

Bridgeway to Success™

October 2009

**BE BOTH TASK-
AND
RELATIONSHIP-
ORIENTED.**

Hybrid, Flexible Leadership

It's an old debate. Are task-oriented or relationship-oriented leaders more effective?

Proponents of task-orientation cite the importance of defining objectives and clarifying roles and responsibilities. Without these, they argue, great relationships won't get the job done. Not so fast, counter the relationship-orientation supporters. It takes people to get things done. Clear objectives, roles and responsibilities are meaningless if people don't believe in their leaders and don't want to do what is asked of them.

It's the p*** and s*** dilemma. If you're too task-oriented, you p*** people off. If you're too relationship-oriented, s*** doesn't get done.

Recent research suggests that the most effective leaders are *hybrid leaders*. They are both task- and relationship-oriented. Critically, they are also *flexible leaders*. They adapt their orientation to the specific needs of the situation. For example, at the front end of projects they lean to task-orientation to provide the required clarity. As projects progress they shift more to relationship-orientation to manage motivation, morale and team dynamics. Both orientations are necessary, neither is sufficient.

Here's the big picture: When assessing, planning and executing strategy, focus on both task and relationship – the technical side and the people side. Be a hybrid, flexible leader.

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