

LEADERSHIP

It used to be normal in management textbooks to list the qualities of a leader. However, this approach has now fallen into disfavour. It has become very clear that such a list of virtues does not describe the characteristics of any one man. Yet, we all think of many leaders whom we admire, from national leaders to those which have been associated with in our work.

A more useful approach to the study of leadership is to ask the question, "What does a leader do?" In other words, to study leadership in the terms of performance as opposed to personal attributes and qualities.

A good leader does two main things:

- ❑ He keeps the needs of his staff constantly in mind, and develops a good working relationship with them.
- ❑ He organises and defines his relationship with staff in such a way that a pattern of organisation and communication is developed which gets the job done efficiently and effectively.

To carry this further, a good manager and leader must be able to initiate ideas, carry them out, and to inspire his staff with him by inspiring enthusiasm and, above all, remain considerate.

There is, however, one thing which is certain. Leadership is of the most importance in any business.

Unfortunately this is not a subject which can be learned from any textbook.

Many books have been written on the subject, which, by themselves, do not help men or women to become leaders. What management should do is to create conditions under which potential leadership qualities can develop and flourish.

There is no one pre-determined correct way for a person to act as a leader. The best leaders are those who can adapt their style to suit the situation in which they find themselves.

Every situation which faces a manager is different and the sound leader is able to adapt in order to suit the particular situation.

***THE MARK OF WORTH OF A LEADER, IS THAT WHATEVER STYLE HE USES, HE IS
ABLE TO CARRY HIS STAFF ALONG WITH HIM.***

Rosemary Steart, in her book "The Reality of Management" gives the factors which should be taken into account in order to determine the best way for managers to behave in given situations. There are three sets of factors which should be considered:

- The personal characteristics of the manager himself - his own value systems, his confidence in his staff, and his own leadership inclinations.
- The characteristics of his subordinates - their readiness to assume responsibility for decision making, their preferences for direction or participation, how they readily understand the business objectives, and their experience.
- The nature of the situation - what type of organisation is it? what is the nature of the problem and the time available for making decisions?

All Rights Reserved © [Arab British Academy for Higher Education](http://www.abahe.co.uk)