

August 2005, Lead People ... Manage Things

Not every manager becomes a leader and not every person who makes the decision to be a leader needs to become a manager. According to Brian Ward, author of *Lead People ... Manage Things*, this statement confuses many people in management positions, but makes perfect sense to every leader he knows.

Ward puts forth the notion that leadership is a decision, not a position. Leaders provide an inspiring focus that attracts followers. Gandhi, Kennedy, Mandela are examples of leaders who attracted a great following. In the business world, one can point to Walton, Welch and Disney as leaders who knew what they wanted to create and attracted followers because they offered a vision. They believed in what they wanted to achieve.

The author points out that being appointed into a management position does not qualify someone as a leader. Having a big idea and attracting followers to it most certainly will. If you want to be a leader, start by asking yourself what it is you want to create and achieve.

Sam Walton knew that he wanted to create an organization that would be the #1 discounter in America. Jack Welch wanted GE to be #1 or #2 in each business that they operated in. Walt Disney just wanted to make people happy. With these stated goals, three characteristics emerge. The goals are simple, challenging and have a meaningful end result. These leaders avoided being too precise because they wanted to give themselves and their followers, plenty of room for creativity to figure out how they would get there.

Becoming a leader takes curiosity, courage, constancy and confidence. Ward believes there are seven points to consider on the way to becoming a true leader and not just a manager.

1. Know yourself and what it is that you want to create.
2. Make it meaningful and challenging
3. State it in simple terms.
4. State it as a measurable outcome.
5. Ask yourself if it will get you up in the morning?
6. Ask yourself if it will sometimes keep you up at night?
7. Announce it to the world and believe in it implicitly and unquestionably.