

# Are We Leaders or Managers?

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The question of whether we are leaders or managers in our assignments for Rotary next year causes me to think of a quotation from Winnie-the-Pooh, who is a fictional character created by A.A. Milne and made even more popular by the Walt Disney cartoons. When asked if he wanted milk or honey with his bread, the Pooh Bear responded that he would prefer to have both milk and honey without any bread. A clear indication of his priorities!

The truth, of course, is that we will be both managers and leaders next year. However, I encourage you to minimize your managerial duties and to maximize your leadership role. I certainly do not want you to ignore your managerial duties, because all of our districts have important assets, such as bank accounts, to be managed, as well as district officers and committees to be counseled and supervised. But the good news is that our managerial duties can be delegated to other capable Rotarians who have earned our trust and respect. Their help can give us more time to be better leaders!

So how do we tell the difference between the tasks needing management and those requiring leadership? To me, the identification is easy! If the task is related to district administration, it needs management, and it can be successfully delegated to others — if you also provide a clear statement of your objectives for their work. However, if the task pertains to informing and motivating the club leaders, it needs your personal leadership. Our primary responsibility next year, both yours and mine, is to provide information and motivation to the club leaders. We need to help the clubs to become bigger, better, and bolder in their communities! In the end, it is our record of achievement in helping the clubs that will be the best indication of our success.

A comment worthy of note is that of Bob Barth, the RI president in 1993-94, when he reminded us that with every right there is a corresponding duty. And the reverse is true as well. When you delegate the managerial tasks to your selected district officers, you also need to assign to them the necessary authority to perform the delegated tasks. If you delegate the duties but retain the authority, you will not save any time, because you will still have to make all the decisions. For that reason, I have assigned my authority and delegated my duties for the 2011 convention in New Orleans to the convention chair, Ron Burton. I know that Ron will consult me on the major decisions, but due to his ability to exercise my authority and to manage my duties for the convention, I will have more time to serve as a better leader.

I also delegated many of the administrative duties for this assembly to José Antonio Salazar, Brenda Cressey, and Monty Audenart. As a result, I had the time to send a personal invitation to almost every speaker for this assembly, along with my description of the topics to be covered by them. I think they appreciated the personal notes from me, but more important, all of the speeches have been outstanding and topical. So I have been well paid for my investment of time, because it was the right thing to do!

The same lesson is applicable in your communications with your club leaders. If you take a personal interest in the club leaders and treat them as friends, they will respond to your leadership. We are not managers of the clubs! I repeat, we are not the managers of the clubs. Instead, we should be the leaders of the club leaders. Therefore, we need to be coaches, counselors, and cheerleaders for them. If we support them in their objectives, then they will support us in our objective to build bigger, better, and bolder clubs. A famous person from my home state of Missouri, Dale Carnegie, aptly summarized that aspect of leadership when he said, "You can make more friends in two weeks by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you." Truer words were never spoken!

Most of our club leaders want to do good jobs that will be appreciated by their club members. However, some of them have very little knowledge about Rotary, and some others have very little commitment to improve their clubs. It is our task to assess correctly their strengths and weaknesses and then to provide the needed assistance to support them. You can select other Rotarians to help the club leaders with Rotary knowledge and motivation, but there will be no substitute for your personal interest in each club. The best form of leadership is personal example, and the best governors are those who form lasting friendships with the club leaders. And the formula is simple: The best way to have a friend is to be a friend!

One of the best ways to form valuable friendships with club leaders is to spend time with them, and I regret that we no longer insist on private meetings between the governors and the three top leaders of each club. When I was district governor, I routinely spent two hours with the club presidents and secretaries as I made my official visits, and I used an extensive checklist of topics to be sure I covered the same items with all the club leaders. Those meetings were the most valuable part of my official visits, and I encourage you to meet privately with the club president, club president-elect, and club secretary of each club when you make your club visits. The Presidential Citation for 2010-11 has a checklist of activities for the clubs, and you may add topics of your own to review with each club. It will be an excellent way to demonstrate your genuine interest in the clubs, which is a leading quality of leadership.

There is an additional test to determine whether our tasks require a manager or a leader. Simply stated, "It is the job of a manager to do things right, but it is the job of a leader to do the right things." Let's think about that statement for a moment. Rotary is filled with capable people, and you can find Rotarians in your district to perform the needed administrative tasks. And since they are capable managers, they will do things right. But as the top Rotary leader in your district, it is your job to do the right things! Therefore, you need to look at all of your district activities to determine if they are the right things to do. I can almost guarantee you that some of your district programs and practices are outdated and outmoded and that you need to look for newer and better alternatives. Others will help you to do things right, but you must decide the basic question of what are the right things to do!

Michael McQueen told us a few minutes ago that the young people of Generation Y frequently ask why we do things in a certain way, and sometimes they ask why we do them at all. That's good, because those are questions that we should be asking as well! We need to attract young people into Rotary to ensure that the spirit of Rotary fellowship and service will continue for many years to come. We cannot attract them unless we bridge the generational gap, which is wider than the gap between preceding generations due to the increasing speed of changes in technology. But we can do it by becoming truly interested in the younger people, which requires learning more about their qualities and gaining a better appreciation of their attitudes and aptitudes. I have no doubt we can do it, if we really want to do it!

There is an interesting book by Marshall Goldsmith and Mark Reiter titled *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. The title is intriguing, and I believe that premise is correct in our challenge of attracting young people into Rotary. But we can do it, if we get the clubs to accept the challenge! We are a grassroots organization, and the creativity and ingenuity of Rotarians is legendary. If the clubs will devote the same brainpower to membership growth that they use for community and international service projects, we can attract an ample number of younger members. But it will take new ideas that will serve the interests of Generation Y, and we need to understand their objectives. One of the most important tests of our leadership next year will be our ability to help the clubs to understand the younger generations and to appreciate them as prospective members.

We will not be alone in that quest, because the RI Board has authorized an expansion of the RRIMC [Regional RI Membership Coordinators] program. The RRIMCs are being replaced by Rotary coordinators (to be known as RCs) in every zone, and the RCs will work with clubs and districts to explain and promote the RI programs and the best practices for clubs and districts.

There will be the same number of RCs as RRFCs, and they will serve exactly the same regions as the RRFCs, which will enhance the ability of the RCs and the RRFCs to cooperate and collaborate. As a result of the change, the new RCs will be available to provide seminars for the clubs in your districts, and they will be experts about RI programs of all kinds, including best practices to help our clubs become bigger, better, and bolder in their communities.

Good leadership comes in many shapes and sizes, and all of you have leadership skills. Otherwise, you would not have been selected by your districts to come to this assembly. What will distinguish the best governors in this class is their willingness to plan their work and then work their plan. But the greatest success will be enjoyed by those who think big! Those who dare to dream before they plan. Remember the words of Cardinal Suenens, who said, "Happy are those who dream dreams and are willing to pay the price to make them come true." May this class be blessed by the ability to dream — and the willingness to work!

The recipe for success as a district governor is simple. Be a friend to the clubs! Listen to the club leaders, and then help them to achieve their objectives. Be a coach, a counselor, and a cheerleader for them. We need to help the club leaders to learn about Rotary. They need to understand and appreciate the value of Rotary to themselves, to their club members, to their communities, and to the world. Regardless of your previous experience, you can help the clubs, if you treat the club leaders as friends — and if you do the right things!

We are so fortunate to be Rotarians at this exciting time in our history. Due to PolioPlus, Rotary is now on the world stage. As a result, we can help the clubs to become bigger, better, and bolder! And we can make the world a better place by helping the clubs to do what Rotary does better than anyone else in the world, which is *Building Communities — Bridging Continents!*