

Measure of a Leader, By Aubrey C. Daniels and James E. Daniels

1. A new model of leadership

The ultimate test of leadership is the action of the followers:

Do they deliver discretionary behavior?

Do they make sacrifices for the leader's cause?

Do followers tend to reinforce the leader's teachings or correct others?

Do followers set guidelines for their behavior based on what the leader would approve or disapprove?

Judge the greatness of a leader by 1) the magnitude of their impact, 2) the duration of their impact, and 3) the number of their followers

Leadership requires no hierarchical position. The durability of the leader's vision is dependent on the quality of management

2. The source of power

Those above us give us authority and responsibility, not power. The ability to hire or fire is authority, not power. Power always comes from the followers, e.g., politicians require supporters to succeed.

The leader's vision must make intangible and uncertain outcomes more concrete and pressing, e.g., Kennedy's man on the moon by the end of the decade. Effective leaders must first learn what matters to their followers, then say those things their followers want to say.

The single most important leadership function is to create a focus for the group's behavior; "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18). Leaders increase reinforcers (positive incentives) for follower behavior that is mission critical, clearly, overtly, and consistently

Idiosyncratic or variable management is the biggest single contributor to variability or failure in organizational output

3. Above and beyond: discretionary leadership

"Discretionary behavior" is behavior which a person could do, but would not be punished if they failed to do.

Discretionary behavior is the product of positive reinforcement, never negative reinforcement, e.g., Shamu jumps over a hurdle at Sea World because he wants some fish. Leaders must focus on the reinforcement systems, which becomes more difficult the more layers of management are added, since managers necessarily filter what they pass on.

Leaders must give as many people as possible a cause they can believe in, that transcends their financial involvement, and inspires them to sacrifice for the cause.

Wise leaders ensure sacrifices are noticed and appreciated; if taken for granted they will soon disappear.

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Focus on the consequences of the behavior rather than the results, and give people a way to personalize and relate to the sacrifice.

4. Loyalty: it's not about the leader

"Loyalty" here means the tenacious adherence to the disciplines and practices advanced by the leader in pursuit of the goals and objectives of the organization.

If employees follow the leader, whether present or absent, and encourage others to adhere to practices and codes of conduct put forth by the leader, the organization has reached an ideal state. Loyalty is not about the leader, it's about the cause and the leader's vision and values.

If employees are indifferent to the future of the organization (perhaps because they will not always be there) there is no loyalty or willingness to protect the organization, e.g., failure to identify and train a successor.

Build loyalty by pairing a thing with positive attributes with another thing of little or neutral worth; the pair has value, e.g., a friend introduces someone and the new person takes on additional importance. The leader uses personal influence to spur a follower to action but then follows through in some concrete way to demonstrate the actions are valued. By contrast, the default approach to follower behavior is to do nothing when the behavior is what we want, and to criticize when it fails to meet expectations. In that fashion the leader is paired with punishment rather than something desired.

Effective leaders call attention to desired behavior and links the behaviors to the benefit they bring to the organization. Celebrate the ordinary, not just the extraordinary.

When you find ineffective practices, look first to the system and the process. Next, seek input on how the leader's behavior impacts the followers. You receive what you reinforce, so analyze unacceptable behavior from the perspective of the followers.

Disloyalty is not what leaders should fear most; indifference and apathy are.

Focusing only on results will produce behavior that erodes the organization over time, e.g., Wells Fargo's opening of unrequested accounts

5. Leaders and Managers: it takes both

Leaders fill different functions than managers. Leaders energize the maximum number of performers to pursue the vision in the most effective way. Managers coordinate people, process, and systems, and ensure reinforcers are delivered for desired behavior when it occurs. "Give me enough ribbon and I will conquer the world." (Napoleon)

Learning to lead is a function of deliberate practice. You refine your techniques by observing the followers' responses.

Leadership focuses on change; management on stability

Leadership focuses on the external environment; management focuses on internal activities

Leadership is concerned with "effectiveness," doing the right thing; management is concerned with "efficiency," doing things right and well.

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Leadership looks forward; management looks at today and yesterday.

Leaders invest in creating reinforcing systems; managers focus on delivering reinforcers for desired behaviors

6. It's all about the behavior

Leadership is all about behavior. There are only two kinds of behavior in an organization: behavior of the leader and behavior of the followers.

The average organization emphasizes behavior it does not want, rather than what it does. This is inefficient as it draws the focus away from the behavior that really matters.

You don't lead by results; you lead to results; and only behavior will get you there. Guidance must be specific and tied to behavior; how else will the behavior be corrected?

7. An introduction to leadership measurement

If you have correctly specified a behavior, you should be able to count it.

The best use of measurement is to provide feedback to individuals and the opportunity for improvement. The most significant reasons a leaders should measure leadership have to do with the leader's own personal development. The second reason is to separate apparent effect from actual effect.

Do not confuse behavior and personality. Personalities (demeanor and approach) typically do not change. Behaviors can be changed every day.

The primary way to change others' behavior so that they become loyal and productive followers is to change one's own behavior first. Leadership is fundamentally a self-management task.

8. Measuring a leaders' accomplishments

In business, a leader's impact is measured in three dimensions:

- 1) Did they grow the enterprise?
- 2) Did their enterprise achieve some level of prominence?
- 3) Did the leader leave a positive legacy?

The best predictors of leadership are found in the behavior of the followers.

- 1) How do the followers respond to the leader's direction?
- 2) How focused are the followers on the leader's goals?
- 3) How do the followers relate to each other?
- 4) How do the followers react to the leader?