

## The other half of organizational effectiveness

In their new book, *Leadership is Half the Story*, Marc and Samantha Hurwitz point out what has been hiding in plain sight: There can be no leadership without followership. Further, they are challenging the leadership sacred cow — the idea that, somehow, being a leader is better than being a follower.

In their book and at a recent presentation to the Strategic Capability Network in Toronto, the pair stated: “Followership is a distinct and equally valuable role to leadership.”

The Hurwitzes make a good case for understanding this perspective and applying that understanding for the benefit of individuals and organizations.

Critically, they identify that all members of an organization — from the CEO to the shop floor — play both roles, and there are distinct benefits to teasing apart the competencies and behaviours of both.

What does all this mean for organizational effectiveness? Plenty.

From an OE perspective, the Hurwitzes’ leadership/followership revelations manifest in two ways: the



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manager/direct report relationship and the peer/peer inter-team or cross-functional relationship.

These are two places — and these are hiding in plain sight — where the rubber hits the road, where work gets done that is aligned toward the achievement of strategy.

That work is the fundamental building block of an organization’s effectiveness. If it’s muddled, unclear and fraught, then effectiveness is muddled, unclear and fraught.

Clarity of expectations and behaviours is what is called for in

those relationships; what precisely are the authorities and accountabilities of each party involved?

Between managers and direct reports, there are the universal authorities (also known as “rights”) and accountabilities of all employees, and the additional accountabilities and authorities particular to managers.

Between peers, there are authorities (sanctioned by the managers of both parties) specific to the work being done.

The mechanics of accountability systems go a long way toward ensuring clarity between roles: “Who has what authority to get something from whom, in which circumstances?”

The result is an effective organization where employees have the clarity they need to get work done effectively and efficiently.

What Marc and Samantha Hurwitz have done is more precisely define those relationships. Specifically, they have provided us with the means to understand following and leading are equal partners.

That clarity about authority and accountability are only components of a relationship and not an exercise in stronger versus weaker, dominance versus submission or more versus less.

The Hurwitzes are removing that whiff of judgment from the relationship and focusing on the most effective means of achieving strategy.

We have got to stop thinking about accountability and authority going up and down, and think instead of two roles adding value to each other.

Marc and Samantha Hurwitz have taken the aging pyramid-shaped organization chart — which is very rusty now — and have gone and turned it on its side.

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