



## Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 111

### CREATING THE EXCEPTIONAL WORKPLACE -- BUILDING A "**STRENGTH-BASED**" ORGANIZATION (PART 5)

#### **Managers Are Not Just Leaders-In-Waiting**

We often use the term "leader" when we refer to supervisors, managers, senior executives, etc. and call all of their activities "leadership." However, if we look closely there are differences between the type of things people do when supervising the day to day activities "internal" to the workplace and those actions that deal with the opportunities "external" to the workplace. This series of Flag Voices refers more to the internal workplace activities, rather than external. The following explanation helps define the focus on "management" or "supervision" within the workplace. It is not that either leadership or management is better than the other -- they each have their role in high performing organizations, and all jobs require competencies in both, to varying degrees, depending upon the level in the organization and the specific area of responsibility.

**Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things.**

"Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things." Conventional Wisdom is proud of maxims like this. As mentioned earlier, it uses them to encourage managers to label themselves "leaders." It casts the manager as the dependable plodder, while the leader is the sophisticated executive, scanning the horizon, strategizing. Since most people would rather be a sophisticated executive than a dependable plodder, this advice seems positive and developmental. Great managers will tell you that it isn't--it demeans the manager (supervisor) role but doesn't succeed in doing much else. They will tell you that the difference between a manager and leader is much more profound than most people think, and that the organization which overlooks this difference will suffer for it.

The most important difference between a great manager and a great leader is one of focus. Great managers look inward. They look inside the organization, into each individual, into the differences in style, goals, needs and motivation of each person. These differences are small, subtle, but great managers need to pay attention to them. These subtle differences guide them toward the right way to release each person's unique talents into performance.

Great leaders, by contrast, look outward. They look out at the competition, out at the future, out at alternative routes forward. They focus on broad patterns, finding connections, cracks and then press home their advantage where the resistance is weakest. They must be visionaries, strategic thinkers, activators. When played well, this is, without doubt, a critical role. But it doesn't have much to do with the challenge of turning one individual's talents into performance.

Great managers are not mini-executives waiting for leadership to be thrust upon them. Great leaders are not simply managers who have developed sophistication. The core activities of a manager and a leader are simply different. It is entirely possible for a person to be a brilliant manager and a terrible leader. But it is just as possible for a person to excel as a leader and fail as a manager. And, of course, a few exceptionally talented individuals excel at both.

If organizations confuse the two roles by expecting every manager (supervisor) to be a leader, or if they define "leader" as simply a more advanced form of "manager," then the all-important "Catalyst" role will soon be undervalued, poorly understood and poorly played.

Next: What is the revolutionary insight shared by all great managers?

Regards, FL Ames

Excerpted from: "*First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*"

For more information about the research and book 'First Break All the Rules' please refer to web site <http://www.gallup.com/poll/managing/grtwrkplc.asp>

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