

# DO YOU MANAGE OR LEAD?

TAKE OUR SELF-ASSESSMENT TO FIND OUT

BY DR. JEAN NORRIS

**A**re you a manager or a leader? While many people aspire to leadership roles, they often function more as managers. Fundamentally, management is the activity of aligning people to accomplish organizational goals and objectives efficiently and effectively. Managers are responsible for achieving business goals and making a leader's vision happen. Leadership is the back-and-forth process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals. We need managers as much as leaders, but misperceptions exist about both groups.

## COMMON MANAGEMENT MYTHS

- **The best team performer is most qualified to be a manager.** While individual high performance is a prerequisite for management, it's not the only consideration. Success depends on technical job skills as well as interpersonal and coaching skills.
- **Managers tell people what to do, and they do it.** Managerial power is no substitute for *influence*. A manager must possess persuasive and collaborative skills to effectively influence others, including peers.
- **Managers have freedom.** Managers often have less autonomy than they anticipated, with people to look after and additional performance duties.

## COMMON LEADERSHIP MYTHS

- **Leadership is common sense.** People frequently think leadership is about applying "street sense" in situations. But as problems in today's workplace point out, it's very unlikely leadership is all common sense.
- **Leaders are born, not made.** Ever heard the statement, "You are either born a leader or not"? Not true! Research has shown that human development is a result of both nature and nurture and both play a role in creating leaders.
- **Leadership comes only from the school of hard knocks.** Experience is important but studying leadership offers you tools to assess, evaluate and reflect. Complementing experience with study will make you a better leader.

- **Leadership is associated with a position.** Leadership happens at all levels and in all kinds of situations. Regardless of title or level, leadership skills can be strengthened, given the right support and motivation.

## MANAGER OR LEADER SELF-ASSESSMENT

Circle a response for each question.

1. T/F: I think more about immediate results than mentoring others.
2. T/F: Knowing people's long-term goals is nice but not required to get the job done.
3. T/F: The best way to build a team is to set a group goal that is highly challenging—maybe even "crazy."
4. T/F: My greatest on-the-job pleasure comes from making the work process more effective.
5. T/F: I spend more time and attention on weaker performers than on my top performers who take care of themselves.
6. T/F: I like to surround myself with people who are better at what they do than I am.
7. T/F: People talk about "mission" too much—it's best to let people do their work and not discuss values.
8. T/F: I'm careful where I spend my time, because the priorities I act on are what others will observe and follow.

Apply your responses to the grid below to find out if your preferences reflect a manager or leader role.

	Management	Leadership
1	T	F
2	T	F
3	F	T
4	T	F
5	T	F
6	F	T
7	T	F
8	F	T
<b>TOTALS</b>		



The good news is there are no correct answers. Your results reflect your preferences. To learn more about each area, see below.

**1.** Managers focus on process and immediate efficiency. Leaders think about investing their time to help people develop talent so they can do more over time. Leaders figure if they do that, those people will do a better job of watching and improving processes than they themselves will. “T” is more of a manager’s response, and “F” is more of a leader’s response.

**2.** Since leaders need to know what makes individuals tick, understanding people’s goals helps them craft ways to combine personal goals with the work and the organization’s goals. For a given project, it may be less important to know people’s long-term goals, but for organizational growth, it is necessary. “T” is more of a manager’s answer. “F” is more of a leader’s answer.

**3.** Managers tend to think more in terms of what has been done before and try to make more incremental improvements, while leaders like to challenge people to bring out their best in ways they themselves may not have imagined possible. The best way to build team coherence is to take people through a shared, difficult challenge—something any military platoon leader can tell you. “T” is more of a leader’s response, and “F” is more of a manager’s response.

**4.** Managers derive pleasure from process and efficiency. Leaders enjoy that a lot too, but they tend to most enjoy helping people and organizations grow. “T” is more of a manager’s response, and “F” is more of a leader’s response.

**5.** Leaders use time as a reward, investing their attention where it can have a positive impact. Generally, people have the most opportunity to grow and become great where they already demonstrate strong performance, so leaders tend to avoid remedial projects or constant oversight of weaker performers. Instead, leaders invest more attention on top performers, since they will bring the greatest improvements in the future. Managers tend to focus more on solving problems than on leveraging opportunities to spur people toward new levels of excellence. “T” is more of a manager’s response, and “F” is more of a leader’s response.

**6.** Managers may want to feel more in control of their surroundings—not least of all because highly talented people can be independent and difficult to manage! Since leaders typically have stronger social skills to deal with other strong egos, “T” is more of a leader’s response, and “F” is more of a manager’s response.

**7.** While it’s true that “mission” and “vision” are concepts that have become watered down, leaders understand that it is best to daily connect work and projects into a larger framework that gives work a sense of purpose and meaning. People want to feel that their work has purpose and meaning in order to do their work well and care about results. “T” is more of a manager’s response, and “F” is more a leader’s response.

**8.** Leaders realize that the little things they do ripple out in wider ways and that their priorities will be mimicked throughout an organization. Consequently, they make wise choices, knowing that people and other managers imitate the “boss” who sets the ultimate tone. “T” is more of a leader’s response, and “F” is more of a manager’s response.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

Whether your skills fall more in one category or another, have no fear. Both roles are essential to organizational success. Think about it. If an organization was filled with leaders, whom would they lead? If there weren’t any managers, how would the work get done? And if everyone were focused on getting the work done in the moment without someone looking at the big picture, how many opportunities would be missed? A successful organization needs *both* roles to operate effectively.

Working in the career college industry hasn’t been easy these past few years but the dedication of all involved is inspiring. Leaders and managers will need to continue to work together to positively impact those they serve. More than ever, the sector needs the dreamers, innovative thinkers and those who are willing to roll up their sleeves to get the important work done.



**Dr. Jean Norris** is managing partner at Norton|Norris, Inc. For more information, visit [www.nortonnorris.com](http://www.nortonnorris.com).



The online course **LS101 - Do You Manage or Lead?** is now available on the AACSB Online Training Center at [www.aacstraining.org](http://www.aacstraining.org). Members call AACSB at 800-831-1086 for your VIP Discount Code. Visit the following URL to learn more about this course: <http://bit.ly/BeautyLinkLS101>.