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Are You a Leader?

Margaret Thatcher once said “Being a leader is like being a lady, if you have to go around telling people you are one, you aren’t.”

Any similarity to what happens in our corporate world is not just a coincidence.

Why can't people who have the formal power be perceived as leaders? The answer is very simple: power does not equate to leadership.

Unfortunately, it seems that some managers have not yet realized that leading people is not the same as ordering staff around, criticizing others, threatening them, or reminding them who is the boss.

It seems too obvious that attitudes like this should not be demonstrated in the 21st century because they seem like caricatures from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

Unfortunately, these kinds of attitudes are more common than we would like them to be. Definitely ever increasing goals, continuously tight deadlines and stricter headcount control are tempting reasons to bring back these old, ineffective managerial styles.

If you ever felt like saying, “you have to do it because I am ordering it,” or if you know someone who says things like that, the following are hints that may prove useful:

- It is during crises that we know our worst or best behavior. Before acting, be sure that you have all needed information.
- Make your staff your allies. How can you win any battle without their support? A “compliant” staff is not enough to ensure success.
- Your role is to remove obstacles so that your staff can perform to the best of their abilities. Reflect upon the following: Are you removing obstacles, bringing them in, or becoming one yourself?
- Surely what people most need from a leader is direction and support. Therefore, position

yourself clearly, and support their needs so they can execute their tasks.

- Get the respect of your staff. How do you do that? Simple: be coherent, consistent and reliable.
- Be a role model. Remember: Even when we aren't trying, we are all role models, for good or bad.
- And finally, do not forget to keep the communication channels open between yourself and your team.

Leading is not about pushing or pulling. It is about being together, side-by-side, with a team that is committed, motivated, and protagonist. And nobody questions who his or her leader is.

See you next time. We welcome your feedback.

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