

Introduction This paper considers two articles about what managers do. First, we look at a work by Mintzberg titled, “The Manager’s Job: Folklore and Fact”. That piece services as a backdrop to consider some present day myths about managers. Second, we look at a work by Kotter titled, “What Leaders Really Do”. I then offer my view on the difference between Leadership and Management and explain how these concepts differ yet are closely related. The goal is to reflect on key concepts considered in the study of management and leadership.

How did Mintzberg’s original work define help us understand what a manager does? In 1975, Mintzberg offered a new definition of management in his Harvard Business Review article titled, “The Manager’s Job: Folklore and Fact.” Prior to his work, then general consensus was that managers plan, organize, coordinate and control. Mintzberg’s definition was much broader and included activities like developing relationships, negotiating agreements, motivating subordinates, resolving conflicts, disseminating information and making decisions under uncertainty. In this article, Mintzberg challenged the then current view of what a manager did. His observations about what CEO’s and other managers actually did showed that they didn’t just plan, organize, coordinate and control. He showed that managers often worked in unsystematic ways, performed regular duties, considered details, not just summaries of information, and often relied on judgment and intuition.

How was Mintzberg’s argument disruptive? How did he resolve his point of view? What does this show us about how The construct of Mintzberg’s argument served to debunk prior thought that the only thing a manager did was plan, organize, coordinate and control. His approach did not build up a new theory. It simply broke down an old one. This type of contribution disrupts the status quo and paves the way for new understanding to emerge. In terms of pure reasoning, Mintzberg’s argument proved that managers did not always work from a plan, they weren’t always organized, they did more than coordinate other people’s work and they weren’t always working from a position of control. Using this reasoning, he showed an inconsistency which required us to come to a new conclusion. His “myth-busting” logic forced us to adopt a new view that didn’t just follow logically from what we previously thought. For example, Mintzberg retrospectively shifts us to adopt a new theory. He sees “another face of management” which doesn’t necessarily follow by pure reason from his prior work. His new

knowledge grows? explanation includes two faces of management: “the cerebral face operates with the words and numbers of rationality; the insightful face is rooted in the images and feel of a manager’s integrity.” This progression of thought shows how, over time, knowledge builds upon itself, responding to prior thoughts. The response can be continuous, following as a smooth logical progression. Or, it can be discontinuous, coming from insight, as was the case in Mintzberg’s eventual conclusion.

What are some current day myths about managers? According to the Visual Thesaurus (visualthesaurus.com), a myth is a traditional story accepted as history which serves to explain an accepted view of people. Today, there remains to be ideas about managers which may be myths. The idea that there is a glass ceiling for women in management may be a myth. While statistics, like those reported on page 305 in the Northouse text on Leadership, show that the leadership gap between men and women is still significant, examples like Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, Oprah Winfrey, Carlie Fiorina and many others show that the story of the glass ceiling is now a myth. The idea that managers are either focused on details or focused on the big picture may also be a myth. Steve Jobs was a great example of one person with strong abilities in both these dimensions. Also we have many examples of CEO’s who are removed to from office, not because they didn’t see the bid picture, but because they failed to attend to the details. Finally, as our awareness of leadership skills grows and our ability to teach Leadership skills improves, we are disproving the myth that leaders are born, not made. New techniques like the Knowledge Cards exercise we are doing in this course are helping people improve their leadership competencies.

How did Kotter define management and leadership? In 1998, John Kotter’s article in the Harvard Business Review titled, “What Leaders Really Do,” explained the concept of Leadership as something different from Management. One was not better than the other. Nor were they a replacement for each other. Kotter defined Leadership and Management as two distinctive and complementary systems of action, each with its own function and characteristic activities. The systems were fundamentally different yet overlapping. They overlapped in that each system of action involved deciding what needs to be done, creating networks of people and relationships that accomplished goals, and ensuring that people actually did the job, but the two

systems accomplish these tasks in different ways. According to Kotter's view, Management was about planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving; Leadership was about setting direction and aligning. His work developed the perspective that Management is about coping with complexity while Leadership is about coping with change. Further, Kotter pointed out that different people may have varying levels of ability in these differing dimensions. He introduced the concept of a "leader-manager" to describe a person in business who utilizes a combination of these forces to accomplish their job.

*What are my
views on the
concepts of
Leadership
and
Management?*

I, too, see the concept of Leadership as distinct from but overlapping with the concept of Management. However, I see Leadership as a system of influence that affects people and Management as the system of influence that affects things, namely the "factors of production". The factors of production include non-human inputs like raw materials, land and machinery as well as labor, "human capital" and entrepreneurship. Here in lies the overlap between these concepts in my view. Both systems of influence affect people, but each in different ways. In the Management system people are treated like a resource to be allocated to the production of goods and services for a profit. In the Leadership system the influence includes the complex factors we have been studying in the Northouse text on Leadership. The dynamics between leaders and followers come into play along with other influences. The traits and behaviors of the people along with their behaviors and beliefs, processes, preferences and goals all affect the way the Leadership system of influence works.

Conclusion

This paper reflects on two key insights gained from this studying these reading. First, it looks at the how accepted notions change over time, examining both the role of logic and the role of insight. Used together, these two mechanisms allow us to dismiss prior assumptions and adopt new beliefs. It shows how the "myth-busting" approach can help us evolve current thinking about management. Second it looks at how Leadership can be seen as a different but related concept to Management, exploring alternative definitions but acknowledging there is a distinction between these two concepts.

References

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Visual Thesaurus, www.visualthesaurus.com