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The Election, the Super Bowl and the Kitchen

What, with the election, the Super Bowl and Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmare there have been no dearth of interesting examples of management.

Presidential Leadership versus Presidential Management

A recent Chicago Tribune editorial commentary spotlighted the differences on how the president's job description is viewed by Senator's Clinton and Obama. Senator Clinton suggests that being president can be likened to be a CEO and COO of a large, complex organization- very managerial. She indicated that this involves a "hand on" policy as well as attention to detail to ensure everything is done right. However, the larger the organization, the tougher it is to effectively remain "hands on." In fact, too much "hands on" can cause leaders to insert themselves into matters that are not only not attention worthy, but that risk disrupting decision making processes already in place. Even worse, this approach can be a spirit slayer for employees in the path of the micro-leader/manager.

Senator Obama's view differs sharply. His thinking, according to the article, is that being president "is not making sure that schedules are being run properly or the paperwork is shuffled effectively." His approach is to develop a strategy, work it

out with a competent group of people while

giving them the authority to execute it. No one, no matter how gifted can increase the 24 hour day. So the key to leading large and complex organizations is to be able to delegate with confidence. This means being deft enough to know what to become engaged in and disciplined enough to know what to stay out of.

If the definition of leadership is doing the right thing and management is doing things right, it appears to me that Senator Clinton may be more managerial and Senator Obama may be more leader like in their approaches to the job they seek. There is a healthy dose of both in most positions, but the question is which overall approach is best suited for your management role?

He May Have Just Lost a Super Bowl, but He Sure Knows How to Manage

An article, *Staid Belichick Often Gets the Last Laugh*, by Rick Morrissey in the sports section of the January 30th issue of the Chicago Tribune caught my eye. In discussing Belichick one of his players, Heath Evans, said "We see a guy who knows how to push each personality in the most perfect manner...He will push those buttons on a consistent basis to get the best out of you."

Further on in the article, Evans goes on to say that that no one player is off limits to Belichick.

This is a classic description of treating everyone the same but coaching to the individual for the purpose of bringing out the best in each employee for the good of themselves and the good of the organization. I believe this is a “best practices” for management.

Recognizing Talent

In the midst of all of his bombast and abrasiveness, Chef Ramsay displayed a couple of striking managerial demonstrations in last week’s BBC episode of Kitchen Nightmares spotlighting the Piccolo Teatro, a vegetarian restaurant in Paris. All of Ramsay’s theatrics (including bodily tossing out a wayward chef) couldn’t save this restaurant, run by an apathetic former waitress, which eventually closed after Ramsay left.

However, one thing Ramsay did, (which is not always done by consultants) is to actually do the work. He opened the restaurant for lunch, cooked and waited on several dozen lunch patrons all by himself! This was to demonstrate to the owner that the lunch crowd could be a money maker. The owner wasn’t having it, but it showed the power of a consultant who can also “do.”

After the head chef was disposed of, the owner’s father procured another chef from the UK. Despite being relatively new and inexperienced, her talents were such that she was offered and she accepted the head chef position at the Teatro. So, when the restaurant closed, this chef was in stranded

in Paris without a job. But Ramsay secured her a position at one of his restaurants in the UK- recognizing that good talent is good talent and a place must always be made for it- another managerial best practice!

Steve Wyrstek, President
Gentle Ears, Inc.
541 N. 5th Ave.
Des Plaines, IL 60016
Direct: 847-803-6991
FAX: 847-299-8070
steve@gentleears.com
<http://www.gentleears.com>