Jack was excited to take on a new role as head of his department. He was chosen largely because of his charismatic personality that made people enthusiastic about his plans. And, he had big plans. He had ideas for several new programs and an ambitious long range fund raising effort to support them. Within months, however, the campaign had fizzled and none of the new programs were launched. Meanwhile, several of the department’s existing programs had started to struggle. Jack had gotten so caught up in where he wanted the department to go that he failed to maintain the daily routine operations. Jack had done a good job of stepping into the role of leader, but he didn’t take on the equally important role of manager.

Often, the roles of leader and of manager are treated as separate functions. Leaders are the visionaries and innovators who push change. They look ahead and set the course. They are the ones who do things right while managers do the right things. Managers, in contrast, are focused on getting things done efficiently. They are interested in systems and structure that maintains stability.

Treating them as separate roles is not a useful approach in the real workplace, however. Rather, they should both be considered skill sets that need to be a part of the job description for everyone in management. There are times when you need to be more of a leader and times when you need to focus on management.

To be effective, you need to find the right balance and know when to focus on one over the other.
When to lead and when to manage?

Think about it like taking a drive. In order to get somewhere, you must first decide where you want to go and choose the best route. Generally, you will do this most effectively if you think about it ahead of time. This is leadership. Once the trip has started, you need to operate the car keeping in mind such things as the traffic laws and the best speed given the road and conditions. That is management. Along the way, you may need to slip back into leadership mode to make adjustments based on unexpected road closures or traffic jams.

You will likely find that you are more comfortable in one role over the other. It is important to understand your own tendencies. Do you like looking at the long range objectives rather than focusing on short term goals? Is it easier for you to set up efficient systems or to evaluate the big picture? Being aware of your strengths and your challenges will help you bring a more balanced approach to your job.

There are some times when leadership should obviously dominate. This may happen when there is outside pressure for a department to make changes, such as an institution-wide push for growth. Or, if a program has become stagnated, it may be time for an overhaul.

Management skills will come into play when it’s time to put a plan into action or if there is a need to establish stability. This involves evaluating existing systems and processes and looking for ways to be more efficient.

Bringing out the best in your team

As you think about the two skill sets and recognize your own tendencies, you can also look at the strengths of your staff. Who would you consider to be your strongest “leaders?” Who are the better “managers?” Of course you will want to put them into the roles that play to those strengths, but you can also think more about how to foster the other skill set. How can those who are great at managing become stronger leaders? Are there ways to help the natural leaders become better managers?

Encourage all of your staff to try on the visionary role and to think about where the department should be headed. And then, turn to them again to figure out how you will practically make and integrate the changes needed to get there.

Leadership and Management are separate skill sets that can be learned and improved upon. But first, it’s helpful to know your natural tendencies.

Do you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ask why</th>
<th>Ask how</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create success</td>
<td>Imitate success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rely on intuition</td>
<td>Follow a plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for innovation</td>
<td>Look for efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim at the concept</td>
<td>Aim at the result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the long-term</td>
<td>Look at the short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovate and discover</td>
<td>Use resources wisely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics of leadership

Characteristics of management

Resources: