

MANAGERS AND LEADERS: ARE THEY THE SAME?

10 myths and truths about what it means to lead.

Leadership development trainer Lisa Marshall says that our business schools are not teaching young people the critical skills necessary to become tomorrow's mature leaders. Instead, they are churning out competent managers. What are the distinctions between mature leadership and management?

MYTH A leader has created an ideal work environment when workers view it as a pleasant place to go each day, put in an honest day's work, and leave behind each evening to go home and live their lives.

TRUTH Work should be a place where employees' hearts get used and nourished, so that they have plenty to give when they get home. A mature leader creates opportunities at work for people to feel passionate about what they are doing and to experience themselves as full of potential and fully present on the job.

MYTH A business leader's most worthy objective should be to "do good" for the client or customer.

TRUTH While there are plenty of shining examples of managers who have achieved great business success by focusing on customer satisfaction, a mature leader asks a much larger question: What is the right thing to do ethically and morally, for the good of the team, the division, the organization, the community, and the planet?

MYTH Leading an organization is, ultimately, a solitary pursuit, like it or not.

TRUTH Mature leadership is a generous and collaborative pursuit, as you allow each person along your leader's journey to take part in a great story, a story that you and they have helped to create and feel committed to.

MYTH Leaders have a clear mission, purpose, and set of goals for the business.

TRUTH Competent managers are great at knowing what they want and how to get there. Leaders, on the other hand, sense possibility. A leader is someone who thinks for, listens for, and evokes action on behalf of a compelling future.

MYTH A true leader—one who is dynamic, charismatic, and dominant—is irreplaceable. When he or she leaves, it's likely that the organization will fall apart.

TRUTH A mature leader always has a healthy leadership pipeline because the people around her feel and are competent, capable, and committed. The organization is not dependent on one specific person for its survival.



- MYTH** Making decisions based on majority opinion is an excellent way to bring people into the process and create a sense of unity and alignment.
- TRUTH** Doing what is politically correct is a management skill, not a leadership skill. Mature leaders are not afraid to tackle hard issues or make unpopular decisions. They know that's part of their job. Such a leader learns how to help the community and be helped by its opinions in order to come to the *right* decision.
- MYTH** A truly committed leader has personal leadership goals that are the same as the organization's goals.
- TRUTH** When you mature as a leader, you will have a burning vision of success for the organization, as well as the ability to subordinate yourself to that vision. That vision is more important than your personal goals.
- MYTH** Great leaders never admit they make mistakes.
- TRUTH** You have grown out of a management role and into a leadership role when you are able to publicly own your missteps, while continuing to set high behavioral standards. Mature leaders aren't afraid to apologize. And they keep the organization moving forward at the same time.
- MYTH** Leadership is about performance and the ability to consistently do things well.
- TRUTH** Mature leaders don't shy away from activities where practice and the risk of making mistakes will be necessary in order to develop mastery. Nor do they prevent others from making mistakes, as long as people learn from their errors.
- MYTH** A great leader values competence.
- TRUTH** Competence is what managers strive for. A mature leader values the kinds of effort that produce continual learning (as well as *increased* levels of competence).

