COMMON CHALLENGES OF LEADERS, MANAGERS AND DOERS

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Managers should expect conflicts to arise when their team is expected to do more with less.

Try leading an organisation with other executive team-members if:

- You don't communicate with each other
- You listen to each other
- You are unequivocally deferential to the CEO and aren't encouraged to speak up when you disagree
- Nobody wants to hurt anybody's feelings
- Nobody is decisive

It's impossible to lead a company if your leadership team struggles to work with each other.

Managers

1. Are told a strategy without having as much time as the leaders to process it. Leaders may have had meetings upon meetings to come to a strategic decision as to the direction of the company. Managers are stuck figuring out how to make it happen while managing the day-to-day tasks. This can be hard when managers are expected to continue to drive results based on the old strategy, when numbers might drop if they make changes to work processes that align with a new strategy.

2. Got promoted because of good individual contributions, but lack proper skills to manage. At Root, we like to call these types of managers the 'five-minute-manager'. These managers were so good at doing their job as a 'door' that they were noticed by upper management and got promoted to a manager level. However, managing is not about doing the work you used to do. It is about getting people you manage to do work like you used to do.

3. Don't have the skill set required to do their job. Sometimes, leaders forget what it is they are responsible for. For example, in the 1990s when Pepsi decided to expand from soft-drinks to bottled water and tea, they didn't realise that going from a few SKUs (stock keeping units) to hundreds of SKUs and going from just aluminium cans to glass bottles would cause heartburn for truck drivers. They needed someone to come help them fix the situation. Can you guess who? (Hint: they ended up working with us.)

4. Isn't told what the strategy means for their team. In theory, strategies make sense. When you're out there driving a truck, the last thing on your mind is what the macro-economic effects of changing consumer tastes are. Usually, it's something along the lines of: "What's for dinner?" "How can I get from point A to point B faster?" "My turn times aren't as fast as I want them to be. What can I do to be more efficient?" "What's for dinner?"

When you don't engage your doers to think about how your role connects to the purpose of the company, compliance can set in.

5. Balance what leaders want with realities of front line. Sometimes, leaders forget what is to be done. And when coming up with a strategy, they forget to consider the obstacles doers may face when executing a strategy.

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1. Don't know how their role is connected to the company. Leaders have most likely had meetings upon meetings to come to a strategic decision as to the direction of the company. They've got all of that to think about. Quite straight forward here, but when you're paid to increase the numbers of customers are yelling in your ear. It's another thing to do it while managing the day-to-day tasks. People don't like change. You bet they will. As a leader, you can bet money that no matter how great your job is, you have at least one gripe about your role that "other personalities in the organisation will just never understand."

Well, I'm here to help everyone understand. Here's the most comprehensive list of common challenges that one will encounter within these three layers in an organisation.

Leaders

1. They have to anticipate the future based on the macro-economic trends. Think about all the factors they have to consider:

- Rapidly changing technology
- Economic volatility
- Increased competition
- Changing workforce demographics
- Supply chain disruption
- Changing customer demands

Try to make a quick decision when you've got all of that to think about.

2. They are misaligned. A lot of the time, members of an executive team have differing opinions. It's one thing for leaders to have different opinions, discuss it in a meeting, and come to a consensus. It's another thing when leaders say one thing in a meeting, but think differently in their own space. Imagine trying to make decisions when your internal conscience conflicts with your external statements. (Hint: the result is not good.)

3. Their incentive package does not align with the strategy. Quite straightforward here, but when you're paid to increase the numbers of customers are yelling in your ear. It's another thing to do it while managing the day-to-day tasks. People don't like change. You bet they will. As a leader, you can bet money that no matter how great your job is, you have at least one gripe about your role that "other personalities in the organisation will just never understand."

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