



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Middle Leaders: Today's Corporate Fiefs

Over the years, it has been regularly felt that top-down leadership isn't enough to get the day-to-day job done. With the inclusion of "knowledge workers," and the many, many tasks to achieve now, leadership at all levels is a reality. And now, particularly important is leadership from the middle level or "middle leadership."

Middle leadership style differs vastly from traditional top leadership. Top leaders are usually visionary, inspirational and global. They come to a senior level by virtue of their periodic promotions. Middle leadership is self-selected and initiated. They focus more on immediate problems, issues and opportunities. Since they give colleagues a chance to work with them they are more people-oriented and more likely to inspire them and be chosen as their leader. Their expertise and relationships help them influence decisions on their colleagues and consequently, their realm of work far exceeds their job descriptions. Middle leaders bring about change in the day-to-day jobs. Companies that innovate and adapt do so through middle leadership. These companies work hard to build middle leadership in their organizations.

The difference middle leaders make!

Middle leadership comes from one's own sense of purpose and striving to achieve one's goals. His assessment of goals and method of achieving them are the cornerstones of his *raison d'etre* in the organization. It therefore, becomes his prime purpose to help colleagues understand the kind of individuals they value in the organization.

Further, though middle leaders set out to be the leader of the pack, they are willing to lead a team to achieve their personal goals. Thus they are different from older managers who use their personal goals as tools to achieve the organization's goals.

Middle leaders are also typified by their sense of curiosity, initiative and sense of responsibility. An urge to learn new methods, systems and areas is also valued and prized. Furthermore they are known by their passion for their jobs and their striving to make a difference to the company. These people give the company an identity, and are adventurous and path-breaking; values that today's companies are always looking out for.