

Leader vs manager – which one are you?



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It's imperative for any business owner to have strong management skills but if you want to take your pharmacy and your employees to new heights, developing effective leadership skills is essential.

Despite managers and leaders having common responsibilities, their ways of motivating people differ dramatically, which sets the tone for their vision, their impact on others and most other aspects of their role within the pharmacy.

Managers tend to focus on managing processes, performance and current situations. They are given authority to delegate tasks to subordinates who follow direction in return for a reward (eg. salary, promotion opportunities, increased status etc). Managers get things done, and hence their style can be very operational which thus flows on to the work style of their subordinates. Managers also usually minimise risks and specialise in problem solving which results in focusing on the 'now' rather than 'where to next?'. Leaders don't have subordinates – they have followers who voluntarily choose to adopt the leader's ways. Leaders tend to be non-directive risk takers who inspire and appeal to people through their own character and behaviour rather than telling people what or how to do things. Their charismatic ways appeal to people's heartstrings and emotions, promising benefits that impact on their followers both professionally and personally. Leaders are very people-focused – they know how to create loyalty through taking the blame and giving credit where required.

Differentiating roles

If you are both the pharmacy manager and the proprietor of your pharmacy it can be hard to differentiate when to manage work and when to lead people.

1. Integrity is the core

A leader is assessed on two key factors – what you do (actions) and who you are (character/integrity). If your character/integrity is inconsistent with your actions, you will lose your followers and regaining their respect will be close to impossible.

Managers are more focused on doing things the right way whereas leaders are driven to do the right thing (morally and for the pharmacy) all the time.

2. Actions speak louder than words

Managers manage through delegation – leaders lead by example. It is very important to practise what you preach. Why should you expect others to do what you wouldn't do yourself? When asked by a staff member how to do something, the best approach is to go through the exercise with them, rather than explain to them how it's done.

3. Clear focus with absolute certainty

Renowned leaders over time have not always been loud or overtly persuasive, yet the most recognised leaders have almost always demonstrated a strong sense of certainty. Leaders are very achievement driven but rather than manage workloads/operations they concentrate on enthusing others. This vision needs to be communicated to all staff with quiet certainty.

You need to believe in yourself and your vision before you can expect others to share your sight. Leaders are known to 'think big' – in order to develop this in the rest of your team you need to really be certain about what you stand for and where you see your pharmacy long-term.

4. Be assertive not aggressive

Being assertive is simply presenting what needs to be done in a way that benefits everyone rather than being demanding, rude or disrespectful. It involves being clear about where you want to take your pharmacy and what needs to be done to get you there. This is increasingly effective when coupled with both personal and professional incentives for your followers. Unlike subordinates, your followers will choose to take your lead if they are truly inspired by your actions.

5. Motivate your staff

It is important to motivate your staff with regular praise, rewards and open feedback. Let them know how grateful you are for their contribution, relaying specific times or tasks where they

have been especially helpful. This can be as simple as "Thank you for helping me out with ... I really appreciated your efforts". It is also important to show empathy, demonstrating understanding of their feelings. An example of this may be, "That does sound difficult. What would be of help to you in this situation?". People will respect you if they feel they have been listened to, understood and respected.

6. Create ownership and accountability

Leaders will empower their staff to take accountability of their own work. It is important to assign tasks to the right people who have the right skills, enthusiasm and support to meet shared goals and expectations. Encourage employees to present their progress to you and other team members. You will notice employees becoming more proactive, developing a stronger sense of pride and ownership of their work. People are very willing to contribute when they feel they are part of the bigger picture rather than simply doing something that they have been told to do as part of their job description.

7. Recognise leadership qualities in others

It is a common myth that a leader must be the boss or the owner of the business. Leadership qualities are evident in individuals from all walks of life including your own staff and competitors!

Expect and accept advice or ideas from employees on all levels – it's not always senior management that has the best ideas. Competitors can also inspire you and your team to avoid weaknesses you see in others and match your own strengths to those qualities you admire in others.

8. Don't be afraid to take risks

Without being reckless, effective leaders are never hampered by fear. What is your driving force – the yearning to succeed or the fear of failure?

If you have big dreams for your pharmacy, then expect to face hurdles along the road to success. Aversion to risk taking will hinder your innovation and ability to inspire and lead a team to greater success. **Rp**

