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# **Ivey Business Journal Article Begs the Question: What Does Leadership Mean?**



This article in the May/June 2010 *Ivey Business Journal* takes the thought-provoking positions that:

- In recent years, leadership has supplanted management as the business world's dominant paradigm.
- However, leadership is about changing direction, while management is about executing the current direction.
- Therefore, if management is not the dominant paradigm moving forward, it should at least share the stage with leadership.

I see the argument that executive assessment and coaching consultancy principal Mitch McCrimmon is making here. Yet, **I don't know if I would *always* define leadership as facilitating change.** Certainly that plays a part, especially when times are better and companies can more easily expand and explore new markets.

But when I look at our employee engagement research on the 2010 Top Small Company Workplaces award finalists, I come to the conclusion that at any given time leadership is more about defining and creating a desired workplace culture of ownership. This includes developing employees within this culture, and taking great care when bringing new hires into it. So as opposed to change, I think of leadership as representing a path moving forward from a set point.

I guess the question I'm really asking here to define leadership is, *What is the split for a CEO in being "chief culture officer" (as many leaders of our small business honorees think of themselves) versus "chief P&L strategist"?*

I think with the economy being where it is now, most CEOs would consider themselves to be the latter; this makes total sense and does support change as being a central (maybe *the*) component of leadership. But if a CEO thinks of him or herself more as the former, that could support the notion of an established, productive workplace culture as being the constant, with all other internal and external elements of the business revolving around that.

**What are your thoughts here?**

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