision	Objectives
Approach	Sets direction	Plans detail
Decision	Facilitates	Makes
Power	Personal charisma	Formal authority
Appeal to	Heart	Head
Energy	Passion	Control
Culture	Shapes	Enacts
Dynamic	Proactive	Reactive
Persuasion	Sell	Tell
Style	Transformational	Transactional
Exchange	Excitement for work	Money for work
Likes	Striving	Action
Wants	Achievement	Results
Risk	Takes	Minimizes
Rules	Breaks	Makes
Conflict	Uses	Avoids
Direction	New roads	Existing roads
Truth	Seeks	Establishes
Concern	What is right	Being right
Credit	Gives	Takes
Blame	Takes	Blames

Table 3 Leaders vs. Manager Characteristics

This above characteristic list was pretty consistent among the various subject matter experts in this area of study. Not only have I noticed that managers tend to rely on authority over others to get things done, a huge differentiator is in the blame column. Managers blame while leaders tend to take blame. This is huge. There is no "passing the buck". Though leaders may not have authority over others they take ownership of issues that arise. This is inherently a big reason a team would be more trusting of someone with this trait.

2.1.1. Low Level Manager

For the most part these managers tended to define management and leadership as authoritative. Here are some of the keywords that stuck out from my conversations with members of this particular group:

- Subordinate
- Direct Report
- Bottom-line
- Short-term
- Control
- Authority

2.1.2. Individual Contributors

Now, lets move on to the Individual Contributors (IC). Interestingly enough the responses that I got from Individual Contributors were very different. Now, I will admit, that looking back I should have taken another step and broken out the Individual Contributor group further by years of experience. The reason I say this is because the individual contributors that I spoke to ranged in experience from 2 years all the way to 40 years. Yes, 40 years. The person that I surveyed that was at the far right end of the spectrum, I will say is very close to retirement to say the least. This particular group had varying reasons of course for their opinions on this particular matter. The varying amounts of tenure in career level played a big part in this, of course.

The Individual Contributors group, even with such a disparity in years of experience seemed to be pretty much on the same page and drew clear contrasts between *management* and *leadership* for the most part.

Some of the keywords that I heard for the most part from these groups as it pertains to leadership in particular were:

- Influence
- Lead
- Charismatic
- Humble/Humility
- Stretch

2.1.3. Executives

This group I found to be especially interesting. This was because their responses were very similar to that of the individual contributors. Why was this? Where is the disconnect here? After all, a manager generally progresses to the executive level right? Do they not progress to this level until they figure this out? This of course had me very curious. So, I took it a step further and queried various people that reported to the executives I met with.

I asked them how satisfied they were with the management style of their respective executives. Needless to say this was a bit of a bust given the fact that they didn't give me candid answers. In retrospect I think that I should have set up an anonymous survey for this

group. I did, however do some other research and found that executives that leaned toward the visionary/characteristic side of the spectrum generally had higher approval ratings amongst their employees. An example of this would be Glassdoor.com's annual list of the 50 Highest Rated CEOs.

I examined the most recent list, which was from 2014. I took the top 25 from the list and looked at the characteristics that were used to describe the CEOs by the people surveyed. The constant that I noticed amongst all the CEOs that I examined was the trust factor. The employees surveyed actually trust the vision of the CEOs. Vision? That is one of the major characteristics that I have observed to differentiate the managers from the leaders.

50 Highest Rated CEOs · 2014

HIGHEST RATED CEOs 2014

FEEDBACK PROVIDED BY EMPLOYEES

Rank	Company	CEO	CEO Approval Rating
1	LinkedIn	Jeff Weiner	100%
2	Ford	Alan R. Mulally	97%
3	Edelman	Richard W. Edelman	97%
4	Northwestern Mutual	John E. Schlifske	95%
5	QUALCOMM	Paul E. Jacobs	95%
6	COSTCO WHOLESALE	Craig Jelinek	95%
7	intuit.	Brad Smith	94%
8	Goldman Sachs	Lloyd C. Blankfein	94%
9	Starbucks	Howard D. Schultz	93%
10	f	Mark Zuckerberg	93%
11	Google	Larry Page	93%
12	usbank.	Richard K. Davis	93%
13	salesforce	Marc Benioff	93%
14	riverbed	Jerry M. Kennelly	93%
15	Fidelity	Edward C. "Ned" Johnson, III	93%
16	Deloitte.	Joe Echevarria	92%
17	J.CREW	Mickey Drexler	92%
18	Apple	Tim Cook	92%
19	FedEx.	Fred Smith	92%
20	ebay inc	John J. Donahoe	91%
21	Disney	Bob Iger	91%
22	USAA	Joe Robles Jr.	91%
23	ADP	Carlos A. Rodriguez	91%
24	NORDSTROM	Blake W. Nordstrom	90%
25	Cognizant	Frank D'Souza	90%

Figure 3 Glassdoor's 25/50 Highest Rated CEOs list for 2014

2.2. HUMILITY IS A VIRTUE

I have observed from my studies, research, and ultimately from my experience in the workplace that it is ultimately the most humble of people managers that are the most effective leaders (This is not always analogous with success.). This is not just my observation, however. I've gotten the same impression from V.P. and C-level execs that I have interviewed.

For instance, an engineering executive @ Cisco Systems that I interviewed told me that one of the main reasons that he has reached the level of success that he has thus far is because of his humility. He said that his experience in the public sector (DoD, Military, Government as a whole either direct work or contracting for) from an observational standpoint was the exact opposite. It was those that stepped all over people to get what they wanted who were the people that seemed to get the attention of the higher ups and ultimately all the accolades. They feed off this. They need it to survive in the workplace. He found it hard to stick to his guns and be an effective manager in that sort of environment. Once he made the transition to the private sector (privately held, non-government entities) he "saw the light" as he put it. He was able to effectively lead the way he wanted to.

This was needless to say something that resonated with me. Why you ask? The main reason was that I too made the transition from public sector to private sector. I had a similar experience with the public sector. I was on the IC (Individual Contributor) side of the house though. One would think that I would fall into the black hole that most found themselves in. No way. No I didn't think that I was better than anyone. I just knew that I couldn't go that route. So how was I to be successful?

Well, it turned out that people who became familiar with my work did the job for me (as it pertained to spreading the word about me). Somehow the word got to upper management. This led to higher visibility (Gift and a Curse). The reason I saw this as good and bad was not that I was afraid of the feedback to come. I just hate the spotlight. I've always been taught to exude humility. For instance, whenever I lead a program and am referring to successes, 1st person singular goes out the window (I, me) and is replaced by 1st person plural (we). When talking to failures it's the exact opposite and I am usually taking the blame.

Does this make me a glutton for punishment? From an absolutely logical perspective, the answer was a resounding yes. Anyone that knows me, however, will tell you that I don't fit in any particular box and am not afraid to go against the grain. Why you ask? I like to test boundaries. Innovation, whether it be technological, managerial, or merely from a personal growth perspective, is achieved by those who "paint outside the lines". Those who are not necessarily risk-averse accomplish it.

3. QUINTESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP

Colin Luther Powell was the first African American appointed as the 65th U.S. Secretary of State (2001-2005) serving George W. Bush, and the first, and so far the only, to serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He also retired from the United States Army, but not before reaching the level of four-star general. Mr. Powell, was actually slated to be interviewed for this effort but due to scheduling conflicts it was not possible.

That said, however, the catalyst behind the desire to interview Mr. Powell remains true. He is a globally recognized leader whose universal leadership principles have proven to be an inspiration for Fortune 500 CEOs and U.S. military officers alike. We will be looking at the leadership principles most relevant to this particular research.

3.1. LESSON 1: BEING RESPONSIBLE SOMETIMES MEANS PISSING PEOPLE OFF.

“Good leadership involves responsibility to the welfare of the group, which means that some people will get angry at your actions and decisions. It's inevitable, if you're honorable. Trying to get everyone to like you is a sign of mediocrity: you'll avoid the tough decisions, you'll avoid confronting the people who need to be confronted, and you'll avoid offering differential rewards based on differential performance because some people might get upset. Ironically, by procrastinating on the difficult choices, by trying not to get anyone mad, and by treating everyone equally "nicely" regardless of their contributions, you'll simply ensure that the only people you'll wind up angering are the most creative and productive people in the organization.”

This is a major cause for divide between managers and leaders. Managers are a lot less likely to piss people off. They are all about keeping the peace. Leaders on the other hand might not be so worried about what everyone thinks, just the key stakeholders. It is very true

that you cannot and should not try to appease everyone. It has been my experience that if everyone is happy, either someone is lying, or there is something very wrong.

**3.2. LESSON 2: THE DAY SOLDIERS STOP BRINGIN YOU THEIR PROBLEMS
IS THE DAY YOU HAVE STOPPED LEADING THEM.**

“If this were a litmus test, the majority of CEOs would fail. One, they build so many barriers to upward communication that the very idea of someone lower in the hierarchy looking up to the leader for help is ludicrous. Two, the corporate culture they foster often defines asking for help as weakness or failure, so people cover up their gaps, and the organization suffers accordingly. Real leaders make themselves accessible and available. They show concern for the efforts and challenges faced by underlings, even as they demand high standards. Accordingly, they are more likely to create an environment where problem analysis replaces blame.”

Too many organizations still function in a truly matrixed fashion. This alone is not a problem, but there need to be a lot more safeguards in place or it can get totally out of hand. For instance, take a gander at the following illustration regarding Microsoft's org structure:

A [fictional org chart](#) that depicts Microsoft divisions pointing guns at each other

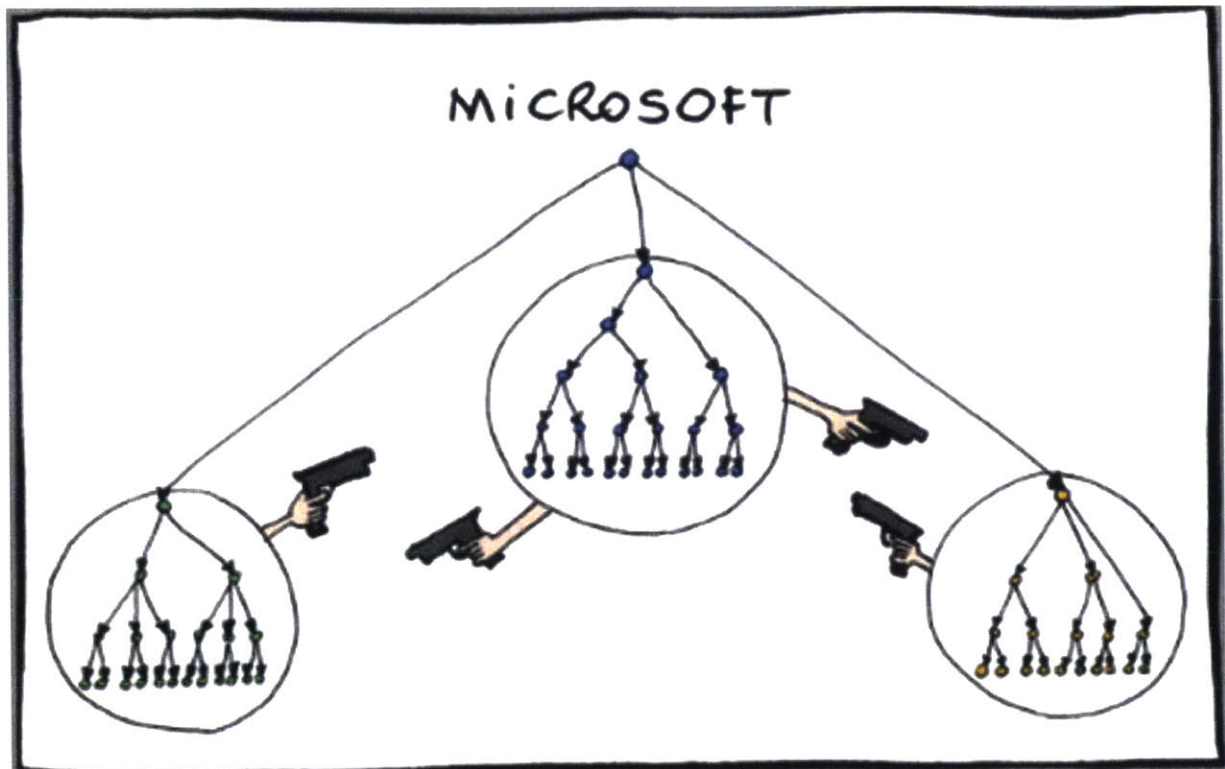


Figure 4 Microsoft Fictional Org Chart

Having worked there myself and interviewed employees both past and present I can certainly attest to this. There was a lot of intra-company competition/contention. The org structure also made it very hard to raise issues other than going to a direct manager.

Organizations that are flat in structure tend to be a lot less management heavy, which lead to a lot less degrees of separation from upper management. This of course fosters a more open environment and as a byproduct, more innovation.

3.3. LESSON 3: DON'T BE BUFFALOED BY EXPERTS AND ELITES. EXPERTS OFTEN POSSESS MORE DATA THAN JUDGEMENT.

“Small companies and start-ups don't have the time for analytically detached experts. They don't have the money to subsidize lofty elites, either. The president answers the phone and drives the truck when necessary; everyone on the payroll visibly produces and contributes to bottom-line results or they're history. But as companies get bigger, they often forget who "brought them to the dance": things like all-hands involvement, egalitarianism, informality, market intimacy, daring, risk, speed, agility. Policies that emanate from ivory towers often have an adverse impact on the people out in the field who are fighting the wars or bringing in the revenues. Real leaders are vigilant, and combative, in the face of these trends.”

I call this the "Ivory Tower Syndrome". I've seen far too many times when a company has separation of duties to the point where no one will step in to help anyone else in the time of need to ensure the team's overall success. You constantly hear the words "That is not my job". Start-ups don't have this problem for the most part, however, as everyone chips in and

no job is out of scope. Everyone rolls up their sleeves to get things done for the overall success of the company.

3.4. LESSON 4: DON'T BE AFRAID TO CHALLENGE THE PROS, EVEN IN THEIR OWN BACKYARD.

“Learn from the pros, observe them, seek them out as mentors and partners.

But remember that even the pros may have leveled out in terms of their

learning and skills. Sometimes even the pros can become complacent and

lazy. Leadership does not emerge from blind obedience to anyone. Xerox's

Barry Rand was right on target when he warned his people that if you have

a yes-man working for you, one of you is redundant. Good leadership

encourages everyone's evolution.”

Environments that are rife with lifers (Those that have been with the company for more than 10 years and plan to retire with the company.) Now having lifers is not a problem per se. Issues tend to arise when new employees are added into the equation and the lifers are not so open to change. Needless to say this sort of environment doesn't necessarily

foster innovation and tend to be overrun with contention between staff. This of course both derives from and needs to be tackled at the leadership level.

3.5. LESSON 6: YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH UNTIL YOU TRY.

“You know the expression, "it's easier to get forgiveness than permission." Well, it's true. Good leaders don't wait for official blessing to try things out. They're prudent, not reckless. But they also realize a fact of life in most organizations: if you ask enough people for permission, you'll inevitably come up against someone who believes his job is to say "no." So the moral is, don't ask. Less effective middle managers endorsed the sentiment, "If I haven't explicitly been told 'yes,' I can't do it," whereas the good ones believed, "If I haven't explicitly been told 'no,' I can." There's a world of difference between these two points of view.”

Leaders inherently take risks.. Managers ask permission when they see risks on the horizon. The bigger the risk, of course the bigger the reward. This is why leaders tend to be the glue that holds a team or effort together. Managers are generally by the book so are not dynamic so tend not to be the best problem solvers. This part, on as it pertains to managers, is generally delegated.

3.6. LESSON 8: ORGANIZATION SUCCESS

“In a brain-based economy, your best assets are people. We've heard this expression so often that it's become trite. But how many leaders really "walk the talk" with this stuff? Too often, people are assumed to be empty chess pieces to be moved around by grand viziers, which may explain why so many top managers immerse their calendar time in deal making, restructuring and the latest management fad. How many immerse themselves in the goal of creating an environment where the best, the brightest, the most creative are attracted, retained and, most importantly, unleashed?”

This actually is fairly closely related to Helm & Associates' Three Rs of Motivation previously referred to. Companies forget that their main and most important assets are humans. The human side of technological innovation is the most important part. I will say, however,

that my research has shown that there are a number of companies that actually get the picture. For the most part they are companies that make Fortune Magazine's annual List of 100 Best Places to Work.

3.7. LESSON 9: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS AND FANCY TITLES COUNT FOR NEXT TO NOTHING.

“Organization charts are frozen, anachronistic photos in a work place that ought to be as dynamic as the external environment around you. If people really followed organization charts, companies would collapse. In well-run organizations, titles are also pretty meaningless. At best, they advertise some authority, an official status conferring the ability to give orders and induce obedience. But titles mean little in terms of real power, which is the capacity to influence and inspire. Have you ever noticed that people will personally commit to certain individuals who on paper (or on the organization chart) possess little authority, but instead possess pizzazz, drive, expertise, and genuine caring for teammates and products? On the flip side, non-leaders

in management may be formally anointed with all the perks and frills associated with high positions, but they have little influence on others, apart from their ability to extract minimal compliance to minimal standards.”

This talks to the extremely matrixed organization. These types of organizations are generally plagued with power struggles, tendencies toward anarchy, employees that feel undervalued, excessive layering, and high overhead costs. All this said, however, one of the worst things that prove to be the pitfall for these types of organizations is stagnation and inability to reach consensus on major decisions. People get so stuck on titles that they are afraid to make a move without permission. The people with the titles are generally the figureheads but not the leaders. There are just way too many cooks in the kitchen.

3.8. LESSON 11: FIT NO STEREOTYPES.

“Flitting from fad to fad creates team confusion, reduces the leader's credibility, and drains organizational coffers. Blindly following a particular fad generates rigidity in thought and action. Sometimes speed to market is more important than total quality. Sometimes an unapologetic directive is more appropriate than participatory discussion. Some situations require the leader to hover

closely; others require long, loose leashes. Leaders honor their core values, but they are flexible in how they execute them. They understand that management techniques are not magic mantras but simply tools to be reached for at the right times.”

Management by itself tends to fail. Not every situation in a dynamic environment will fit in the box of the latest management technique that you have studied. Leaders, on the other hand, adapt to the situation at hand and are amenable to change. This is not something that is taught, but can be learned with experience.

3.9. SIMPLIFICATION VIA LEADERSHIP

“Effective leaders understand the KISS principle, Keep It Simple, Stupid. They articulate vivid, over-arching goals and values, which they use to drive daily behaviors and choices among competing alternatives. Their visions and priorities are lean and compelling, not cluttered and buzzword-laden. Their decisions are crisp and clear, not tentative and ambiguous. They convey an unwavering firmness and consistency in their actions, aligned with the picture of the future they paint. The result: clarity of purpose, credibility of leadership,

and integrity in organization.”

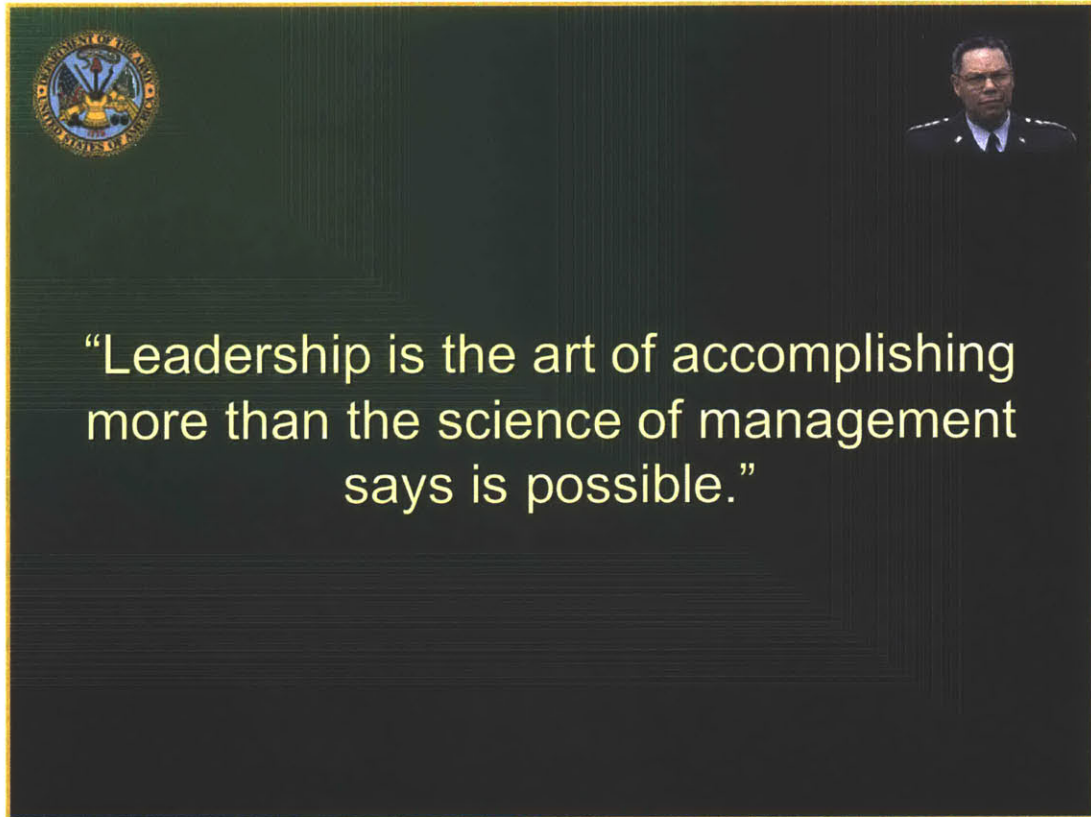
Managers tend to focus on optics. Problems from a management perspective, if no quick fix is in sight, to solve the problem receive a bandage in order that they may move onto the next thing on their list. A leader, however, will step in, gather all the pertinent information to understand the problem, and work toward a resolution, and not a stopgap. They make the connections and generally think about the long-term effects for an issue that they are presently troubleshooting.

3.10. MANAGING FROM AN IVORY TOWER

“Too often, the reverse defines corporate culture. This is one of the main reasons why leaders like Ken Iverson of Nucor Steel, Percy Barnevik of Asea Brown Boveri, and Richard Branson of Virgin have kept their corporate staffs to a bare-bones minimum - how about fewer than 100 central corporate staffers for global \$30 billion-plus ABB? Or around 25 and 3 for multi-billion Nucor and Virgin, respectively? Shift the power and the financial accountability to the folks who are bringing in the beans, not the ones who are counting or analyzing them.”

Too many times are there decisions that affect the customer being made by people that have no connection with the customer. These decisions, or at least input feeding these decisions should derive from customer-facing parties. For instance, a manager that has had no interaction with the customer at all should not chastise a sales rep that has traveled to a customer site and made a decision to provide a concession to the customer to save an account. I call this the "Ivory Tower Effect".

3.11. LEADERSHIP DEFINED



4. INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR VS. MANAGER

What is the main motivation from someone to move from an individual contributor role to a people manager role? Vice versa? This is a common, important decision in many professional's careers that tends to be taken lightly by not only the individual involved, but the organization that the individual works for.

4.1. INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR

A common misconception is that individual contributors can't lead. The truth is that it depends on the individual and the respective environment. For instance, if you're dead set on being a software engineer, and only do work that is assigned to you, this doesn't exactly exclude leadership. This is not necessarily a problem however. There are professionals that are task-oriented in nature and prefer it that way.

There are other individual contributor roles that have to exhibit leadership traits however. An example of such a role would be that of a program manager. What is a program manager you say? Well, a program manager is someone who is charged with managing not only projects, but also the amalgamation of multiple projects, which generally form what is called a program. They are responsible for thinking holistically and fostering collaboration between project teams to ensure the overall success of the programs that they are responsible for. To do this you by definition have to lead. Team members are looking to you for leadership throughout the course of the effort. You are the proverbial "throat to choke".

4.2. THE PEOPLE MANAGER

Managers come from all walks of life. They are authority figures as opposed to leaders. Work is not general done by managers as it is generally delegated. This does not necessarily talk to the work ethic of the manager. This is by design. They are not looked to fro leadership per se, but to encourage others to complete tasks and ultimately evaluate their efforts.

It should also be pointed out that managers generally have to deal with a lot of personal issues related to employees who report to them. It figuratively comes with the territory. Managers are generally compensated better than their subordinates however and are expected to provide performance reviews.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. TRAVERSING THE LADDER

There are obviously pros and cons for both jobs and of course the individual's preferences and perceptions tends to play a big part of where they stand on either column. What people as well as organizations don't take into consideration a lot, however is what exactly should be taken into consideration when moving someone from the individual contributor side to the People Manager side of the ladder. Too many times there are exceptional individ-

ual contributors that are promoted to people manager roles based solely on their individual efforts.

The problem here is that an exceptional individual does not automatically make them an exceptional manager. Quite frankly that is not the case for the most part. Some of the key reasons for this is that a good portion of these individuals are what we in the technology field call *broken toys*:

- They are the software engineers that would rather read RFCs than interact with a colleague.
- They eat alone in their office or cubicle.
- They don't make eye contact.
- They don't attend social functions.
- They might, however, be some of the best at their particular tasks

While I am not claiming there to be anything wrong with these sorts of individuals, there is, however, an issue with corporations that promote Broken Toys to people managers merely based on their individual work. This is a major failure. It's Crap! The human side of technology should always be taken into consideration when making these types of decisions. I've witnessed some of the most brilliant individuals fail miserably at managing others because of an inherent social ineptitude.

They interact with others as if they were dealing with a computer. It's all binary with them. They see black and white, but no grey, blue, red, green, or yellow. Be not only a critical thinker, but be able to think out of the box and take each situation for what it actually is and not what it is perceived to be. They should examine situations on a case-by-case basis and not lump like situations together, especially when it comes to dealing with human beings.

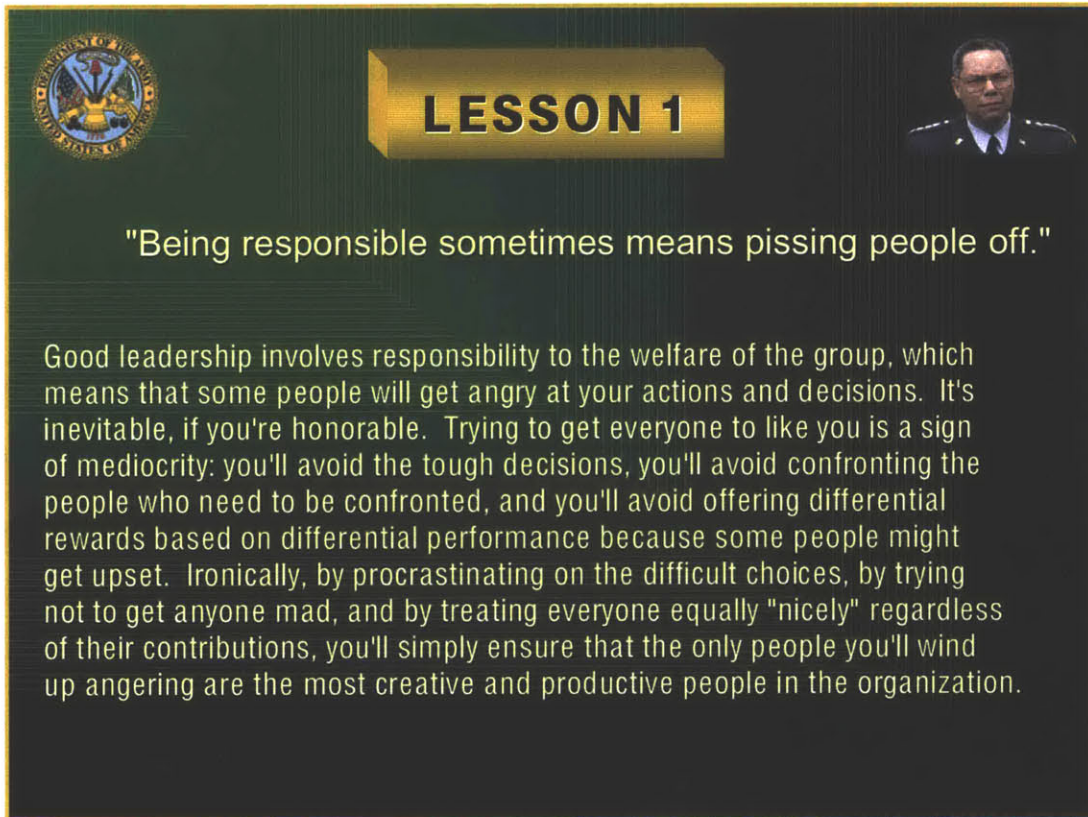
5.2. WRAP

You may have noticed that there was a bit of an affinity toward leaders throughout this paper. This is not, however merely a matter of my personal preference. This is truly a by-product of the research and the climate of the high tech industry today. Some traits, however, are shared by leaders and managers:

- A focus on team effectiveness
- Strategy alignment
- Coaching of either peers or subordinates

This said, however, there are more differences than similarities. The hope is that after reading this paper that the reader would easily be able to identify where they reside on the ladder, whether they want to be there, and if not, the steps to take to get to where they want to be.

Appendix A COLIN POWELL LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES



The slide features a dark green background with a gold border. In the top left corner is the Department of Defense seal. In the top center, the text "LESSON 1" is displayed in white on a gold rectangular background. In the top right corner is a small portrait of Colin Powell in a military uniform. The main text is centered and reads: "Being responsible sometimes means pissing people off." Below this is a paragraph of text explaining the concept of responsible leadership.

LESSON 1

"Being responsible sometimes means pissing people off."

Good leadership involves responsibility to the welfare of the group, which means that some people will get angry at your actions and decisions. It's inevitable, if you're honorable. Trying to get everyone to like you is a sign of mediocrity: you'll avoid the tough decisions, you'll avoid confronting the people who need to be confronted, and you'll avoid offering differential rewards based on differential performance because some people might get upset. Ironically, by procrastinating on the difficult choices, by trying not to get anyone mad, and by treating everyone equally "nicely" regardless of their contributions, you'll simply ensure that the only people you'll wind up angering are the most creative and productive people in the organization.

Figure 5 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 1



LESSON 2



"The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help them or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership."

If this were a litmus test, the majority of CEOs would fail. One, they build so many barriers to upward communication that the very idea of someone lower in the hierarchy looking up to the leader for help is ludicrous. Two, the corporate culture they foster often defines asking for help as weakness or failure, so people cover up their gaps, and the organization suffers accordingly. Real leaders make themselves accessible and available. They show concern for the efforts and challenges faced by underlings, even as they demand high standards. Accordingly, they are more likely to create an environment where problem analysis replaces blame.

Figure 6 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 2



LESSON 3



"Don't be buffaloed by experts and elites. Experts often possess more data than judgment. Elites can become so inbred that they produce hemophiliacs who bleed to death as soon as they are nicked by the real world."

Small companies and start-ups don't have the time for analytically detached experts. They don't have the money to subsidize lofty elites, either. The president answers the phone and drives the truck when necessary; everyone on the payroll visibly produces and contributes to bottom-line results or they're history. But as companies get bigger, they often forget who "brought them to the dance": things like all-hands involvement, egalitarianism, informality, market intimacy, daring, risk, speed, agility. Policies that emanate from ivory towers often have an adverse impact on the people out in the field who are fighting the wars or bringing in the revenues. Real leaders are vigilant, and combative, in the face of these trends.

Figure 7 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 3



LESSON 4



"Don't be afraid to challenge the pros,
even in their own backyard."

Learn from the pros, observe them, seek them out as mentors and partners. But remember that even the pros may have leveled out in terms of their learning and skills. Sometimes even the pros can become complacent and lazy. Leadership does not emerge from blind obedience to anyone. Xerox's Barry Rand was right on target when he warned his people that if you have a yes-man working for you, one of you is redundant. Good leadership encourages everyone's evolution.

Figure 8 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 4



LESSON 5



"Never neglect details. When everyone's mind is dulled or distracted the leader must be doubly vigilant."

Strategy equals execution. All the great ideas and visions in the world are worthless if they can't be implemented rapidly and efficiently. Good leaders delegate and empower others liberally, but they pay attention to details, every day. (Think about supreme athletic coaches like Jimmy Johnson, Pat Riley and Tony La Russa). Bad ones, even those who fancy themselves as progressive "visionaries," think they're somehow "above" operational details. Paradoxically, good leaders understand something else: an obsessive routine in carrying out the details begets conformity and complacency, which in turn dulls everyone's mind. That is why even as they pay attention to details, they continually encourage people to challenge the process. They implicitly understand the sentiment of CEO leaders like Quad Graphic's Harry Quadracchi, Oticon's Lars Kolind and the late Bill McGowan of MCI, who all independently asserted that the Job of a leader is not to be the chief organizer, but the chief dis-organizer.

Figure 9 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 5



LESSON 6



"You don't know what you can get away with until you try."

You know the expression, "it's easier to get forgiveness than permission." Well, it's true. Good leaders don't wait for official blessing to try things out. They're prudent, not reckless. But they also realize a fact of life in most organizations: if you ask enough people for permission, you'll inevitably come up against someone who believes his job is to say "no." So the moral is, don't ask. Less effective middle managers endorsed the sentiment, "If I haven't explicitly been told 'yes,' I can't do it," whereas the good ones believed, "If I haven't explicitly been told 'no,' I can." There's a world of difference between these two points of view.

Figure 10 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 6



LESSON 7



"Keep looking below surface appearances.
Don't shrink from doing so (just) because you
might not like what you find."

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is the slogan of the complacent, the arrogant or the scared. It's an excuse for inaction, a call to non-arms. It's a mind-set that assumes (or hopes) that today's realities will continue tomorrow in a tidy, linear and predictable fashion. Pure fantasy. In this sort of culture, you won't find people who pro-actively take steps to solve problems as they emerge. Here's a little tip: don't invest in these companies.

Figure 11 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 7



LESSON 8



"Organization doesn't really accomplish anything. Plans don't accomplish anything, either. Theories of management don't much matter. Endeavors succeed or fail because of the people involved. Only by attracting the best people will you accomplish great deeds."

In a brain-based economy, your best assets are people. We've heard this expression so often that it's become trite. But how many leaders really "walk the talk" with this stuff? Too often, people are assumed to be empty chess pieces to be moved around by grand viziers, which may explain why so many top managers immerse their calendar time in deal making, restructuring and the latest management fad. How many immerse themselves in the goal of creating an environment where the best, the brightest, the most creative are attracted, retained and, most importantly, unleashed?

Figure 12 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 8



LESSON 9



"Organization charts and fancy titles count for next to nothing."

Organization charts are frozen, anachronistic photos in a work place that ought to be as dynamic as the external environment around you. If people really followed organization charts, companies would collapse. In well-run organizations, titles are also pretty meaningless. At best, they advertise some authority, an official status conferring the ability to give orders and induce obedience. But titles mean little in terms of real power, which is the capacity to influence and inspire. Have you ever noticed that people will personally commit to certain individuals who on paper (or on the organization chart) possess little authority, but instead possess pizzazz, drive, expertise, and genuine caring for teammates and products? On the flip side, non-leaders in management may be formally anointed with all the perks and frills associated with high positions, but they have little influence on others, apart from their ability to extract minimal compliance to minimal standards.

Figure 13 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 9



LESSON 10



"Never let your ego get so close to your position that when your position goes, your ego goes with it."

Too often, change is stifled by people who cling to familiar turfs and job descriptions. One reason that even large organizations wither is that managers won't challenge old, comfortable ways of doing things. But real leaders understand that, nowadays, every one of our jobs is becoming obsolete. The proper response is to obsolete our activities before someone else does. Effective leaders create a climate where people's worth is determined by their willingness to learn new skills and grab new responsibilities, thus perpetually reinventing their jobs. The most important question in performance evaluation becomes not, "How well did you perform your job since the last time we met?" but, "How much did you change it?"

Figure 14 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 10



LESSON 11



"Fit no stereotypes. Don't chase the latest management fads. The situation dictates which approach best accomplishes the team's mission."

Flitting from fad to fad creates team confusion, reduces the leader's credibility, and drains organizational coffers. Blindly following a particular fad generates rigidity in thought and action. Sometimes speed to market is more important than total quality. Sometimes an unapologetic directive is more appropriate than participatory discussion. Some situations require the leader to hover closely; others require long, loose leashes. Leaders honor their core values, but they are flexible in how they execute them. They understand that management techniques are not magic mantras but simply tools to be reached for at the right times.

Figure 15 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 11



LESSON 12



"Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier."

The ripple effect of a leader's enthusiasm and optimism is awesome. So is the impact of cynicism and pessimism. Leaders who whine and blame engender those same behaviors among their colleagues. I am not talking about stoically accepting organizational stupidity and performance incompetence with a "what, me worry?" smile. I am talking about a gung-ho attitude that says "we can change things here, we can achieve awesome goals, we can be the best." Spare me the grim litany of the "realist," give me the unrealistic aspirations of the optimist any day.

Figure 16 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 12



LESSON 13



"Powell's Rules for Picking People:"

Look for intelligence and judgment, and most critically, a capacity to anticipate, to see around corners. Also look for loyalty, integrity, a high energy drive, a balanced ego, and the drive to get things done.

How often do our recruitment and hiring processes tap into these attributes? More often than not, we ignore them in favor of length of resume, degrees and prior titles. A string of job descriptions a recruit held yesterday seem to be more important than who one is today, what they can contribute tomorrow, or how well their values mesh with those of the organization. You can train a bright, willing novice in the fundamentals of your business fairly readily, but it's a lot harder to train someone to have integrity, judgment, energy, balance, and the drive to get things done. Good leaders stack the deck in their favor right in the recruitment phase.

Figure 17 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 13



LESSON 14



"Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate and doubt, to offer a solution everybody can understand."

Effective leaders understand the KISS principle, Keep It Simple, Stupid. They articulate vivid, over-arching goals and values, which they use to drive daily behaviors and choices among competing alternatives. Their visions and priorities are lean and compelling, not cluttered and buzzword-laden. Their decisions are crisp and clear, not tentative and ambiguous. They convey an unwavering firmness and consistency in their actions, aligned with the picture of the future they paint. The result: clarity of purpose, credibility of leadership, and integrity in organization.

Figure 18 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 14



LESSON 15



Part I: "Use the formula $P=40$ to 70 , in which P stands for the probability of success and the numbers indicate the percentage of information acquired."

Part II: "Once the information is in the 40 to 70 range, go with your gut."

Don't take action if you have only enough information to give you less than a 40 percent chance of being right, but don't wait until you have enough facts to be 100 percent sure, because by then it is almost always too late. Today, excessive delays in the name of information-gathering breeds "analysis paralysis." Procrastination in the name of reducing risk actually increases risk.

Figure 19 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 15



LESSON 16



"The commander in the field is always right and the rear echelon is wrong, unless proved otherwise."

Too often, the reverse defines corporate culture. This is one of the main reasons why leaders like Ken Iverson of Nucor Steel, Percy Barnevik of Asea Brown Boveri, and Richard Branson of Virgin have kept their corporate staffs to a bare-bones minimum - how about fewer than 100 central corporate staffers for global \$30 billion-plus ABB? Or around 25 and 3 for multi-billion Nucor and Virgin, respectively? Shift the power and the financial accountability to the folks who are bringing in the beans, not the ones who are counting or analyzing them.

Figure 20 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 16



LESSON 17



"Have fun in your command. Don't always run at a breakneck pace. Take leave when you've earned it: Spend time with your families.

Corollary: surround yourself with people who take their work seriously, but not themselves, those who work hard and play hard."

Herb Kelleher of Southwest Air and Anita Roddick of The Body Shop would agree: seek people who have some balance in their lives, who are fun to hang out with, who like to laugh (at themselves, too) and who have some non-job priorities which they approach with the same passion that they do their work. Spare me the grim workaholic or the pompous pretentious "professional;" I'll help them find jobs with my competitor.

Figure 21 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 17



LESSON 18





"Command is lonely."

Harry Truman was right. Whether you're a CEO or the temporary head of a project team, the buck stops here. You can encourage participative management and bottom-up employee involvement, but ultimately the essence of leadership is the willingness to make the tough, unambiguous choices that will have an impact on the fate of the organization. I've seen too many non-leaders flinch from this responsibility. Even as you create an informal, open, collaborative corporate culture, prepare to be lonely.

Figure 22 Colin Powell Leadership Lesson 18

“Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible.”



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