

Leadership

*"Of the best leader, when he is gone, they will say:
We did it ourselves."*

Chinese Proverb

Many people profess to have it, that *Leadership Ability*, but few people truly possess it. They read the books, listen to the tapes, go to the seminars, and then pronounce themselves **Leaders**. They use words like *empowerment, total quality management, excellence, vision, commitment*, and in the same breath, want to take the credit. As James O'Toole, a professor and leadership expert puts it, "**Ninety-five percent of American managers today say the right thing. Five percent actually do it.**"

I recently worked with an old friend who had chosen to go with a new company. Having worked with him several times before in other organizations, I had seen his management style in action. It was a sheer delight to watch him operate in an entirely new company, with all new people, and see that he had already been awarded the title of LEADER by his people: a man who respects, understands, directs, motivates, and helps his people; a man who can be given a difficult task and accomplish it while at the same time CARING for his people and customers; **a man who understands that great leadership will seem like less leadership.**

It is not how your people perform when you are there, but how they perform when you are not, that is the benchmark of a true leader.

ã 2001 Robert Stevenson, Seeking Excellence Publishing

*The superior leader
gets things done with little motion.
He imparts instructions not through many words
but through a few deeds.
He keeps informed about everything
but interferes hardly at all.
He is a catalyst,
and though things would not get done as well
if he weren't there,
when they succeed he takes no credit.
And because he takes no credit,
credit never leaves him.*

Lao-Tzu