



# Information Overload

Issue 15, November 2003

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## Welcome:

In this month's issue we will be asking the question – Are you a Manager or a Leader? Can you be both an effective manager and a leader at the same time? Or is it a case of “never the twain shall meet?” We will be looking at the issues surrounding this very interesting topic.

As always, if you would like to see us cover any other topics, we would love to hear from you. Just send an e-mail to [training@iea.com.au](mailto:training@iea.com.au). We hope you enjoy reading.

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## In this Issue we will be looking at:

- What Makes for Poor Management Style?
- Are you a Manager or a Leader?
- What Makes for Effective Leadership?
- A Thought to Ponder

## What Makes For Poor Management Style?

According to a study conducted by organisational development company Human Synergetics, the primary thinking and behavioural style of managers in most cases is avoidance. When unable to “avoid” they then become aggressive – finding fault, seeking to control and competing against others.

Other key findings include:

- Poor work culture has a direct link to the bosses thinking and behaviour;
- Culture cannot change without changing leadership thinking and behaviour;
- Managers with constructive behaviour styles are likely to be less stressed, have better health and are more satisfied with their work, family and relationships;

- Most organisations measure performance the wrong way (share price is not an effective measure);
- Leaders with a short-term focus are most likely to have an aggressive nature;
- In most cases, competitiveness blinds an organisation from seeing many of its long-term systemic problems;
- Stress comes from the thinking styles of individuals, which translate into behaviour;
- Effective leaders are focused on both people and task;
- The key to sustained cultural change is through building constructive management styles

The study, “*Leading high performance cultures: measuring leadership style through the life styles inventory*”, was based on data collected from 28,000 survey respondents over a 7 year period.

*Taken from “Confidence crisis for Australian Managers” Human Resources, September 2002 p1.*

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## Are you a Manager or Leader?

The annual leadership index says that there is still a short-term mentality among many managers that can and does impact on Australian organisations to compete globally and survive long-term. The survey looked at 300 Australian and New Zealand managers and it's key findings were:

- Creating and following through on change within an organization is a key theme;
- Associated with this is being flexible enough to respond to external change and new ideas, and being entrepreneurial enough to exploit future opportunities;
- There's a clear gap between how managers perceive their ideal leaders and how they apply those criteria to themselves;
- The capacity to relate well to people is seen as critical to leadership. Being able to listen, have empathy, be supportive and build positive relationships reinforce that emphasis;
- There are clear differences in the way male and female managers perceive and prioritise workplace challenges;
- Baby-boomers are much more focussed than other age groups on people and relationship issues such as building networks, working with people and achieving work/life balance. Younger managers are concerned with strategy, priorities and achieving outcomes.

The question is this – is short-term thinking being demanded or rewarded by “boards” leaving managers little choice but to toe the company line?

And what of the people who report to them? If short-term thinking is potentially damaging, then change for change sake can be devastating to those people who have to work under the constant turmoil of re-structures, change-management, down-sizing, right-sizing, flatter management

structures (so the managers who are still with an organisation have more people reporting to them), with everyone in a constant state of flux and unable to settle down and get on with the business of business.

One of the best ways to test this theory is to find out what your level of staff turnover is like. If your turnover rate is high, then chances are your short-term planning is causing you more problems than it is solving, there will be little or no staff loyalty if they perceive that the only certainty within the organisation is change and more change. Organisations who suffer this rate of staff turnover will find their organisations constantly on the look out for new people, shuffling those people who are left, trying to re-train staff and train new members of staff whilst struggling to complete their day to day tasks. Is it any wonder then, that short-term planning seems to be the best and only solution to this kind of problem?

Of course – at the other end of the spectrum are those organisations with the with the mentality of “if it's not broken, don't fix it” style of management, where their long term planning is rather like their short-term planning “we've always done it this way” people are comfortable with this lack of change, they are entrenched in their comfort zones, and little or nothing is going to shake them loose.

In reality of course, both styles of management are damaging. Change for change sake can see organisations hit the self-destruct knee-jerk button, whilst organisations who don't change at all will slowly wither and die.

It should make sense to say that everyone would benefit if your short-term planning is based around an organisations long-term goals.

*Taken from “Managers flunk leadership tests,” Human Resources, May 2002 p6*

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## What Makes for Effective Leadership?

Leigh Clapham, senior vice president of MasterCard Australasia, says that leaders must have a team perspective “rather than just being seen to be the figurehead of a business.” *Human Capital, September 2003, P27*

It is said that to be an effective leader you need to possess the following characteristics:

- Adaptability, flexibility and responsiveness to change;
- Tolerance for ambiguity and the ability to make decisions based on imperfect information;
- Comfort with (perceived) failure;
- Passionate and inspirational with high energy levels;

- Creative and innovative;
- Values driven and trustworthy;
- Absolute integrity;
- Achieving results through relationships, listening, facilitating and coaching;
- Obsessed with customer satisfaction and service;
- Intolerant of mediocrity;
- Able to balance short-term needs with long-term perspective;
- More concerned with legacy than celebrity.

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### A Thought to Ponder:

“Managers help people see themselves as they are; Leaders help people to see themselves better than they are.”

**Jim Rohn**

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Your comments and suggestions on the subject of this newsletter are most welcome. Or if you would like to see other issues covered in future editions, please email [training@iea.com.au](mailto:training@iea.com.au)

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