

LEADERSHIP versus MANAGEMENT

by Bonnie Bucqueroux

The best police departments benefit from excellent leadership and superior management. But what we must remember are the differences between the two -- and the fact that the same person may not be good at both.

Leadership - Leadership rests on vision - what the late Bob Trojanowicz characterized as the ability to paint the Big Picture. A leader is someone who can persuade other people to envision a better future and inspire them to work enthusiastically to make that dream a reality. Some leaders can persuade by sheer charisma, but that can result in a shaky foundation for long-term change. Others wisely rely on including key stakeholders in the decision-making process,

LEADER	MANAGER
Vision	Implementation
"Big Picture"	Detail
Long Term	Short Term
Inspire	Direct
Strategic Planning	Action Planning
Outline Framework	Assess Progress
Proactive	Reactive
Motivate	Facilitate
Change Agent	Steady Hand
Delegate	Delegate
Communicate	Communicate

grounding major decisions in consensus. The challenge of leadership also requires communicating, clearly and consistently, what the future should look like and what it will take to get there.

Management - Management is the ability to structure and supervise the changes that can make that vision a reality. The manager's job is to focus on the individual brush strokes that make up the Big Picture, prodding people to do their best, overcoming obstacles and pitfalls, and documenting and assessing progress toward ultimate goals.

On rare occasion, a great leader is also a great manager and vice versa. Lincoln apparently not only had the ability to inspire, but also the skills to manage the steps required to make his vision a reality. Yet it is more likely that a person is one or the other. President Reagan, like him or not, was clearly an exceptional leader. His successor, President Bush, like him or not, was more the manager. The challenge for police departments is to make sure that they strive for excellence in both categories.

Both are essential

It is a mistake to think of leaders as to managers. If a police department is going to implement a change as profound as implementing community policing, it will need the skills of both.

It would also be a mistake to think of leadership and management as the sole province of the chief and top command. As Drew Diamond of the Police Executive Research Forum notes, all people have both positional and personal power. The chief clearly has the top leadership position, and that position has power. But in almost any police department, it wouldn't take long to come up with a list of sergeants with the positional and personal power to make or break any chief's best-laid plans. Or think of the officer who, by force of personality, can inspire his peers to do their best. The challenge is to harness the personal and positional potential at all levels in service of implementing community policing.

-- Special thanks to Jim Golden of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock for his thinking on these issues.