
MONDAY MANNA**Sept 21, 2026****INFLUENCE MATTERS MORE THAN POSITION****By Sergio Fortes**

For many years, leadership has been widely regarded as a natural consequence of holding a position of authority. If you have the status, the thinking goes, you must be a leader. It was assumed that the simple fact of receiving a title, taking on a leadership role, or moving into a larger office would automatically generate influence. Reality, however, tells a different story.

A position may grant formal authority, but it does not guarantee moral authority. It may secure compliance from the people that the executive is responsible for overseeing, but it rarely ensures that admiration, trust, or genuine commitment will follow.

The greatest example of leadership in history comes from someone who never held political office or commanded an army. Jesus of Nazareth influenced people not through the authority He possessed, but through the consistency demonstrated between what He taught and how He lived. When Jesus declared, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44), He was making a radical distinction.

His disciples had just been jostling for position, arguing about who among them would be the greatest. By contrast, Jesus provided a model of leadership – servant leadership – that challenges organizations and leaders to this day. He summed it up by declaring, "For even the Son of Man [Himself] did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Influence is not about forcing people to obey. It is about inspiring them to believe – in themselves, their leader, and their shared mission and goals. When influence is authentic, people do not work merely because they are required to do so. They work because they understand the purpose, have confidence in their leader, and genuinely want to contribute to something greater than themselves.

Within organizations, this distinction is easy to recognize. It is common to find managers who rely on their position to control people, assuming that because they are "the boss," subordinates have no choice but to be compliant with what they are instructed to do. Meanwhile, true leaders are those who win people over through their example. Both might achieve measurable results, but only one builds committed teams, healthy workplaces, and lasting trust.

Genuine influence is born where credibility meets consistency. It grows when words and actions move in the same direction. The apostle Paul understood this principle when he wrote to followers of Jesus in ancient Corinth: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul did not appeal to his apostolic title or status as one who had personally encountered Jesus. He appealed to the example of his life. That remains the greatest asset any leader can possess.

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People may obey a position. Their job security may depend upon it. They may respect the organizational hierarchy. But they will follow with sincere trust and commitment only the leader whose character inspires trust. Leadership influence has never been a privilege reserved only for those who hold high positions, those who occupy prized corner offices and whose names appear at the top of organizational charts. It is a responsibility entrusted to everyone who chooses to serve rather than to be served.

In the end, positions come and go. Organizations evolve. Structures are redesigned. Yet the influence a leader has on people's lives can endure for many years. Because leadership is not, first and foremost, about a position. It is about influence — built daily through character, strengthened by example, and confirmed by the way we treat people.

At the end of each day, every leader should honestly ask: ***Is my team following me simply because I hold a position – or because my life inspires their trust?***

Sergio Fortes served CBMC Brazil for over two decades and was also a member of the CBMC International Board. A devoted follower of Jesus of Nazareth, he serves the corporate world as a consultant and leadership mentor, integrating faith, leadership, and human development, while continuing Christ's mission of making disciples.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you define “leadership”? Now, how would you define “influence”? What do you think is the difference?
2. Why do you think the concept of leading by serving others seems such an alien concept in much of today's marketplace?
3. Is there a danger that by determining to humbly serve others it could result in undermining one's impact as a leader? Explain your answer.
4. Think of some leaders who inspire and motivate you, who have succeeded in bringing out the best in you. Have they demonstrated the kind of influence described in this Monday Manna?

Challenge for This Week

Take some time this week to evaluate the kind of influence you have at your workplace. Whether you hold a high position within your company or organization, or rank lower in the corporate hierarchy, you still can have influence on those with whom you work.

Discuss this with a trusted friend, mentor or advisor and invite their prayers as you strive to become a person of great influence for Jesus Christ.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Luke 22:27; John 6:38, 13:14-15; Galatians 5:13-14; Philippians 2:3-7

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