



Management, Leadership...and Statesmanship

-- Al E. Bavry, CEO, Kimal Lumber & Hardware

I've talked from time to time about Management and Leadership...To me, the management part of it is kind of simple. You can teach a willing person how to manage things...Processes, systems, services, personnel. It's all a matter of skill sets that can be learned. So, people can be taught to be managers. But I do think confusion sets in, when we have someone managing things, but along with the equation is their role in *managing the folks that actually do the job*.

So...Years ago I started talking and referring to Kimal's Center Managers as "Leaders." Especially in our often chaotic, turn-on-a-dime industry, those Leaders have to be able to do things like: Think on their feet; come up with a quick answer they wouldn't have learned in a book; give guidance when the team is looking at them for direction on how to move forward; diffuse negativity in a diplomatic way, etc. I simplify it a lot here, but it comes down to much more than just "managing." And I'll set up the next part of this "job description" by suggesting that especially those in a management/leadership role have pretty big egos! Dare I say, maybe even really big egos?

So the other day I was catching up on some news in a local publication oriented to our business, called *The Business Observer*...talking about an impasse the governor and Speaker of the House were having. Seems, in reading through this, they both had strong ideas on a piece of upcoming key legislation. And it appeared they both were "right." Well, in my mind they were both "right" to the point that they were so sure of their stance that they'd allowed egos to kick in and rule the day...neither was giving an inch! In his well-written article, Matt Walsh, the editor, was suggesting (pleading) that they needed to bury their egos, and start talking like real adults. And the gist of it was, that they really don the hat of "Statesmen" and remember they were hired by the people to represent all of them. While I don't know the outcome of this real saga, I have to believe they'll become adults at some point and resolve the issue and move on...for the benefit of all!

So, my takeaway is simple: You can be taught to "manage" operations, staff, and things...but you can (and should) also rise above this role, and if you are a manager it truly is synonymous with Leading...or Leadership. Probably the more important role by far. But then, with your ego still intact, and whether you're right or wrong, can you take all of the above to the next level and be a Statesman? O.K. Statesperson—to be politically correct! In our modern world, men and women are thrust almost equally into this role of Leading...So, when was the last time you were able to "Park Your Ego at the Door"? Don the hat of a Statesperson, and really, effectively accomplish the task at hand amid controversy and egos? Good luck and good Leading.