

Critical Thinking 6

Manager vs. Leader

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ORG300: Applying Leadership Principles

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May 28, 2023

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While some might use the term manager/management and leader/leadership interchangeably, they are quite distinct and each of them has their own unique set of qualities and skillsets that determine what might be considered “good” manager vs. “good” leader (Colorado State University Global [CSUG], 2023). This paper looks to compare and contrast two individuals who have styles primarily set within these two skillsets. It will explore the differences between each individual, one who is more of a leader and one who is more a manager and will look at what qualities made them effective in their respective style while leading the same company during their respective tenures and what they could have done to improve upon by incorporating skills from the contrasting style. Lastly, I will discuss which style I aspire to in my life and why that is while suggesting strategies to help develop the skillset one might be lacking or need to improve upon.

Apple Inc. a Tale of Two Leaders

Steve Jobs, the CEO and Co-founder of Apple Inc. would be a prime example of someone who is a leader. He was known for his visionary thinking, his ability to inspire others, and his willingness to take risks. He showed a keen sense of purpose, fostering innovation, and encouraging his teams to think outside the box. His charismatic and visionary leadership style set the pace and changed the technology industry and personal computing to heights once never imagined (Piccoci, 2023).

Tim Cook, on the other hand, the successor of Steven Jobs and current CEO of Apple Inc., is a prime example of someone who exemplifies a more managerial style. He is known for his meticulous attention to detail, his operational efficiency, and his focus on execution, all

characteristics of someone who manages things. He emphasizes process optimization, quality control, and maximizing productivity. His management approach has been crucial in maintaining Apple's high-quality products and efficient supply chain (Biography, 2021).

Contrasting Qualities

The leadership qualities that Steve Jobs showed were in his wide futuristic vision and in him constantly pushing boundaries and inspiring others to strive for ambitious goals and innovative technologies. His inspirational communication style effectively communicated his vision and goals for the company and industry, inspiring his teams and stakeholders to actively contribute towards achieving them. And lastly, Jobs was willing to take risks and embrace failures as learning opportunities, fostering a culture of innovation and resilience within his organizations (Piccoci, 2023).

In contrast, Tim Cook excels at strategic planning and organizing to optimize efficiency and ensure smooth operations. He demonstrates meticulous attention to detail, ensuring high-quality standards are met and maintained while operations are streamlined. Finally, Cook focuses on monitoring performance, setting goals, and holding individuals accountable for results (Biography, 2021).

Effectiveness and Improvement

Steven Job's leadership style has proven highly effective in driving innovation, inspiring his teams, and disrupting industries. However, his visionary style may have benefited from increasing focus on delegation and building a more sustainable work-life balance. These would help to incorporate some management characteristics into his mostly leadership style and provide qualities to a more balanced executive.

Tim Cook's managerial style has contributed to Apple's operational success, financial performance, and customer satisfaction. To further enhance his effectiveness, Cook could work on fostering a more visionary and risk-taking mindset to drive innovation within Apple to help it maintain its technological edge that it once saw under the leadership of his predecessor. By doing so this would help Cook to add to his executive abilities and help lead the company into the future with new innovations and vision.

My Aspirations

I would tend to aspire to a leadership style like Steve Jobs. His ability to envision a better future, inspire others, and embrace calculated risks aligns more with my personal and professional ideologies. His approach encourages continuous growth, innovation, and the pursuit of audacious goals. Leadership is more effective in reaching desired goals because it entails using a wide-angle lens to gather a vision, and leaders are good at conveying that vision to those whom they lead thereby inspiring and allowing teams to work toward that vision creatively and enthusiastically. It goes without saying that in order to realize maximum success there needs to be a balance between leadership and management incorporating aspects of each, but I think leadership garners greater results with higher participant satisfaction in the process than just a strictly management point of view. Personally, I would strive for a 70% - 30% ratio and make adjustments as necessary when the need arises.

Enhancing Skills

A few ways to enhance leadership skills are through continuous learning by engaging in regular self-reflection, seeking feedback (360 review), and pursuing leadership development programs that can help develop leadership skills (Canaday, 2020). One should also focus on

building relationships as developing strong relationships and networks can help in collaboration, provide support, and foster a positive influence with others (Kumle & Kelly, 2018).

Management skills can be improved upon by focusing on process improvement, quality control, and results-based accountability. By emphasizing continuous process improvement and seeking innovative solutions one can optimize efficiency and increase productivity. Developing strong decision-making skills such as analytical and critical-thinking abilities can aid in making informed decisions and managing complex challenges effectively thereby increasing one's management skills as well (CSUG, 2023).

Conclusion

Understanding the differences between leadership and management skills is crucial in various contexts. By analyzing individuals with contrasting styles, such as Steve Jobs and Tim Cook, we can find the unique strengths and areas for improvement within each approach. Steve Jobs leadership style drove innovation and inspired others, while Tim Cook's management style ensures operational efficiency and quality control. To enhance leadership skills, continuous learning and self-reflection are essential. Seeking feedback, taking part in leadership development programs, and staying updated on industry trends can help expand your visionary thinking and help to inspire others. Taking the time to build relationships and networking can lend support and provide collaboration opportunities and a platform to influence others in a positive manner (Canaday, 2020).

To improve one's management skills, focusing on improving processes and increasing innovation is key. Continuous evaluation and streamlining of operations can help to increase

efficiency and productivity as well as quality. Committing to learn strong decision-making skills can help manage complex challenges critically and analytically (CSUG, 2023).

Enhancing leadership or management skills can bring benefits to both personal and professional lives. Improved leadership skills can foster better teamwork, communication, and the ability to guide and inspire others. Effective management behaviors lead to efficient operations, improved productivity, and better resource utilization (CSUG, 2023).

In conclusion, contrasting leadership and management styles can be seen in individuals like Steve Jobs and Tim Cook. Both approaches have their strengths and areas for improvement. By identifying the skills utilized by these two and considering strategies for improvement, we can develop our own leadership or management skills to achieve success in our personal and professional lives. Continuous learning, self-reflection, relationship-building, process improvement, and decision-making skills are key factors in shaping effective leaders and managers.

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