

## LEADERSHIP

# How Managers Become Leaders

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**H**arald (not his real name) is a high-potential leader with 15 years of experience at a leading European chemical company. He started as an assistant product manager in the plastics unit and was quickly transferred to Hong Kong to help set up the unit's new Asian business center. As sales there soared, he soon won a promotion to sales manager. Three years later he returned to Europe as the marketing and sales director for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, overseeing a group of 80 professionals. Continuing his string of successes, he was promoted to vice president of marketing and sales for the polyethylene division, responsible for several lines of products, related services, and a staff of nearly 200.

All of Harald's hard work culminated in his appointment as the head of the company's plastic resins unit, a business with more than 3,000 employees worldwide. Quite intentionally, the company had assigned him to run a small but thriving business with a strong team. The idea was to give him the opportunity to move beyond managing sales and marketing, get his arms around an entire business, learn what it meant to head up a unit with the help of his more-experienced team, and take his leadership skills to the next level in a situation free from complicating problems or crises. The setup seemed perfect, but a few months into the new position, Harald was struggling mightily.