

Your Leadership Role "A Personal Reflection"
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In 1995 Ed Henderson submitted a monograph for the Master Club Manager program on effective club leaders. In that monograph titled "Lions Among Us" it stated that "successful club management requires a strong general manager, a leader who, in partnership with the Board of Directors, provides vision and direction for a club's future success." The monograph was enlightening, as it focused on the leadership styles of several successful managers.

After some reflection on the issue, I believe leadership has a second part that complements vision and direction. It is about accomplishing agreed-upon goals. True leaders not only have vision, they have the ability to develop consensus, and then rally support from directors, committees, staff and the membership to a successful end.

When I was younger, I believed success was a derivative of having the complete authority to solve problems in areas of responsibility. To me leadership was about problem solving. I was convinced one could not be successful without the authority to act, so often an illusive element of managing a private club.

This belief was derived from a focus on the technical aspects of managerial expertise as the path to success. Technical expertise regarding the many aspects of this unique industry is certainly important. However, management is about much more.

Today I believe true leadership in the end results in progress in any form. Some characteristics of leaders listed in Lions included proactive, agent of change, visionary, high integrity and ability to instill confidence. I am in full agreement with each of the above. As I have matured, I also agree with another quote that goes "If the end result is success it doesn't matter which road you took to get there."

Good leaders in clubs today must be a combination of opposites. They must be passionate about change but adaptable to other points of view. They have to be unafraid to express ideas, yet counseling and facilitating to give them birth. Comfortable in making decisions, but have the ability to compromise on implementation. They must be able to set high standards yet, in most instances, delegate responsibility to evaluate performance against those standards. They must have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and at the same time, be amenable to criticism from their constituency. This can be a difficult road indeed.

Famous industry leaders such as Lee Iacocca and Jack Welch gain recognition for their accomplishments. Great club leaders today are evaluated on the quality of their Clubs in meeting and exceeding expectations. Each organization is different and there is no list of actions that will guarantee success. Leadership is the ability to discern what will work, when, and under what circumstances, and how to best implement change to enhance progress.

As career opportunities expand and competition gets stiffer for that just right job, managers today often get thrown into clubs that have difficult issues to solve. Your

success ratio can be enhanced substantially if you consider a leadership style that promotes progress in any form. Some clubs require extensive technical capability. However, what most clubs really require is sound management - that being the ability to get things done through other people. It is about accomplishment of agreed-upon goals and progress toward positive change.

Whatever your circumstances today, whatever job you're in, reflect on your leadership style. Is it one that promotes progress in any form? Is it a style that can make positive change occur no matter what the environment? Clubs are unique and have special personalities and cultures. A 'progress in any form' approach can enhance your success ratio no matter where you find yourself or what problem you face. That is considered true leadership.