

# Leadership vs. Management



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Why knowing the difference matters

*Adapted from an article by Dr. James N. Farr, founder of Farr Associates.*

Is there a difference between leadership and management? Absolutely. To be an effective leader, one must know how to make this distinction, understand it, and be able to apply it. Both management and leadership skills are important to have, but knowing when and how to apply them is even more crucial. At Farr Associates, we teach our clients how to do this. It boils down to a simple thought: manage tasks; lead people.

You may think that if someone is a manager, then they are also a leader, but this is not the case. A manager is someone who plans logistics, handles design, accounting and software details. But a leader is someone who inspires, motivates, and guides others to accomplish goals and create change. Think of it this way, someone who is an excellent manager but a poor leader, is like an airplane with only one engine; they can maintain the altitude, but they won't get any higher.

Dr. James Farr explains, that much of the "old school" leadership style is designed around a "control/authority model," – in which a manager figures out what needs to happen, tells his/her people what to do, and then expects it to get done. However, the psychological reality is that people only do what they want to do. When workers are unmotivated, misguided, and uninspired, the current approach shows that they will only work as hard as they need to, in order to avoid being reprimanded or risk losing their job.

**Skilled leaders** ask themselves, "What can I say or do to cause my followers to do what I need them to do?" **The best leaders** however, cause maximum "followership." The art of causing "followership" is founded on a few deceptively simple principles. One of the

most important of these principles being that, people do what their minds and emotions tell them to do, and not necessarily what the leader says to do.

A second principle is that the follower provides the motivation. No leader can motivate others. They can only influence people to motivate themselves. Therefore, the accomplished leader becomes adept at reading and addressing each follower's needs in a way that optimizes the individual's performance and the organization's success. This is an important aspect, in that the leader must have an acute insight into others perspectives and state of mind. This ability uniquely allows leaders to properly inspire motivation and choose the most appropriate course of action to both solve pressing problems and effectively achieve long term organizational goals.

Leadership skills, like management skills, can be learned and improved. However, learning new leadership techniques requires current dissatisfaction with the status quo, as well as a belief and acceptance that one's leadership could be improved.

Learning to be a better leader means facing the inevitable discomfort of hearing negative feedback. It also requires the discipline of trying new approaches and working through the discomfort of new behaviors. If you remember back to the explanation of The Three Qualities of a Leader, creating a "Leaderself" is not instinctively comfortable and is often times, not your natural-self. Yet, in the long run, the rewards far outweigh the discomfort.

When one looks at the most effective executives, they will notice that they exhibit the qualities essential of both a

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great manager and a great leader. Successful at knowing *when* to manage and *when* to lead, they also carry the skill sets and industry expertise needed to thrive in their field, and they utilize the techniques of a "Leaderself" concept in order to get the most from their followers. In understanding that leading people is not the same as managing tasks, executives can obtain a more positive response from their followers and ensure their employees are working effectively and efficiently to achieve desired results.