

What is Leadership?

7 Questions Every Effective Business Executive Should Ask

By Ruth Schwartz



People don't want to be managed. They want to be led by someone who has a clear and compelling vision, the power to communicate the vision, and the ability to rally people behind the vision. While we can tell the difference between management and leadership when we see it, the truth is, that most of us don't know how to make the shift from manager to leader within ourselves. It is possible to become an effective leader—asking the right questions is a good place to start.

- 1. What is the difference between a leader and a manager?** Managers focus on work flow, measured results, performance evaluations, problem solving, decision making, meeting planning, training, hiring, firing, reporting, efficiencies, organization, resource procurement, and similar issues. Leaders are about inspiration, motivation, coaching, and resource sharing. They are visionary, principled, information gatherers, communicators, forecasters, and strategists.
- 2. What are the traits common to good leaders?** Leaders have a driving passion to realize their vision. Leaders are egoless. Leaders build and maintain relationships of trust. Leaders unleash the motivation and commitment of their followers. Leaders are social and organizational designers. Leaders act from positive beliefs about people and situations.
- 3. What are the roles of an effective leader?** Given the situation, good leaders perform a variety of roles. They can be tradesman, managers, designers, visionaries, and coaches. When a team is led well, the tradesman and manager roles are played by team members. In fact, good leadership is the ability to leave the technical work and the management of it exclusively to the team and develop skills that allow everyone to grow.

4. **What did organizational guru Edward Deming mean when he said that leaders should work *on* systems, not *in* systems?** Leaders add the most value when they are working on improving the team and not just doing day-to-day work, solving all the problems, handling crises, and managing relationships.
5. **What is the greatest value leaders can add?** To focus more on the team than on the work. To make other people successful.
6. **When it comes to leadership, what does it mean to “get the big picture”?** To “get the big picture” suggests that one is observing from the outside rather than being caught up in the bustle of the team.
7. **What can a leader do to be in the action, but also “get the big picture”?** Involve others in solving a problem rather than doing it yourself, explore a problem rather than solve a daily crisis, supply needed resources that serve the team, and remain aware of the impact of your actions on the atmosphere of the group.

Ruth Schwartz started Mordam Records in 1983. By the time Nirvana hit the pop charts and Green Day went platinum, Schwartz was running a ten million-dollar company. In 2012 Schwartz chronicles her success in *The Key to the Golden Handcuffs – Stop Being a Slave to Your Business*. Published by Outskirts Press, and based on Schwartz’ business experience, the book gives entrepreneurs and business executives insight into shifts that can be made to create a transparent, open-book company. Today, Schwartz is an internationally certified business coach, motivational speaker, and the facilitator of business peer advisory boards. She owns High Performance Advocates, a management development and marketing company. Contact Ruth through www.highperformanceadvocates.com or by calling 530-288-0180.