People's lack of effort is fueled by popular positive psychology that says people should always be happy. There is a widespread sentiment that people don't have to focus on what they can't do—all they have to do is focus on what they want and what they can do. The idea is that somehow, what people don't do well miraculously becomes irrelevant and what they want just happens. While happiness is a great quality to have, happiness shouldn't come at the expense of self-improvement.

As a result of people's short-term focus and avoidance of discomfort, they take in the *why* and the *what* of leadership but shy away from the *how*. They fall victim to the huge gap between knowing and doing—the *why* and *what* versus the *how*. The *why* of something is inspiring, intriguing, and often entertaining. Knowing why someone volunteers for a charity, starts their own business, or pursues a particular hobby reveals fascinating insights about them. The *what* of something appeals to people's desire for knowledge and makes for good discussion. Knowing what someone did to earn a promotion, close a sale, or ruin a friendship makes for good conversation and debate. The *how* of something is the point where content gets too detailed for most people. The *how* is where people have to move their knowledge into understanding and application. It is where audiences start to yawn or fall asleep. It is where the real effort is required to become a great leader, and so people tend to avoid it.

6. **Lack of Approach:** Leading is very different from a domain skill such as engineering, selling, or marketing. In these fields, there are straightforward processes to follow. Leadership is different. There is no standard leadership process that a person follows. Leaders never know what step they are on because there aren't any steps. They don't have the diagnostic

framework a doctor has or the planning framework a project manager has.

Despite thousands of leadership programs and models, few provide a simple yet functional approach like those provided for professionals in other domains. Leadership programs that do get into the level of detail required to teach someone how to become a great leader often don't provide the details in a model that is easy to follow. People learn what to do but then struggle to put it into application because they lack an easy-to-use reference model.

7. **Lack of Practicality:** Even fewer leadership programs and models are practical. It is a primary reason for the disconnect in most organizations between their competency models and how managers actually operate. Leadership isn't about knowing concepts, complying with policies, or following procedures. Leadership isn't about using strengths. It's far more demanding than that. Leadership is situational—dependent on an almost unlimited number of variables and circumstances. Simple and theoretical leadership models may be appealing, as they give the illusion of a quick path to great leadership, but true leadership and developing leadership competence isn't that simple.

8. **No Standard:** Unlike becoming a registered engineer, certified public accountant, or licensed hair stylist, there is no formal certification for becoming a leader. There are no standard expectations of performance or objective tests that measure proficiency. Many people claim to be leaders when in reality they are more managers, if not the lucky beneficiaries of fortuitous circumstances. Without a standard of performance to compare to or objective competency assessment to take, people can simply claim to be leaders, even great leaders, and ignore the need to develop any further.

- **Myth #7: Leadership is an art and can't be made into a science.** Leadership is both art and science. The problem with making science out of leadership is that it is inherently intangible and complex. It is situational. However, just because people don't take the time to understand the science behind human behavior doesn't mean science doesn't exist and can't be applied. Like building a house, the most effective way to build leadership competence follows a structured approach that includes creating a plan, establishing a strong foundation, building a quality infrastructure, and finishing it off with an attractive facade. This still leaves flexibility for the art—different architectures and furnishings, just like great leadership allows for people's individual styles and uniqueness. Adding to this support for leadership as a science are many recent advances in behavioral science. Improvements in understanding how the human brain works are increasingly making leadership more tangible and scientific.

- **Myth #8: Leadership can be boiled down to a few simple principles.** Leadership is multidimensional and situational. It is wide-ranging and dynamic. It can't be adequately defined or learned through a few simple principles. It can be taught, understood, and learned, but not by merely following a few core values or general philosophies. Still, people try to make it simple. They treat leadership like the latest fad diet or fitness device, as if learning leadership were as simple as spending five minutes a day using a contraption to build ripped abdominal muscles. It is no wonder that inexperienced managers who try to follow simple suggestions become confused, if not cynical, about leadership. Leadership is well within the realm of comprehension, but like most any profession, it can't be effectively performed by only following a few precepts.

- **Myth #9: The goal of leadership is to make money.** Goals are different for different people. Goals can be financial, professional, relational, social, spiritual, or physical. Leadership is *success-neutral*. Leadership is about achieving results, not necessarily financial results. It takes great leadership to promote a new product, raise responsible children, develop a vibrant community, and maintain a faithful congregation. It takes great leadership to complete a project on time, build products to high-quality specifications, or lead loved ones through a family crisis. Great leaders are focused on achieving a desired outcome, not necessarily with making more money.

- **Myth #10: Leadership is the end goal.** Leadership is the means to a goal, not a goal in itself. Leadership is how you achieve results. Leadership is working in, through, and with people to achieve an outcome that would be impossible on your own and is greater than what others could achieve on their own. If you're not moving people toward a meaningful goal, you are not leading. Leading people without a focus on producing results is merely activity. It is busyness. It is arrogance. The purpose of leadership isn't to gain power so you can exercise your ego. Leadership isn't about earning the right to control people. It isn't about impressive titles, corner offices, or country club memberships. If you aspire to be a leader for the purpose of status, fame, or fortune, you will be a disappointment to yourself and your team. Great leadership is about producing results. Any stature or fame achieved from great leadership is the byproduct of great leadership, not its goal. Leadership is the means to achieving a desired outcome.

> LEADERSHIP IS THE MEANS TO A GOAL, NOT A GOAL IN ITSELF.

The Measure of Leadership

Few areas have more impact on an organization's performance than leadership, yet leadership on its own is intangible. Its effect can't be denied, but it is not directly measurable. The real impact of great leadership comes through the results of those whom leaders influence, not the leader's own individual contribution.

Evaluating leadership effectiveness involves looking at the results of the leader's sphere of influence. Leadership effectiveness is the difference between how a team would perform on its own and how it performs under its leader's influence. It is leaders' impact on their teams' efficiency, production, quality, attitude, skill development, and results.

Leadership effectiveness is the measure of what happens as a result of leaders' influence. It is the difference in the condition before and after of the organization, department, neighborhood, city, county, state, country, or family they lead. It is the measure of their impact on areas such as those listed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Measures of Leadership Effectiveness

• Profit	• Operational efficiency
• Sales	• Asset utilization
• Customer satisfaction	• Return on investment
• Partner satisfaction	• Cost containment
• Employee morale	• Employee sense of responsibility
• Teamwork	• Employee sense of urgency
• Environmental stewardship	• Employee pride and self-esteem
• Community improvement	• Decision-making quality
• Employee turnover	• Employee engagement
• Internal promotions	• Employee skill development
• Employee productivity	• Product quality

- Competitive differentiation
- Communication flow
- Strategy formulation
- Talent utilization
- Progress toward vision
- Adoption of organizational values

Great leaders positively impact these performance areas. The assessment of a leader's effectiveness should therefore be based on how much his or her influence impacts these results. Although leaders don't control every variable and circumstance that impacts their organization, they influence how their people react to the variables and circumstances. The actions leaders take, as well as the actions they choose not to take, impact their organization's performance. That is the reason it is customary for leaders to receive the blame as well as the credit for what happened in their organization, regardless of the cause.

Measuring the quality of leadership is made even more difficult by money and contracts. Professional coaches and corporate managers have a crutch. Athletes and employees follow their coaches and managers if for no other reason than because they are contractually obligated to do so or because they won't get paid if they don't. Contrast these paid employees to volunteers who follow leaders of nonprofit charities. Volunteers follow by choice. A true test of great leadership lies in how well the leader's inherent ability to influence causes people to take action and produce results by choice. It lies in how well people make the choice to adopt an organizational initiative, develop their skills, or give their best effort without the influence of bonuses, awards, contracts, or continued employment. Consider the extent to which others would follow you and take direction from you if they weren't paid to do so or if you didn't have any authority over them. This reveals the extent of your true leadership effectiveness.

Another measure of leadership effectiveness is how well a leader's followers perform after the leader is gone. You have reached

the highest level of leadership when you have embedded sustainable high-performance behaviors into your people and the fabric of your organization. You are truly a great leader when you have transferred your knowledge, competence, and passion to others to the extent that they no longer need you. It may not feel very rewarding when you are no longer in the critical path of an organization's daily activity, but if your employees operate at the highest level without you because you enabled, empowered, and coached them to do so, that is the ultimate reward deserving of the highest evaluation.

When people refer to leadership qualities, they use phrases like *instilling passion*, *shaping the culture*, and *fostering teamwork*. These qualities, like most other leadership qualities, are intangibles. Intangibles such as culture, values, passion, teamwork, and attitudes produce great performance. A successful company's competitive advantage is rooted in intangibles like passionate people, a collaborative spirit, and an ability to innovate continuously. Any cynic who believes value has to be tangible for it to be real needs to look no further than examples like these. Like the wind, you might not be able to see a leader's contributions directly, but the effects are undeniable.

While great leadership isn't always obvious, poor leadership is easy to see. As opposed to well-led organizations where activities run smoothly without drawing much attention to them, poorly led organizations draw a lot of attention. Poor leadership causes poor communication, frustration, bickering, internal competition, bureaucracy, politics, and gossip. In poorly led organizations, employees are noticeably disengaged and apathetic. Their results are inconsistent. Employees are unsure of their roles, responsibilities, and level of authority. They have to ask regularly for guidance or permission to perform their work. Employees work primarily in react mode because they have to contend constantly with quality and operational issues. Employee passion and enthusiasm are largely absent. Confidence is displaced by fear. Teamwork is exchanged for conflict.