

5 Common Challenges and Sacrifices in the Producer-to-Leader Transition

By Linda Sasser

Isn't it interesting how so many people want to advance their careers and climb the ladder but few want the not-so-glamorous responsibilities that come with an impressive title, like finishing last?

That's why I believe that **leading others is a calling**. Those who think leadership embodies a position, title, or corner office will be a disappointment to the people who have the misfortune of working under them.

When I reflect on the producers I have been blessed to lead, there are five common sacrifices and challenges they have all faced while making the transition from producer to leader.

1. **Balancing Producing/Leader Responsibilities:** There is no question that deciding to take on a leadership role will take up some valuable time, both at the office and away. Let me be clear: The people you lead come first. The production you are responsible for comes after your people.

However, your production can't suffer. In fact, your production is even more important than it used to be because of that new title you have! You still need to produce, yet at the same time, you will teach and lead others to be productive too – first by example, then by coaching.

And because you make others more successful, your production as a team excels. Over time your personal production will fade away because the team's production is accelerating. The company will benefit from increased performance from a higher performing team.

2. **Prioritizing Prime Time** – The prime time for leading your teammates is during work hours when you are together. Save administrative or other non-teammate tasks for the hours of the day when your team is not available or after hours.

This takes discipline and a little creativity! For example, I return e-mails when I'm going through the car wash. I catch up on a little reading when I'm stuck standing in line or sitting in a waiting room. I take work home and do it while my daughter is doing her homework. If you have kids, set up a family homework time.

3. **Giving Up the Spotlight** – One of the most difficult things for a producer to let go of is the recognition of being “the producer.” Stepping out of the spotlight is difficult, yet I think you will find that pointing it at someone else is very rewarding. As the leader, you are responsible for elevating your team. They should be the ones on stage getting the applause.

4. **Resisting Peer Pressure** – Working alongside your friends, then having the responsibility of leading your friends, can be a delicate situation. If you change into their boss overnight you won't survive!

Don't change anything over night. You are still "on the team." You just have some additional responsibilities for the team's performance. Serve your team, set expectations, and lead by example. Be very aware of perks or privileges. If you didn't take them before, don't take them now that you have a title.

5. **Spinning your Producer Scoreboard** – Even though we're leaders, we still want to be producers. We can't help it; it's in our blood. As a leader you are still producing – you're producing leaders! Challenge your achiever mindset to do great work by coaching others to perform better. Be a producer by growing others.

Remember, leadership is about *who* you are. It's not something you can turn on at 8:00 and turn off at 5:00. If a leader realizes this and seeks to serve the team, that leader will grow and sustain their organization's future *and* its next generation of leaders.

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