

THE LEADERSHIP

EQUALISER

THE LEADERSHIP EQUALISER

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There are essentially three components to any leaders job; doing things, managing things and leading people.

Doing Things

No matter how senior our leadership role, there will always be things that we must do ourselves. These could be key sales meetings, presentations or analyzing data for example.

Equally, there are many things that we should not be doing as leaders. Our job is to create the vision, develop the strategy and support the team so that they can execute the plans.

Letting go of some of the things that we've always done is hard. We got promoted because we were good at execution and because we enjoyed it. Often we think that it is quicker and easier to do things ourselves as opposed to delegating; because we know how to do it and we know how we want it done. But that is short termism and that is not leadership.

Managing Things

We all have things that we are responsible for managing such as budgets, projects, launches etc. Without question, these things will have KPIs attached to them and we've probably got personal objectives aligned to them as well.

This means that the old adage of *"what gets measured, gets done"* really kicks in.

Leading People

This is the final piece of the Leadership Equaliser. Ironically, for many leaders, this becomes an after thought or something that we do when we have time. This leads to us leading in our spare time.

When we are in "doing things" mode we can tick stuff off our to-do list and get that dopamine driven, feel-good feeling.

But we don't get that same feeling of satisfaction from leadership. Leadership isn't a cut-and-dry task that we can complete and tick-off the list. Leadership is on-going and never ending activity where the rewards come in a very different style.

This is compounded by the fact that few organisations measure a leaders performance on how they lead. Instead they are measured on what they deliver.

These two factors, combined with the fact that very few of us set out in our careers wanting to become a leader, means that we naturally prioritise our dials as follows:

- 1 *Doing*
- 2 *Managing*
- 3 *Leading*

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From Super-Manager to Inspiring Leader

The Leadership Equaliser explains why so many of us inadvertently spend a great deal of time operating in super-manager mode as opposed to leader mode.

We work harder, faster, longer and more frenetically – doing what we've always done whilst taking on the additional things that come with the new job.

This has an enduring negative impact on our productivity and cognitive brain function. More significantly, Emotional Contagion theory tells us that this has a very real impact on the productivity of those that we lead, as well as affecting how effectively they collaborate, think and problem solve.

Adjusting and flipping the dials

As leaders it is critical that we make the time to step back, to plan and to lead. Doing more stuff, more quickly does not give us the time to do this.

Similarly, increasing our management focus will have absolutely no impact on our ability to motivate, engage and retain those in our teams and organisations.

Consciously pushing up our leadership dial will have a rapid and sustained impact on the engagement of those that we lead, their well-being and business performance.

It is not just a matter of pushing down the "doing" and "managing" dials however.

At the same time we must also re-order the dials in our minds. It is critical that we adopt an entirely new mindset and set of priorities. We must start thinking:

- 1 *Lead*
- 2 *Manage*
- 3 *Do*

