Are you a leader? Manager? Both? As a management or leadership figure of a team within the A/E/C industries, you know that structure, organization, and deadlines are (probably) the most over-utilized words in your work-vocabulary. Though general organizational management is the foundation upon which leaders are born, leading a team translates more into creating inspiration and challenging employees rather than strictly getting the job done. We need to explore what gets our A/E/C marketing and business development teams excited and motivated in our ever-changing world.

So, what does it take to become a leader? Within our creative teams, we must set a clear vision, inspire, and have high emotional intelligence to transition from transactional management to more of a transformational approach.

Manager vs. Leader
In short, traditional managers are transactional. The mantra “Get in, get the job done, and get the job done well,” is what our managers are most likely following. Though these transactional managers are successful at accomplishing metrics and tasks, how are they affecting our employees? Was this the influential leader, boss, or authority figure you envisioned above?

Leaders built from managers, however, share transformational qualities. While getting the job done efficiently and effectively is the primary goal of those in senior positions, leaders go above and beyond metrics and knowledge performance indicators. Creating inspiration through charisma, dedication, high standards, and a shared vision introduces ways we can begin to transform our A/E/C marketing and business development teams.

Charisma. Are you born with the charisma and personality it takes to be a leader? It is contemporary belief that you can learn how to be charismatic. One way to implement this is by using your voice and body language to convey your vision and get your teams engaged and excited. Are you launching a new initiative? Perhaps you are implementing a new graphics software or CRM system for the team to utilize? Speaking clearly, effectively, and enthusiastically helps get your marketing team motivated, instills confidence and is a catalyst for increased morale and
overall acceptance of the new measure, vision, or goal. Incorporating emotional connectedness with individuals creates the ability to have deeper and more visceral relationships that allow the vision to be embraced and relationships to be built.

**Dedication.** How invested are you in the success of your direct reports? Do you express your gratitude and appreciation towards them? Basic human interaction proves that when we feel appreciated, we are more likely to become motivated and feel more confident in our roles. Mutual respect, in turn, will develop a higher level of morale, engagement, and thought-provoking work. Challenging, teaching, and coaching your employees in an environment that supports and facilitates success create the motivation that is required to grow your direct reports into the leaders of tomorrow.

**Standards.** High standards and challenging goals or deadlines may seem unforgiving. However, by pushing your team to grow, learn, and become resourceful, you are helping them advance and become more valuable assets as employees. In the short term, your marketing and business development team will feel accomplished once they reach (or surpass) these goals. In the long term, acting as the support system for your team, you create an empowering environment that team members will be able to flourish and thrive in. Though you should create challenges for your team, if you create goals that are unattainable, your team may quickly feel discouraged and inadequate.

Get to know your team. Learn their strengths and weaknesses, and learn to leverage their strengths and develop their shortcomings. This knowledge allows you to incorporate self-relevance into your techniques. Your team ultimately wants to know what’s in it for them.

For example, your marketing assistant is great at communicating with the studio directors and senior management throughout all of the offices. In addition, he/she finds it easy to collaborate with peers, yet has a more difficult time sticking
to and meeting deadlines. Challenge him or her to utilize their communication skills to complete deadlines more efficiently. Structure these changes with measurable and specific goals—create a game plan. For example, establish attainable, yet challenging deadlines for the proposal process in order for your employee to become more efficient, win more contracts, and create high-quality packages. A more assertive approach may assist them to increase task-oriented behavior. Finally, reward the individual for accomplished goals, which appeals to their self-relevance.

**Shared Vision.** What is the goal of your marketing department? Is it to enter and gain traction in the hospitality sector? Is it to have 50 retail-related proposals submitted by the end of the year? Perhaps it’s to increase customer engagement and client retention? This concept of a shared vision helps employees feel accountable for their tasks and responsibilities.

With a shared vision, your team is aware of the role it plays in the big picture of the firm. For example, you just hired a marketing intern to help with data management. Without insight into the big picture and goal of the department, this new intern may be quick to feel discouraged and unappreciated, and may begin lacking productivity and overall engagement. In contrast, by explaining their role in relation to the vision of the company, this intern will feel empowered and feel like they are making an impact and contributing to the success of the department. For example, explain to your new marketing intern that one of the department’s goals is to increase client retention and communications. Share with them that, by having the most accurate and current customer database, the company as a whole will be able to have a more seamless communication process with past, current, and future clients, which will help increase client retention and engagement.

Transitioning between managing and leading doesn’t happen overnight. The process takes time and trial and error within your respected teams. Within the A/E/C industries, our marketing teams are always evolving. Creating inspiration throughout your team is the first step to becoming a leader and visionary as a marketing and business development pacesetter in this competitive space.