

# The StraightTalk Coach

## Insights for Leading From Strength

### Leading and Teaching vs. Managing and Doing

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**H**ow much time did you spend last month leading? Managing? Teaching? Doing?

Although you probably did each at some point, the real question is how much time you spend leading and teaching instead of managing and doing. This is a critical distinction for creating sustained value throughout your organization. If you define your job as creating value by strengthening innovation and results, that means you need to spend more time leading and teaching, instead of managing and doing.

This is a powerful concept. In fact, constantly increasing the proportion of time you spend leading and teaching is a formula for personal and organizational growth. Learning how to rely on leading and teaching instead of managing and doing is a baseline requirement for becoming a successful leader and building a successful organization.

#### What's the Difference?

Although leading, teaching, managing and doing may sound like fairly similar elements of every executive's job, they represent fundamentally different activities.

Leadership at any level includes a range of responsibilities: setting the vision; driving a change agenda and aligning the organization to achieve it; making decisions; balancing the bottom

line concerns of people and results; creating a StraightTalk organization; actively utilizing conflict; and engendering confidence, respect and trust.

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Teaching is a leader's highest order responsibility. It may occur in many settings: one-to-one, by example or mentoring; classes and debriefings; knowledge management systems and structures, and more. As a leader, your teaching responsibility is both personal (e.g., setting an example and using interactions as teaching opportunities) and structural (e.g., creating a teaching organization).

Managing involves directing one's self, processes and people. Managing yourself means setting priorities and organizing your time around whom you need to influence and what you need to control to achieve those priorities. Managing process means ensuring that

resources are appropriately deployed and people are appropriately supported. Managing people revolves around selecting, deploying, developing and retaining the talent needed to achieve your organization's mission.

Doing means just what it says: identifying a project or task and completing it.

The trap is that people are often promoted to increasingly responsible positions because they have proven excellent at doing and managing a particular function or silo. Unless these individuals realize the need to move from doing and managing to leading and teaching, they tend to become especially adept in their areas of expertise, but do not provide the strategic leadership required to move their organizations from what business theorist and author Jim Collins would call good to great.

There are a number of ways to characterize the key differences between leading and teaching and managing and doing. First, leading and teaching are more heads up and externally focused; managing and doing are more internally oriented. Leading and teaching tend to focus on strategic to think issues rather than to do tasks associated with managing and doing. In addition, leading and teaching usually empower people; managing and doing are more control-oriented. Last, learning is a key differentiator. Teacher-leaders are avid learners.

As illustrated below, leaders with the four classic categories of personal and organizational style usually approach leading, teaching, managing and doing quite differently, and assign them varying priority.

<p><b>Builder</b> (Evolutionary, Team-Oriented Culture)</p> <p><b>Lead</b> <b>Teach</b></p> <p><b>Manage</b> <b>Do</b></p>	<p><b>Inventor</b> (Revolutionary, Idea-Warrior Culture)</p> <p><b>Teach</b> <b>Lead</b></p> <p><b>Do</b> <b>Manage</b></p>
<p><b>Producer</b> (Business As Usual, Club-Oriented Culture)</p> <p><b>Do</b> <b>Manage</b></p> <p><b>Lead</b> <b>Teach</b></p>	<p><b>Fix-it</b> (Troubleshooting, Fix-It Culture)</p> <p><b>Manage</b> <b>Do</b></p> <p><b>Lead</b> <b>Teach</b></p>

Generally speaking, making the transition from manager to leader and doer to teacher offers the most potential to executives who want to become Builder-leaders or Inventor-leaders. This is partially because their organizations are culturally predisposed to accelerate learning and change, and improve results to create sustained value. Producer and Fix-it leaders are typically more focused on maintaining the status quo or addressing crises so that there is limited capacity and appreciation for leading and teaching.

### Becoming a Leader

For most executives, making the transition from managing to leading is a matter of recognizing the significantly greater potential of leading versus managing for influencing others and the organization, for refocusing priorities to anticipate marketplace changes, and for broadening participation to achieve greater innovation and results.

An individual must then act on this

new mindset by carving out time from managing himself, people and processes to address bigger picture leadership activities such as setting the vision and driving change. These functions are not the sole province of top-level executives; leaders at

all levels of an organization can and should exercise them within their scope of authority.

The transition from managing to leading tends to be more natural for executives who are both externally focused and intuitively recognize the growing range of stakeholders to be served today and in the future. The shift may also be easier because there is usually more measurement of and reward for leading, which reinforces and sharpens those abilities over the course of an individual's career.

### Becoming a Teacher

In our experience, the transition from doer to teacher is more challenging for most leaders. This is partly because few organizations openly measure and reward teaching. It is also because becoming a teacher-leader often requires building specific skills.

Being a good learner is the most important skill set for a teacher, and is often the area in which leaders need to grow. By mastering the following eight skills, you can become a better leader-teacher:

1. Having a global and external orientation.
2. Being open to learning and change.
3. Being receptive to others' thoughts and ideas.
4. Listening attentively and applying what you hear.
5. Being curious about things, people and events.
6. Encouraging risk and innovation.
7. Setting a vision in which integrity is the foundation for achievement.
8. Constantly raising expectations for yourself and others.

Sharpening these capabilities offers you

opportunities to grow personally, as well as to become a teacher to those around you. Teaching need not—and should not—be one more item on your to-do list. Rather, it is more a matter of how you interact with superiors, peers, subordinates and outsiders, and whether you take every opportunity to learn, explain and instruct.

As a leader, your commitment to teaching personally should also extend to creating a teaching organization, one in which sharing knowledge takes place individually and structurally. For example, teaching organizations tend to have organized instruction programs, such as orientation programs that convey the organization's culture and strategy, classes taught by senior executives or industry luminaries, and offsite meetings to debrief on significant successes and failures.

### Leading and Teaching as a Strategic Tool

Many organizations are stalled because their leaders get mired in managing and doing, and never make the transition to leading and teaching. Yet recognizing and intentionally deciding to become more of a leader-teacher instead of primarily a manager-doer is one of the most important things you can do to help your organization create sustained value.

Once you have mastered the transition, begin to apply it to teams within your organization, each of which has the potential to lead and teach in addition to managing and completing its specific projects.

As you, other leaders and teams emphasize leading and teaching, you will inevitably create a teaching organization that actively seeks new knowledge and better ways to build the business. You will build an organization that fosters transparency, energy and excitement by asking questions. You will create a teaching organization that grows by sharing experience and knowledge.

Above all, as a leader-teacher, you will build an organization in which innovation, agility, external orientation and value creation inevitably thrive. [HK](#)

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