

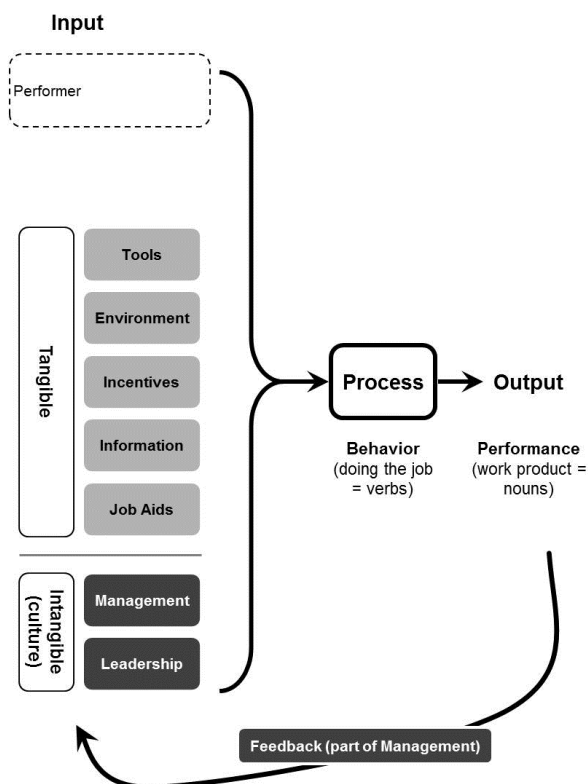
Why Doers Do

- appropriate balance of change and stability

He was aware that leadership is complicated, with more nuance perhaps than any other element of human performance. Luke knew that a bulleted list of sub-elements was oversimplifying the importance of leadership. Gosh, he thought, “In my career, great leadership has at times lifted me to levels where I felt I could conquer the world. And poor leadership has debilitated me to where I couldn’t eat or sleep.”

On the other hand, it was dismissive and lazy to see leadership as an art or magic that wasn’t teachable. By identifying and compartmentalizing the elements of good leadership, Luke, his company, his hockey team and his family had a better chance of doing the right things more often and doing the poor things less.

Another addition to the model seemed in order. He remembered in his career hearing a lot about corporate culture or the culture of a sports franchise. It occurred to him that in the world of human performance, *culture* was the combination of two elements: management and leadership. He added that parenthetically to his model.



Why Doers Do

For many smokers, a cancer diagnosis is a wake-up call that motivates them to quit. But researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital report that a “substantial minority” of lung and colon cancer patients are still smoking 5 months after their diagnosis.... The study, published in the journal *Cancer*, involved 2,456 patients with lung cancer and 3,063 patients with colon cancer. At the time they were diagnosed, 39% of the lung cancer patients and 14% of the colon cancer patients were current smokers (although a much higher portion had a history of smoking). Five months after their diagnosis, 14% of the lung cancer patients and 9% of the colon cancer patients still smoked....¹¹⁸

People may in fact be creatures of habit, even in the face of the largest stakes of all. Yet to those leaders or workers who complain of change, I offer the words of retired U.S. Army General Eric Shinseki: “If you dislike change, you're going to dislike irrelevance even more.”¹¹⁹

Managing Leadership

To repeat an earlier theme, *management* plus *leadership* equals the *culture* important to human performance. Culture means many different, important things in many different milieus. But in the context of those intangible elements external to a person that are important to their optimum performance, culture captures how people are managed and led. Leadership is different than management, but both are important. Seth Godin, in his book, *Tribes*, in a section entitled “Leadership Is Not Management,” underscores this nicely:

¹¹⁸ Simon, Stacy. “Some Smokers Diagnosed with Cancer Don't Quit.” *Some Smokers Diagnosed with Cancer Don't Quit*. American Cancer Society, 7 Mar. 2012. Web. 02 Jan. 2013.

¹¹⁹ Owens, Mackubin T. “Mackubin Thomas Owens on Marines & War on National Review Online.” *Marines Turned Soldiers. The Corps vs. the Army*. National Review Online, 10 Dec. 2001. Web. 02 Jan. 2013. <<http://old.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-owens121001.shtml>>.

Why Doers Do

In a classic *I Love Lucy* episode, Lucy and Ethel are working on a candy assembly line. As the candies come faster and faster, the two of them panic, stuffing truffles into their mouths to keep up with the onslaught. They had a management problem. Managing is about manipulating resources to get a known job done.... Leadership, on the other, is about creating change that you believe in.¹²⁰

Leadership is not positional. One does not need a title to be a leader. True, leadership is expected at higher levels of an organizational chart, but leadership can be fostered anywhere in a company. We can be led by our peers or even those who work for us. C-level managers and VPs have not cornered the market on the ability to be positive and rally others around a common cause of great performance toward an explicit goal. We see that everywhere, in all organizations, at all levels.

The book *Tribal Leadership* outlines five stages of an organization's culture, as illustrated by what employees are thinking, saying to themselves, or saying to others¹²¹:

1. Life sucks.
2. My life sucks.
3. I'm great.
4. We're great.
5. Life is great.

The stages move from general negativity to specific negativity to specific positivity to general positivity. Leadership is a key component of an organization's culture. These five categories of thinking or speaking are the ultimate measures of leadership effectiveness. Town hall meetings, group emails, department outings, earnings reports, newsletters and genuine individual recognition are all part of the leadership ecosystem. All are important, but all have a short shelf life. At the end of the day (figuratively and literally), which of these five statements do your employees say to themselves on their way home? That is the purest acid test of leadership.

¹²⁰ Godin, *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us*, 13-14.

¹²¹ Logan, David, John Paul King, and Hallee Fischer-Wright. *Tribal Leadership: Leveraging Natural Groups to Build a Thriving Organization*. New York: Collins, 2008. Print.

Why Doers Do

Leadership: Questions to Ask

In assessing how well leadership supports human performance with your people, department or organization, here are some initial questions you might ask:

1. Are people empowered to make many of their own decisions without asking permission?
2. Do employees take risks? Is failure not always punished?
3. Do people trust that trying new approaches or questioning out loud without all the facts is not seen as a weakness?
4. Do people give honest feedback to one another as opposed to avoiding or sugar-coating the truth or worrying about the personal side of relationships?
5. Incentives aside, do people consistently receive positive recognition?
6. Are employees surrounded by others with enough of a similar world view, experience and skills?
7. Do they work with people with enough of a different view and background?
8. Is work conducted in a civil manner?
9. Is the balance between teamwork and individual work appropriate?
10. Are employees allowed access to work with the people they need?
11. Are people allowed to grow professionally and advance through the organization, either laterally or vertically?
12. Is there too much change? Is there not enough change?