

## Definition of Power How it Differs from Leadership

HASSAN ALI ALMOMEN

### Abstract

When we consider power, which is the capacity to accomplish something in a particular way you need it done by any methods essential, one person that rings a bell is Napoleon Bonaparte. He led his kingdom with an iron clenched hand and had no issues going to war to protect it or to offer it some assistance with growing. His management was by power only, and on the off chance that you contended with his point of view, you were not going to be around for long. We then can pause for a minute to take a gander at leadership. A man that rings a bell is John Kennedy. President Kennedy tested NASA to put a man on the moon and through leadership, persuaded and inspired his group to get that going. His achievements did not drop by utilizing power, but rather by utilizing leadership and painting a vision for others to take after.

---

Power is a multifaceted concept that takes on meaning depending on the context under consideration. An individual is considered to be in power when he or she holds some position that comes with the authority to give directions, make some decisions, and exercise control over the others within the system. Power is also considered in terms of the ability of an individual or group of people to do something (Green, 2009). This may touch on the available skills, energy, and resources that are required to carry out that activity. For

instance, one can talk of the president of the United States as having the power to restore calm in some warring African nation. What is implied, in this case, is the ability of the president to restore peace in that country using any means he considers appropriate. Power is also considered in terms of the legal mandate or authority given to an individual to undertake or influence some activity (Bal et al., 2008). Individuals can then say that they have no power to make some decision implying that they are not allowed by the law to do so.

With the above illustrations, power can then be defined as the ability of an individual to exercise control and have things done, usually by others, according to his or her will. It is what will make the other people follow the commands or directions given by an individual. Power comes with the authority that is associated with the position one holds that gives him or her ability to influence or dictate the actions of the other people. In order to influence the behavior of the other people, the individual can apply different approaches, which give rise to different forms of power: coercive power, reward power, legitimate power, expert power, and referent power (Green, 2009). The agent (one using the power) usually has mission that he or she wants accomplished by the targeted person or people. Coercive power is applied when the agent uses some force to have the

target follow suit. The latter has no option but to comply in fear of the possible punishment. Reward power arises due to the level of control that the agent has over resources. The target will execute a given order with expectation that he will receive some reward from the one in power (Bal et al., 2008; Green, 2009). Legitimate power emerges when targets comply with the order knowing that the agent has the legal authority to make the orders or give such requests. Similarly, one enjoys expert power when he is quite knowledgeable compared to the others. The others will comply simply through the understanding that the agent has more knowledge and skills in the given area and knows what should be done (Green, 2009). Finally, a leader exercises referent power when he requests a friend to take some action that he (the leaders) considers important. The follower will comply depending on how

he considers that act important and in order to receive some favor from the leader.

Power and leadership are different but very closely related. While power rests in the ability to exercise some control over people and activities, leadership has much to do with the influence on the attitude, behavior, and actions of the followers (Bal et al., 2008).

One needs power to exercise some good leadership. The type of power used by a leader will also characterize the kind of leadership he or she exercises. Some of the approaches will receive resistance from the followers while others will strengthen the leader-follower relationship. Effective leadership is achieved when one exercises power in a way that does not threaten the followers (Green, 2009). On the other hand, the leader also needs not to be too lenient

with, or persuasive to, the followers. He may end up relying so much on them. In essence, leaders should be very cautious in the use of both coercive and reward powers if they have to exercise good leadership. This is not to say that a leader should not apply the two types of power at all. Coercion may be necessary when the leader feels there is some deliberate laxity. Rewards are also necessary to motivate the best performers.

## References

- Bal, V., Campbell, M., Steed, J., & Meddings, K. (2008). The role of power in effective leadership. Center for Creative Leadership.
- Green, R. D. (2009). Leadership as a function of power. *APMP* Fall 1999, pp. 54-56

# IJSER