

Nine Tasks of Manager-Leaders - By Denise Franck Aboody & Lamar Hamilton

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Challenging people to achieve more than they thought was possible starts with management. Managers must possess clear self-awareness and self-management before they can influence others effectively.

This presentation was a discussion of the nine tasks of leadership as outlined in the book 'On Leadership' by John W. Gardner. Hamilton presented and explained how the nine tasks can be applied in one's organization, including which tasks should and should not be delegated. Aboody (nee Franck) then facilitated a goal setting session for attendees focusing in on their management practices and development areas for their organization.

You know you're in the hospitality industry when on the opening night of your new restaurant and your building is crammed with well-dressed people...you notice water running from under the bathroom door into the lobby...and you still love your job. Our task as leaders is to pass on this enthusiasm for problem solving and commitment to those who look to us for guidance. Motivating people to achieve more than they think is possible is the task of the manager-leader.

That brings the discussion to the nine tasks of leadership taken from John W. Gardner's book, On Leadership. Our focus is on the key leadership tasks that keep a restaurant or hotel growing and unleashes motivation in the hearts of its people. We will consider the tasks in the context of three focus areas: Management savvy, Cultural Intelligence and Adaptability. Every great manager-leader possesses management savvy, demonstrates strong cultural intelligence and is adaptable to change. The first focus, Management Savvy includes the first three leadership tasks: envisioning goals, managing and renewing.

The first task, envisioning goals, is one of the tasks that should never be delegated. This is the ability to define overarching goals that serve to unify people and focus energies. It's about effectively declaring what's possible for the team to achieve and compelling them to accomplish more than they ever thought possible. Your task as leader is to envision what's possible and rally the troops to get it done.

The task of management deals with visualizing a path to achieving the goals you have set in practical, feasible steps. This task is about being intimate with your work and setting the priorities. It can be delegated, but you as the leader have to remain engaged to ensure the stated priorities and goals are being implemented. So, if your goal is to sell more sandwiches at lunch, and your shift manager comes up with three steps to reach that goal, you have to understand what the three steps are and ensure the activities will result in achieving the goal.

Manager-leaders are responsible for fostering the process of renewal. Renewing has to do with providing new processes and resources. The practices and strategy that got you where you are today may be inadequate for the challenges and opportunities you face tomorrow. For example, create an environment where people can approach you with creative changes to policies or service. You will elevate the group and the business will benefit from process improvements and higher employee morale.

The second focus area, cultural intelligence, covers the next three tasks of the leader: affirming values, achieving workable unity and representing the group. Cultural intelligence grasps the things that are important to the group and institutionalizes them. The manager-leader who seeks cultural intelligence will go to great lengths to understand past successes and failures of the organization while charting the course to future success.

Affirming values requires the manager-leader engage his or her people to create clear values that capture the collective beliefs and hopes of the group. Clarifying values with key outcomes will provide the foundation for decision-making. The manager-leader must affirm those values consistently with everyone. For example, if respectful relationships is a shared value, that means acknowledging every member of a team, regardless of their position in the company. It means greeting the housekeeping staff or the dishwasher as you pass and expecting the same behavior from everyone in the organization.

Conflict is inevitable, so achieving workable unity is critical. When the group is achieving workable unity they are cooperating for collective advancement and the good of the organization. As the manager-leader your task is to find the areas of conflict where people are becoming polarized between two different views or ideas and build a sense of common interests.

Representing the group means you interact with other departments within the company and with vendors on behalf of your group without personal agenda. You represent your group by negotiating on their behalf and defending the integrity of the organization. It's about projecting a good image and being true to your brand.

The third and final focus area is adaptability. This is a non-negotiable area in our business especially. You have to adapt to the ever-changing hospitality industry or you will not survive. The three tasks under this topic include: motivating, explaining and serving as a symbol.

Motivating others is all about tapping into the motives of the individual to serve the purposes of achieving shared goals. Leaders unlock existing motive in the team members and leverage it for the benefit of the whole. For example, revenue growth is more likely to be attained by a manager who is motivated by results or has a high drive for personal financial success.

Explaining what's happening, and why, is the most basic and most profound of the nine leadership tasks. It is simply the ability to define a problem and explain why someone is being asked to do certain things and why that person might face frustration. When there is a lack of explanation or information people will make it up. Manager-leaders find the words to explain situations and how they will impact everyone involved.

Finally, serving as a symbol is another one of the tasks the leader must not delegate. You as a leader symbolize the group's collective identity and continuity and it's your responsibility whether in the media or out in public, to be the symbol of the organization. You represent the group. It's not about you. The most casual observer recognizes that the identity of many great organizations is embodied in a key person or leader. Michael Jordan, for example, was the embodiment of the Chicago Bulls throughout the world and Jack Welch became synonymous with General Electric.

Taking action

Step one: Review the nine tasks and determine which one or two tasks would, if focused on, increase your effectiveness as a manager-leader.

Step two: Describe the current state (what's not happening), and then describe the desired state (what outcome you want).

Step three: Write three measurable actions that you will take to get the results you want.

For manager-leader development or culture development, you can contact Denise and Lamar at info@corevision.us.com

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