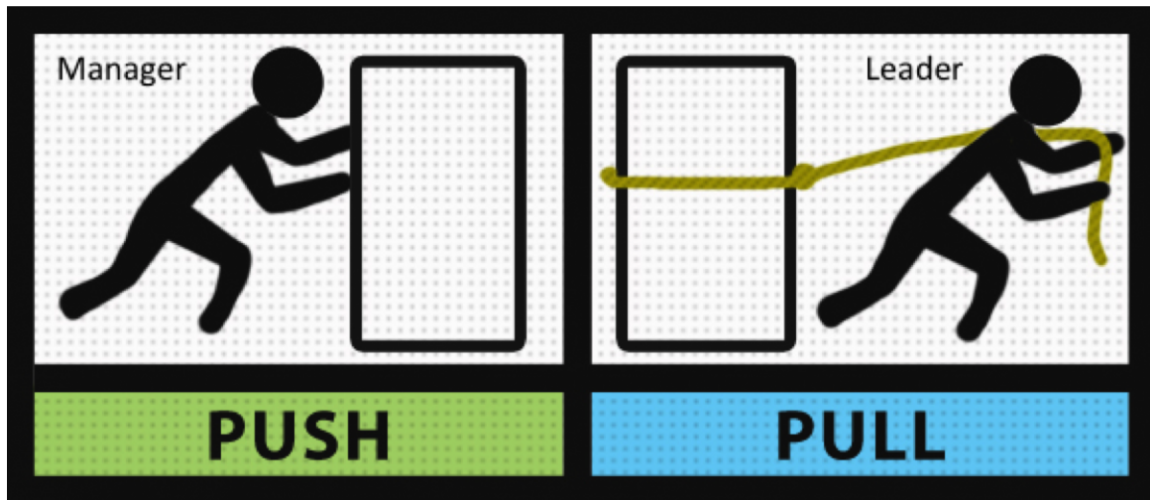


# How Do Managers Become Leaders?



Brian Braudis



Managers are typically promoted into leadership roles with the thought that their effectiveness will continue; but rather than assume, senior leaders are wise to put into place a two-pronged approach to succession. The first prong is to pick the right candidate. The old cliché applies: “Hire for attitude and train for ability.”

The second prong is to cultivate the well-selected candidate. This involves extensive training opportunities and environments that promote growth.

Transitioning managers into leaders should ideally start long before the switch is flipped. Early on, candidates should be “groomed” through extensive cross-training experiences and leadership development. Preferably the training, experience and development will culminate by equipping the candidate-leader with a view and an understanding of the “leadership landscape.”

The context of leadership can be polarizing, ambiguous, volatile and complex; so out of necessity, strong support systems must be in place. A network of colleagues to model the way and offer reassurance along with mentors, coaches, and careful monitoring will serve as the classic challenge/support system to promote a productive transition while cultivating new leaders.

## **New Leaders Must Shift in Five Broad Areas**

The biggest difference to grasp for new leaders is the change in role that entails a focused shift in five broad areas:

### **1. Production to Outcomes**

The immediate challenge for managers is to shift their thinking and operating from a “making widgets” mindset to an “influencing outcomes” mindset. It is inherent in the leadership process that the leader influences the outcome. As the new leader begins working with stakeholders they need to be operating from a new perspective, a long-term view with the idea of short-term, stepping stone implementation. The role of the leader is to influence the long-term with organizational strategy in mind.

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Rather than making and counting widgets, a new leader must have both eyes toward efficiencies now and necessary adaptations toward the future.

### **2. Specialist to Visionary**

Managers thrive as specialists. They know their department, their people, and their function. That’s not enough for a leader. Leaders must know the language of all departments.

They must be able to translate information, patterns, and trends from departments into the language of efficiencies, profit, and direction.

The vision of the organization is up to the leadership. No one else will take the reins here. Leaders must harness what is known now about the trends they see in the telescope and provide direction. Vision can be complex and multifaceted, but nothing can beat everyone pulling in the same direction. This is one big advantage that is difficult for competitors to duplicate.

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### 3. From One to All

Managers have the responsibility to manage the day-to-day on the floor. They are embedded with the staff. Leaders don't manage things as much as they lead direction. Whereas a manager focuses on employee engagement, a leader has a focus on workforce engagement.

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A new leader may have lingering "departmental biases" that show up as baggage that slows meetings and other processes down. The classic mistake is for new leaders to over-manage and under-lead, as this was their previous function. Colleagues need to give the new leader their patience while he cultivates an open-minded shift from managing one department to serving all departments in the organization.

## 4. Solving Problems to Seeing Problems Before They Develop

Strictly speaking, managers and leaders are keen problem solvers. But one of the finer points of leadership—and where leaders earn their keep—is seeing problems before they happen. If a leader can identify slowed growth or a decline in earnings early on and proactively put things in place to avoid the dreaded “workforce planning,” this “seeing” can save everyone.

## 5. Worker to Learner

Leadership is not about knowing—it’s about learning. New leaders typify the shift from a working manager to a learning leader. As they work to cultivate an open mind and flexibility, they must also demonstrate a commitment to relentless self-improvement—that means applying continuous learning toward competency, excellence and greatness.

When new developing leaders are hand selected, cultivated, and afforded the organizational backing necessary for success, it’s more than an exercise in succession. It’s a testament to a leadership strategy and the state-of-the-art demonstration of a leadership culture. Over time the effort results in leadership duplication and sustainable success.



**Brian Braudis** is a highly sought-after human potential expert, certified coach, speaker, and author of *High Impact Leadership: 10 Action Strategies for Your Ascent*. He has also authored several audio programs from executive leadership development to stress management. Brian believes “leadership” is a verb not a title. Brian’s passionate and inspiring presentations are based on the foundation that regardless of your position or role, everyone is a leader.