



A running feud is going on in the military services today. But because it is not being waged on the usual battlefield, some infantrymen may not be aware of it. It is the continuing, and sometimes strident, debate between management advocates and leadership advocates. A truly strenuous effort is being made to convince everyone that managers and leaders really are different in significant ways — that management and leadership are, in fact, two distinct functions.

The background for the present struggle for "supremacy" between the concepts of management and leadership dates from World War II when both the scale of military operations and the number of complex weapon and communication systems increased dramatically. Back then, specialists, technicians, and

analysts of all types flocked to Washington in great numbers to help manage the effort. In a relatively short time, they became permanent fixtures. Many, of course, were integrated into the armed forces, and the era of the technologist began with a bang.

Then — just when we thought we had eradicated villainy on an international scale — the Cold War started and it soon became apparent that we could match the growing Soviet military forces only by striving for technological superiority, not by depending on sheer numbers of troops. As a consequence, we placed renewed emphasis on ever newer, better, and more sophisticated weapons and weapon systems. Together with his brother, the technocrat, the technologist became the new hero.

Meanwhile, the leader of grunts was reduced to near

plebian status and was made almost an object of ridicule, certainly of condescension. The new elite, ushered in as the famous "whiz kids," solidified its position with tremendous vigor and dash. This elite had little interest in the supervisors of foxhole-digging or of up-the-hill chargers. The junior leaders were not the only ones relegated to second-class status; their seniors also were shouldered aside. Almost before we knew it, we were inundated by operations researchers and system analysts, and programmers, and budgeters, all working feverishly under the banner of cost effectiveness.

Little wonder, then, that attention was so concentrated on the virtue — nay, the necessity — of the corporate manager in this new world environment where obeisance was made daily before the altar of sophistication. Now and henceforth, it was proclaimed, decisions were to be made on the basis of engineering and economic variables. The human factor was much too uncertain and unstable to use as a variable in the organizational effectiveness equation. Thus, as the appeal of the cold, logical approach proved irresistible, emphasis shifted from the largely unmeasurable human being to the quantifiable object. Even today, this is the primary basis for allocating the resources with which to churn out tanks, guns, ships, aircraft, missiles, and all the rest of the



military hardware and accoutrements that the Army needs.

Accordingly, no modern, top level *manager* can now afford to shun the rational, numbers-crunching approach to decision-making. Consequently, an ambitious officer who aspires to promotion and to important positions in such an environment cannot help being strongly influenced by this significant and unmistakable trend to be a *manager*, a truly modern, top level manager.

## VITAL SKILLS

Yet it is not the top level manager who slogs in the cold, muddy fields, urging his men forward through the trauma of battle while the world explodes in smoke and flame. It is not the programmer, the systems analyst, or the comptroller who leads others to seize and hold critical terrain. Is there really any serious argument that, ultimately, someone on the ground still has to perform these vital functions? Should we not, therefore, spend more thought and effort on developing the skills of that man?

But what do we develop him into? A manager or leader? More to the point: What's the difference?

Those who claim that a manager is not a leader and a leader is not a manager buttress their arguments with the following:

- Managers and leaders differ in their motivation, in their personal history, and in how they think and act.
- Managers and leaders have different functions: Management is oriented to the individual; leadership is interested chiefly in the group — the collective.
- Management is coldly rational, quantitative, stable; leadership is volatile, chaotic, emotional, even unstable.
- Large organizations, historically, tend to develop managers, not leaders. If a leader emerges, it is by chance.

So what does this argument have to do with the military services? Well, the Army, for example, is a large organization; therefore, to some people, what the Army develops is managers. Any leaders it may have will develop only occasionally and quite unintentionally.

Personally, I think the entire debate is a specious, pettifogging one, designed particularly so that academics can engage in publishing presumably learned pieces to prolong the controversy (and add to their publication credits toward promotion). Unfortunately, though, this absurdity is no longer confined to academia; the practice has also invaded the military services. Now military officers can play this game, too, presumably forever.

## DEFINITION

In the articles that I have read on the controversy, there is no clear-cut definition of terms that positively differentiates the concept of leadership from the concept of management. In fact, in most of these articles leadership



and management are frequently described in terms of each other.

So let's be straightforward about it. Anyone who is in charge of someone else is a leader and is responsible for using all of the resources in his control in the most effective manner. Anyone who is *not* in control of someone else is clearly not a leader, but he could be a manager of resources.

We all can agree that the most important resource is people but that other resources are also needed to get the job done: money, of course, and equipment, tools, facilities, inventory, and the like. The neglect of one or the other of these resources usually spells trouble. Of course, we do not say that we lead inventory, or equipment, but we damn well better manage these resources properly. If we do not, the combat mission may be impaired or even jeopardized.

To utilize these "things," these inanimate objects, effectively, we need to develop procedures, methods, systems, and mechanisms of one sort or another, including sophisticated computers and computer networks for communicating and processing data as well as for controlling and directing operations. If we take these means away from a leader because they carry the taint of

the unheroic word "manager," have we not cut him in half, emasculated him?

A leader is clearly responsible for people and things, and in the process he must inspire his followers and create methods that are suited to his objectives. He must, in other words, accomplish his varied administrative tasks properly and concurrently (even if he is really excited only about the inspiring part, and perhaps resigned to the methods part). This is just another way of saying he leads other individuals and manages his other resources at the same time.

I do not contend that all leaders can do all that is required equally well. Most informed observers, for example, would agree that General George S. Patton was a superb combat leader but a poor logistics manager. And we certainly have managers who are not leaders; the most common example is the staff specialist who is responsible for developing a communications network, or a plan for nuclear defenses, or an intelligence estimate, or the design of new military hardware.

But since any leader functions in an organizational environment of some sort, it is preposterous to claim that a leader does not also perform as a manager. It is even more preposterous to suggest that we need two individuals for every key job, one an astute manager who waits until an administrative task is required and then rushes forward to take the baton from an Audie Murphy or a Terry Allen, who must now wait idly by until the next charge has to be mounted.

So, enough is enough. Let us stop trying to cut this poor man in half, one half labelled *leader* and the other *manager*. The two terms are, for all practical purposes, synonymous. So let us end this absurd debate and do away with the confusion caused by the labels and their false implications. Let us take heed of the marvelous advice of the King in *Alice in Wonderland*, who sagely observed, "If there's no meaning in it, it saves a world of bother, for we needn't have to look for any."

Let us instead get on with the really serious task of developing leaders. First we must identify potential leaders and educate them about the profession of leadership. Then we must place them under mentors who appreciate the importance of developing their latent ability to recognize the proper relationship between the personal example of leadership and the impersonal managerial aspects of leadership. Yes, let us give them to mentors who will test and stress them, and who, ideally, will inspire them to progress to their fullest.



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