

## What is Leadership?

Leadership is a subject that has long excited interest among scholars and laypeople alike.

The term connotes images of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from atop gleaming skyscrapers, or shape the course of nations.

But leadership isn't mystical or mysterious. It does not require having "charisma" or other exotic personality traits. It is not the province of a chosen few. Indeed, leadership is exercised by people from the top to bottom of most organizations.

## What is Leadership

Leadership is the process of giving meaningful direction to collective effort

- **Giving Meaning**
- **Setting a Direction**
- **Willing effort and cooperation**

Leadership vs. Management

- **Planning vs. Setting a Direction**
- **Organizing and Staffing vs. Aligning People**
- **Controlling and Problem Solving vs. Motivating People**

Leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action.

They are both necessary but have different purposes.

Management is concerned with coping with complex modern organizations. Good management brings a degree of order and consistency to key dimensions like the quality and profitability of products. Leadership, by contrast, is about coping with change.

Companies manage complexity by planning and budgeting--setting targets or goals for the future, establishing detailed steps to get there, and then allocating resources. By contrast, leading an organization to constructive change begins by setting a direction--developing a vision of the future along with strategies for producing changes needed to achieve that vision.

Management achieves its plans by organizing and staffing--creating an organizational structure and set of jobs for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing the jobs with qualified individuals, communicating the plan, delegating responsibility, and devising systems to monitor implementation. Leaders align people by communicating the new direction to those who can create coalitions that understand the vision and are committed to its achievement.

Management ensures plan accomplishment by controlling and problem solving--monitoring results versus the plan in some detail, by means of reports, meetings, etc.; identifying deviations and then planning and organizing to solve the problems. But for leadership, achieving a vision requires motivating and inspiring--keeping people moving in the right direction, despite major obstacles to change, by appealing to basic but often untapped human needs, values, and emotions.