What is Management?

In a Harvard Business Review classic on leadership and management, John Kotter argued that whilst leadership is about coping with change, management is about coping with complexity and organisational systems.

Peter Drucker had a more simple definition 'management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things'.

In the modern workplace, it is helpful to combine these two definitions as inter-connecting. Managers need to manage but also need to lead.

It is not unusual that organisations change, so as a manager you may have to cope with both change within complex, organisational systems and taking your teams on the same journey.

Traditional Methods

5 Key Functions

Increased engagement and motivation are two of the benefits generated when managers let go of 'command and control methods. And a leader's authority may be enhanced - but there's no reason that teams should become dysfunctional.

In Pete Drucker's classic, 'The Practice of Management, he sets out what he sees as the five key functions of a manager

Motivate

Motivate and communicate: Here, the role of a manager is to work with employees, and find individual motivators in order to build high performing teams.

Targets

Establish targets and yardsticks: This involves setting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for projects. It also covers setting quality control standards, and putting into place performance measurement and monitoring systems to ensure all employees are meeting agreed goals, targets and standards.

Objectives

This involves setting the direction of travel for organisational goals. It may involve participation in strategy development and business planning.

Organise

This aspect of management concerns working with leaders and others to shape the structure of the organisation, and individual teams. This can also include allocating tasks and responsibilities to employees - those who you manage directly, or otherwise.

Development

Developing people: This includes being able to control your inherent biases when allocating work, and ensuring that you proactively seek to nurture your employees through training. It also covers working with their innate motivators and drivers.