



Chapter 3: Leadership needed to promote innovation and organizational learning. The humble and self- confident boss

Leadership and management must be totally blended and both are needed to promote innovation and organizational learning in hospitality. Leadership must to be in perfect equilibrium with management. There cannot be real teams without the proper managerial leadership. What's meant by a real team is a group of people who do collective work with commitment. It's more than just cooperate and coordinate between departments. Depending on how leadership is applied when managing, a very powerful "energy" will take place and permeate everything. Only those managers that have created such teams know what I am talking about; this kind of energy manifests day-by-day working in many forms, and constantly feeds on itself.

The Hotel General Manager –together with department managers- is the key person to develop high performance teams. He or she will enhance learning, encourage job improvement and challenge people to get innovative solutions to different job problems –when possible.

Not all styles of management are capable of doing so. Indeed, management must come on board with an appropriate leadership-

style. Our Hotel General Manager must be able to escape from his/her Ego, or at least to be able to control it, since the final purpose is to make innovation happening as a social process, in-group. In this context the process of innovating it is seen as a democratized responsibility among workers through constant job improvement. Hotel General Managers, together with middle managers, they support, not just drive, teams and individuals in their daily work. Equally, they will be considered as the main source of energy that ultimately will unleash workers' potential. In this way, we should place our GM at the center of everything, and not only on top of a hierarchy. He or she should be a mirror to everyone exemplifying norms, values and company beliefs. In other words, they have to walk the talk.





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Contrary to this style of management and leadership, that constantly boosts company knowledge, we have the manager who is not secure enough in his or her strengths. His insecure attitude is normally hidden behind an autocratic and authoritarian personality that does not accept critics, or divergent approaches, nor recognizes personal mistakes. Such a manager normally feels more comfortable within a command and control style in working.

We may have also the Super Ego person, or narcissist director, with much selfishness incapable of empowering workers, honestly listening, and of course, not willing to "share" leadership. Linda A. Hill and Kent Lineback pointed it out very clearly in his book *Being a Boss* when they clarified that effective managers don't view authority as a source of personal superiority or primarily as a means of satisfying personal needs. Instead, they considered it a tool for helping others accomplish something worthwhile. In short, they use authority to do useful work, not to serve their own ends.

I do commit with such statement very strongly. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about some bosses I had during my career.

There are also many managers that only understand the concept of management from top-down because they grew and experienced management in that way; they have deep-rooted beliefs. The opposite of an authoritarian manager is the "democratic" leader, apt to be marked by tolerance and by admission of ignorance, by willingness to admit that he doesn't know everything. Edwards Deming wrote long time ago, saying that reason for a kind of sickness in leadership was such a consequence of resisting knowledge and learning; usually directors and managers,

weren't able to question themselves their professional bias. The same is true for pride, which it makes it also difficult for better knowledge, since a very proud director must be acting and pretending that he or she has all responses, together with solutions to all types of problems. Instead of doing intelligent things, he prefers to appear intelligent to everyone. At the end everything is masquerade that undermines manager's credibility. Effective managers know that, within their managerial responsibilities, they must manage themselves too.



The growth of people capacities is a main issue in managerial leadership. Indeed, employee's strengths development must be on the mind of all Managers and Directors. Not doing so, will be mismanage. The greatest humanistic psychologist, Abraham Maslow, saw it when he stated "The good boss or the good leader in most situations must have as a psychological prerequisite the ability to take pleasure in the growth and self-actualization of the people". We should therefore ask ourselves: are we comfortable when ideas or initiatives come from the bottom? Do we feel fulfilled when we see employees growing and improving work constantly? Do we trust in people and believe in human potential as nature, although some people will surely disappoint us in certain moments of our career?

One of the great benefits of coaching is not only that you help others to improve, yet you also grow as person and as a manager.



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Management and leadership must be both sides of the same coin. Both are complex social processes that we have to situate first in its context. There may not be a unique style of management, because a specific situation could define other priorities; we may find a hotel without proper company values, and with "contaminated" employees showing wrong attitudes... Yet our Hotel GM must struggle to make change happening, even though he has to adapt himself to this particular situation. Maybe not having another choice but to apply a more autocratic style. His final goal is focused on a final behavioral change. Then, as soon as possible, he or she will get rid of his provisional carrot and stick method, once the proper values have been instilled.

Management tasks such as controlling, coordinating, budgeting, deeming, evaluating, supervising... are very important too, but not enough if those tasks are coming alone. Leadership is needed too, and appears in other roles and responsibilities such as setting a vision and purpose, and to make this purpose clear to the whole team. Therefore, the most important roles in leading are: making this vision shared by everyone; setting values and being a model for all workers; enhancing people's strengths and making weaknesses irrelevant; developing a sense of community and defining or modeling the company culture; contributing to solve problems and place order to apparent chaotic situations; participating in dialogues, moderating and influencing with his or her ideas; developing the proper atmosphere to make a kind of community energy happening, that will also alienates people toward common objectives.

Day-by-day, issue-by-issue... leadership and management occur also in small things and daily working activities. It's surely not an

easy process being more difficult in practice because managers must face many challenges such as emotional conflicts, since human relationships are fundamentally emotional. Sometimes managers, will have to take unpopular decisions to some members in the interest of the majority; the short-run and long-run are both important in business, and this requires trade-offs... Managers -like good organization behavioral researchers proved in their field of studies - "do one darn thing after another".

In my experience, I have to admit also that improvisation has occurred very frequently. Iganill Holmberg and Mats Tyrstrup from Stockholm School of Economics, in Sweden, pointed out that managerial leadership is an event-driven improvisation. As they say: "The need for everyday leadership emerges constantly since there are always events that require immediate management action. Much leadership is thus about finding the right solutions for the problems of the particular moment and making sure that the most important and urgent problems are solved so that the work may continue". That is why there is a very important part of craft and art in management, which balances today's priorities with tomorrow's vision, and other opposing forces. We thus have to move thoughtfully and systematically from planning, to organizing, to coordinating... to find ourselves improvising! "However, the good manager also needs improvisational skills and stress-coping tools that are not acquired in classrooms or by reading textbooks. These are the skills and tools the analytical and conceptual models cannot provide" –remarked professor Stefan Tengblad.



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Management, above all is neither a science nor a profession, it is a practice. This proposition means that management is first rooted in experience. If management is rooted in practice, certainly our hotel director and middle managers need experience, but managerial skills do not improve beyond a certain point if managers are not flexible enough to adapt themselves to new situations; feeling comfortable within the business and market uncertainties, unexpected events or daily problems. Though, being self-confidence and humble is equally important. It is key since management should have a proper attitude to learn constantly; indeed, learning never ends and it must be considered as a continuous life process.

Do managers need both brain hemispheres?

Scandinavian researchers in management brought to light the "irrational" aspects of management, such a kind of Complexity theory; defining complexity as the transition region between stability and chaos. We should thus consider the importance of other managerial and leadership skills in a more and more complex business and unpredictable scenario. Tengblad summarizes management as a field of practice saying: "that is probably characterized more by stability than chaos; however, managerial stability is not so strong that one can describe it in terms of a static and simple order. The exception is the ordered management system that may exist in highly bureaucratic settings where following rules takes priority over following managerial directions, and where organizations are typically unresponsive to external stimuli. Except in perhaps extremely stable environments".

Are then hospitality environments that

stable? The question is: it depends where you look. For example, in some areas of Spain –as in many others in Asia -there is a hyper-competitive situation, which has commoditized more hotel products and makes it more complex in order to obtain profitability.

Is it necessary to develop both hemispheres when managing, because of this complex situation? As Daniel H. Pink has been telling us. Neurological scientists have confirmed that our brains have two regions, the left and right hemispheres. The left side would be more analytical, linear, where literalness and analysis take place. And the right hemisphere, meanwhile, takes care of context, emotional expression, and synthesis. A perfect balance in management to accomplish order, analysis, and control, together with creativity, chaos, vision and synthesis would be needed. I agree that there is not a perfect manager, not along a "super hero" leader -which has been already demystified by Mintzberg- However a good boss should focus on what has been called the "hard" tasks of management- such as analysis, control, planning a strategy, evaluating, controlling, deeming, discipline...together with the "soft" ones – such as creativity, humanity, passion, vision, empathy, communication...etc.

