

# Leadership vs. management: What's the difference?

In business, there are certain buzz words you hear regularly. Leadership and management are two of those words. While you hear and likely use them often, do you know the difference between the two? To be successful in business, you need both influential leaders and strong managers. But, knowing how the roles and responsibilities differ can significantly impact how your company operates and achieves its goals.

Here is a breakdown of the definition of both leadership and management, along with the differences between leadership vs. management.

## What is leadership?

When you exhibit leadership skills within a company, you help to lead your group toward a common goal or mission by inspiring, motivating, and encouraging others.

A great quote that summarizes leadership is “A boss has a title, a leader has the people.” - Simon Sinek

It's common for leaders to be found in those who don't hold a traditional leadership position because it's based on a skillset, not a title. People will want to follow their leader because they know, like, or trust them.

Some duties of a leader are:

- Having a vision
- Communicating their vision
- Inspiring others to want to take part in the vision
- Challenging others to do their best
- Being goal-oriented
- Leading by example

## What is management?

As a business manager, you control things and people within your company. Managers plan, coordinate, and organize tasks within the business. They ensure that things are operating correctly and following the best processes.

A quote that summarizes management is, “The essence of management is to make knowledge productive.” - Peter Drucker

As a manager, you'll want to focus on metrics, tools, data, analyzing systems, etc. to ensure you're making the best choices. Many managers are seen as leaders, but it's easy to lose focus on leadership when managing the day to day business and long term business operations.

Some duties of a manager are:

- Implementing goals and objectives
- Planning and organizing projects
- Creating solid processes
- Delegating project tasks to others
- Setting deadlines
- Communicating

## 6 primary differences in leadership vs. management

In looking at what leadership and management are, it's easy to see how the terms and expectations can overlap. In an ideal world, leaders would be able to manage, and managers would be able to lead. However, that isn't always the case. Sometimes the focus is skewed heavily to one side or the other, and the balance is lost.

Here are 6 key differences between leaders and managers.

### Goals

- **Leadership:** Most leaders focus on achieving a specific mission. They want to encourage, motivate, and inspire others to reach that goal.
- **Management:** Most managers focus on achieving a set task. They want to see the company move from point A to point B by doing XYZ.

### Actions

- **Leadership:** Most leaders' activities are focused on coaching those around them to encourage them to do better in their position. They work with you to do and be better overall.
- **Management:** Most managers' actions are focused on directing the efforts of others to achieve set goals. They tell you what to do.

### Focus

- **Leadership:** Most leaders focus on the overall purpose, mission, or goal of the organization. They see the big picture and want it to be part of it coming to life.
- **Management:** Most managers focus on completing the task at hand. They have a checklist and want to mark off each task to achieve a set goal.

### Risk Management

- **Leadership:** Most leaders are willing to take risks to achieve their goals. They believe the risk is worth the potential payoff.
- **Management:** Most managers want to control and decrease the present risk. They know and believe that time is money and want to reduce the likelihood that time or money will be wasted.

### Innovation

- **Leadership:** Most leaders are innovative and continuously willing to try new ideas to achieve their goals. They want to hear about and get excited about learning new insights from those around them.
- **Management:** Most managers want to go by the book to reduce risk and get from point A to point B as quickly and efficiently as possible with limited chances of making mistakes that will throw the company off course.

## Inspiration

- **Leadership:** Most leaders want to inspire others to achieve at a high level, even if that involves new, innovative, and creative ideas.
- **Management:** Most managers want to have more control over the actions of those in the company because it helps to keep them on the same page.

## Leadership vs. management: You need both to succeed

No matter the size of your company, your annual revenue, or your industry, you need both leadership and management to achieve the level of success that you desire. Ideally, you'll have leaders that can manage and managers that can lead, but both skillsets should be present amongst decision-makers in the company.

These skills might not always come naturally, or you might find that additional refinement and training is necessary to achieve the desired level across the board.

In knowing the importance of both, you want to do what's necessary to ensure that both leadership and management are present in your company as you strive to achieve your goals.