

Leader-Follower vs Leader-Leader

In his book "Turn the Ship Around!" Captain David Marquet tells the story of how he successfully transformed the USS Santa Fe from the worst-performing submarine in its fleet to the best...in under a year! His success hinged on replacing the conventional Leader-Follower model of leadership with a Leader-Leader model.

Leader-Follower Model

- ▶ Hierarchical
- ▶ Leaders send orders downstream
- ▶ Followers do what they're told
- ▶ Success hinges on leader's competence, and personality

Leads to:

- ▶ Stagnancy
- ▶ Bare minimum work
- ▶ Lack of innovation
- ▶ Low accountability

Leader-Leader Model

- ▶ Retains some hierarchical elements
- ▶ Everyone is the leader for their own area
- ▶ Solutions sent upstream
- ▶ Success hinges on ownership, clarity, and responsibility

Leads to:

- ▶ Excitement
- ▶ Committed, inspired work
- ▶ Innovation + Creativity
- ▶ High accountability

How to create a Leader-Leader Organization

Communicate trust and accountability.
When people ask for permission, ask them what THEY intend to do.

"That's an interesting problem. What do you intend to do about it?"

"Thanks for telling me. What's your plan?"

Shift from Permission to Intent

How to act in a Leader-Leader Organization

Don't wait to be told what to do.
Take initiative and ACT.

"What should I do?" or "Can I do this?"

"I intend to..."

"We are planning on solving that problem by..."

Make the mission and priorities clear.
Establish guardrails and allow people to navigate within them.

"What are we REALLY trying to accomplish with this?"

"What principles or standards should guide you in this decision?"

Provide & Demand Clarity

Ask questions until things are clear.
Push information and solutions upstream.

"So, what does success look like here?"

"What problem are we trying to solve?"

"Here's what we do and don't know. I suggest that we..."

Spend less time telling "What" and more time training "How" and "Why".

"What skills do they need to be competent in their job?"

"What vision do they need to be able to take initiative on this?"

Competence Instead of Control

Try stuff, fail fast, adjust often.
Seek feedback often.

"We are going to try...could you help us see ways to do it better next time?"

"How do you think I could have improved or changed that?"