

Hello, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in. Please click on our social media and as always, we welcome your comments so just fill in the box below and we love to have feedback from our viewers.

This week I want to talk about leadership myths. We had our first boot camp cohort here a few weeks ago and it was really eye opening and we spent a lot of time, the first whole day really, talking about the importance of leadership in organizations and in family businesses. Everybody knows instinctively I think that leadership is vital to long term success in an organization and I think authors certainly know that because when I last went to Amazon to look for leadership books, there are, get this, 60,000 books out there on the subject of leadership so there's lots of different opinions.

One of the things I wanted to talk about this week is leadership myths and it's important because leadership is what it is, there's a definition, which I'll give you at the end, but there are lots of leadership myths that are out there that we think maybe need to be dispelled so that you can zero in on what leadership is genuinely all about.

Two things I learned from boot camp that don't have anything to do with leadership, just things I learned. One of the things from one of our south Florida contractors came out and he said that everything can be fixed with money. I'd never heard that before and I suppose it's true in a business context, but I thought that was terrific. Then the other one was similar, where there's confusion there's money and I think maybe in business that's true. I think when there's confusion there's a cost but maybe when there's confusion there's opportunity to make money in business as well.

Those were two things that came out of boot camp, but just as important, all these leadership ideas came out too and the first myth that we want to talk about, I want to talk about four here. The first one is managers are leaders. Managers are not necessarily leaders. Lots of managers have been over promoted. Managers manage things and processes, leaders lead people. There's a huge different in focus there. Leaders focus on people, managers focus on things and tasks. Very different orientation.

The second myth, leaders always have all the answers. Maybe some of the leaders in your organization pretend they have all the answers or try to appear as if they have all the answers, they don't, nobody has all the answers. What leaders do is ask questions. They ask great questions to get at the answers, to elicit the answers from their people, and the best leadership question I've ever learned, and I hope you'll think is a good one too, is when somebody comes to you with a question, instead of giving them the answer or bluffing your way through it as if you have the answer, why not just ask them what do you think we should do? I have found that to be a tremendous training tool.

Number one, I don't want everybody in my organization coming to me for an answer, I want them to figure it out. I don't have all the answers, they're smarter than me in most cases, why shouldn't they figure it out? The other thing is that I want them to not be dependent on anybody. I want them to be able to figure things out on their own and so when somebody comes to me with a question I almost always turn it back on them, what do you think we should do about this? Nine times out of ten, whatever the person or people come up with is what I agree with anyway, so it works out great. It gets rid of some of the time wasting that you have for answering questions that people should be able to answer on their own.

The third myth about leaders is that leaders have this singular laser-like focus. They can just drill down, and maybe they do, maybe some of them actually do, but for leaders the talent isn't their ability to focus, it's their ability to get their organizations to focus. To focus on the few things that matter, the few things that really make customers happy, the few

things that drive success in the organization and ultimately margins and profits in the organization, and you can only focus ... any organization can only focus on one, maybe two things at a time. In a previous blog, we were talking about change. Only try to change one thing at a time, only have one goal, one overarching goal or one new initiative at a time. To focus an organization, you can't diffuse the focus. The focus has to be tight and for it to be tight it has to be on one thing.

The fourth myth is that anyone can be a leader. That's just not true. First of all, not everybody wants to be a leader. Not everybody has the mental, emotional, EQ capacity to be a leader. I think it's just a myth that anybody can be a leader. Now perhaps in your organization more of your people can lead than you think and maybe you're not giving them the rope to lead, maybe you're not giving them the opportunities to lead, so perhaps you could broaden your leadership group, but it's just a myth that everybody has the capacity to lead. Some people just don't want to and won't do it, and that's as simple as that.

What's the definition then that we use for leadership? Now this comes from Mike Flentje who's our leadership guru, leadership is the art of inspiring people to contribute their best efforts to a common goal. The art, I think it is an art, of inspiring people to contribute their best efforts towards a common goal, that is a terrific leadership definition. I'd like to hear your definitions too. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you.