

Supervision, administration, and control are typical manifestations of the management process. Leadership is not even close to these processes, for it is a different process with a distinct focus. Shortly we will discuss it detail but for now let this statement alone suffice.

In the shortest possible terms, management is mobilizing and utilizing resources efficiently and effectively. Be it material, human or market equity. Typical management process involves planning and mobilizing, organizing, directing, or supervising and controlling. Factors that contribute to the success of management include environment, strategies and policies, systems, and technology and last but not the least behaviors. The management process is designed in layers. Meaning, management responsibilities are split and distributed along the scalar chain (Hierarchy). As a person becomes senior his management function becomes complex and abstract and his authority is proportionately increased.

While many people consider leadership as a brand name for management, in fact it is a process on a different tangent. In an organization, both management and leadership processes must co-exist. Let us describe what leadership is meant and what it encompasses that makes it different from management. Conventionally, leadership was a trait. Then people argued it is a behavioral skill. Later, focus was shifted to the process of leadership. Instead of developing further on the behavioral and process aspects of leadership now the focus in leadership has turned into soft skills and poetic quotes. Is this progress or displacement?

Leadership is meant to navigate the organization's values, vision, and mission. In doing so, it must respond to the contours of morality, rationality, equality, and justice. In short, leadership process sets the premise for the management process to exist. Nevertheless, ironically some organizations are managed without the existence of leadership premise. Consequently, such organizations are bound to be amoral and less sustainable.

Having said, leadership is a process that operates at the core of an organization. Put it differently, at the highest level of the hierarchy. Leaders are the ones who set organizational values (morals), define its vision, and set its directions (mission). Subsequently, leaders' role is to cascade and promote organizational values and vision across the organization, ensure that management plans and processes are in line with the organization's values, vision, and mission, and to monitor the organization's external and internal performance in the context of its values and vision.

To further elaborate leadership processes let us draw insight from the work of a renowned management author Henry Mintzberg. In 1973 he developed this theory initially referred to as "managerial roles" to provide a systematic approach to the role of the manager within an organization. However, in fact it deals with typical leadership roles, hence should be referred to as "Leadership Roles."

According to his typology, leadership roles fall into three basic categories:

- a) **Interpersonal Roles** - This category includes the roles which concern interactions with people working inside and outside the organization. Basically, the majority of leaders' time is spent on interpersonal communication through which things get done. Roles in this category are figurehead, leader, and liaison.
- b) **Informational Roles** - The informational category involves creating, receiving, or sharing information with coworkers. The leader collects information from sources both inside and outside the organization, processes it, and delivers it to those who need it. Roles in this category are monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson.

- c) **Decisional roles** - Interpersonal roles are about dealing with people, and informational ones are about dealing with knowledge. Decisional roles are about action. By communicating with people and using information, leaders make decisions that lead the organization to its goals. The roles in this category are entrepreneur, disturbance-handler, resource-allocator, and negotiator.



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It is very much evident that leadership process typically indicates that it is a function of people who are at the core of an organization. While the management process must aim to implement values and vision in the organization. Note that Mintzberg's typology has quite a few common processes with that of managers. However, the perspective and locus are entirely different. Leaders act from holistic perspective looking at a bigger picture, while managers act on executive level, dealing with prevention and control of operating issues.

It is imperative that organization strategies and policies must reflect the organization values and vision. The function of aligning policies and strategies should be the responsibility of senior managers, while the middle managers and junior executives should religiously focus on implementing the same in verbatim. Such a system ensures true discipline within an organization. However, it is observed that everyone management group – senior managers, middle managers and even executives – get involved in the policy decisions. In such a scenario, we also see that even senior managers get themselves involved in micromanagement. Consequently, we see that chaos comes up and the required diversity of roles across the tiers vanishes. Besides, a lot of intra politics and competition pop-up, whereby juniors are seen by-passing their immediate supervisors and what not. In short, organizational discipline is completely lost.

Displacement of Focus in Human Resources Development

Paradoxically, leadership has become a buzz word. Organizations are aiming to develop leadership across their echelons, disregarding the required process of leadership and its locus. Consequently, every training, irrespective of its contents, is leadership training and every development initiative is a leadership development. Paradoxically, with all the due respect for the trainers some are too young to have gained the real-life exposure of factual leadership roles, yet they brand themselves as **Leadership-coach**. It seems similar to what we do by renaming a Sales Manager as Marketing Manager or Accounting Manager as Finance Manager, etc. without changing their function.

Disclaimer: I have no bias towards any person. The only reason I have done this critical analysis is to reflect upon the dilemma which we as a fraternity are facing in the sector and to initiate needed corrections.

About the Author: The writer holds a professional qualification in Banking and Finance. He is a practicing Human Resources and Organizational Development Professional, having more than three decades of hands-on experience in his field. He has authored books and publishes extensively.