

## Leaders and Bureaucrats

*The differences are all in the mind(set).*

By William P. Fisher



People in leadership positions usually evidence a style, charisma, persona, or personality that causes others to follow their lead in achieving the leader's goals. Bureaucrats, those who are in responsible positions but don't seize leadership opportunities, have a style, demeanor, or manner that causes others to be unsure about their ability to lead. When this occurs, results are usually not all that they could have been.

On occasion, organizations, departments, and teams fail miserably due to the "bureaucratic mindset."

Following are some contrasts between leaders and bureaucrats in terms of their styles and attitudes.

- Leaders say, "We can do it." Bureaucrats say, "We can try it."

- Leaders look for continued progress. Bureaucrats continue to maintain the status quo.

- Leaders possess and evoke an improvement attitude. Bureaucrats are self-satisfied.

- Leaders look for opportunities. Bureaucrats wait for something to happen.

- Leaders play a good game. Bureaucrats talk a good game.

- Leaders judge themselves. Bureaucrats hope others will judge them favorably.

- Leaders know they must confront problems. Bureaucrats hope problems will go away.

- Leaders demand flawless administration. Bureaucrats get bogged down in administration.

- Leaders delegate duties and tasks. Bureaucrats absorb duties and tasks.

- Leaders are comfortable with their subordinates. Bureaucrats are comfortable in their office.

- A leader says, "I'm responsible." A bureaucrat says, "It's not my fault."

- A leader can laugh at himself/herself. A bureaucrat is offended by bureaucracy-directed humor.

- A leader shares credit but participates in it. A bureaucrat wants all the credit.

- A leader says, "I'll take the blame." A bureaucrat says, "Who's to blame?"

- The leader is a tireless worker. The bureaucrat is a tired worker.

- When things get hot, the leader is overwhelming. When things get hot, the bureaucrat is overwhelmed.

- The leader goes for the win. The bureaucrat goes for the tie.

- The leader rises above adversity. The bureaucrat runs away from adversity.

- The leader is outgoing. The bureaucrat likes going out.

- Leaders develop subordinates. Bureaucrats assign subordinates.

- The leader is often the team's most valuable player. The bureaucrat is often the team's most valuable player.

- Leaders say, "We can fix that." Bureaucrats say, "I told you it wouldn't work."

- Leaders are customer-orientated. Bureaucrats are process-orientated.

- Leaders provide direction. Bureaucrats give instructions.

- Leaders can manage many things at once. Bureaucrats prefer to manage one thing at a time.

- Leaders handle the media effectively. Bureaucrats allow the media to handle them.

- Leaders earn respect. Bureaucrats demand respect.

- Leaders seek organizational commitment and loyalty.

Bureaucrats require personal commitment and loyalty.

- Leaders trust key subordinates. Bureaucrats rely on control systems.

- Leaders recruit the absolute best talent available. Bureaucrats don't want to be challenged by subordinates.

- Leaders teach. Bureaucrats pontificate.

- Leaders emphasize standards. Bureaucrats emphasize discipline.



### Don't allow your organization to become a bureaucracy!

- Leaders focus. Bureaucrats view.

- Leaders inspire. Bureaucrats perspire.

- Leaders manage stress in their lives.

Bureaucrats are managed by stress in their lives.

- Leaders communicate articulately.

Bureaucrats communicate artfully.

- Leaders lead for the future. Bureaucrats allow the future to take care of itself.

- Leaders take action at the appropriate time. Bureaucrats want more advice.

- Leaders say, "We succeeded in spite of the obstacles."

Bureaucrats say, "We could have succeeded if it weren't for the obstacles."

- Leaders take advantage of the rules. Bureaucrats go strictly by the rules.

- Leaders see the glass as "half full." Bureaucrats don't see the glass.

- Leaders are generous with their time. Bureaucrats are protective of their time.

- When things look as if they are going wrong, leaders cry, "Charge!" When things look as if they are going wrong, bureaucrats cry, "Foul!"

- Leaders are gracious. Bureaucrats are ingratiating.

- Leaders are aggressive. Bureaucrats are intrusive.

- Leaders think strategically. Bureaucrats think about time off.

- Leaders attempt to be objective. Bureaucrats are selfishly motivated.

- Leaders enjoy their time. Bureaucrats put in their time.

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