

A question of leadership?

By Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

Leadership is an important skill for anyone wanting to create or enhance a successful career. Leadership can lead to recognition and open doors to your success.

Think about the following list of names for a moment.

| | | |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| Meg Whitman | Jack Welsh | Walt Disney |
| Mary Kay Ash | W. Clement Stone | Warren Buffet |
| Eiji Toyoda | ???? | Sam Walton |
| Fred Smith | Lee Iacocca | Bill Gates |
| Michael Dell | Clive Beddoe | Steve Jobs |

Ask yourself:

- What do they have in common?
- What do you know about them and/or their companies?
- What connections or commonalities do they share?

Now you might be thinking:

- Each of them started, built, or led a billion dollar company employing thousands.
- Many of them started with very little capital, overcame struggles, and/or took on struggling organizations to recreate them and lead them to success.
- Each has gained national or international exposure and recognition for their leadership, success, and achievements.
- Each of them has become or was fairly wealthy.
- Some have retired well or passed away.
- The majority of them are male.

And you would be correct. However the connections I draw from their inclusion are slightly different. Let me take a minute to remind you of the organizations each of these leaders created or led to greater success.

- Meg Whitman started an on-line company called **eBay**.
- **Mary Kay** Ash created the company that still bears her name;
- Eiji Toyoda was part of the amazing family who created **Toyota**;
- Fred Smith launched **FedEx** which continues to deliver value;
- Michael Dell started **Dell Computers** while still in college;
- Jack Welsh was a legendary **GE** leader who created leaders and a very profitable company;

- W. Clement Stone made his initial fortune in the insurance industry, but is best known for starting **Success Magazine** and mentoring one of my favorite authors, Og Mandino;
- Lee Iacocca took on the challenge of rebuilding **Chrysler** and saved them from bankruptcy;
- Clive Beddoe is one of 4 founding partners with successful Calgary, AB based **Westjet**;
- **Walt Disney** needs no introduction for his creative leadership;
- Warren Buffet is one of North America's savviest investors;
- Sam Walton started a small store called **Wal-Mart** which grew to be the world's largest company;
- Bill Gates created **Microsoft** and gave **Apple's** Steve Jobs someone to compete with. ☺

Let me ask you two personal questions:

- Can you see 'your' name included in the 'center' square at sometime in your future? Yes? No? Why not?
- Do you see the '*less obvious*' connections?

Now you might be saying, 'NO' to these questions. Some of you would say, "*No way, Bob! I can't see 'my' name included in this list of famous, influential, successful, and wealthy people.*"

Why not? What is stopping you from being included at sometime in your future? Each of these took personal leadership over his/her life and business careers. Each created something of definite value for those who joined them in their quest.

Each exhibited definite attributes of '*true*' leadership and effective management, which propelled them to succeed in their respective ventures.

Each spelled their '*leadership*' with multiple 'P's. Their success and track records reinforce that observation. Each of them exhibited *all or most* of the following traits in various degrees of intensity in their life and their leadership. None of them started out rich or famous.

Each of us can learn from their example, build on their expertise, and expand our personal leadership success. Can you see a glimpse of yourself here?

Look at the characteristics I observed in their successful leadership. Let me ask you again. "*Can you see yourself included?*" Perhaps you are now saying, "Yes!" That is great!

Each of you has the capacity to take personal leadership over your area and expand your leadership role.

There is not one person reading this who has not exhibited some or all of these traits in various degrees or in specific situations. Wouldn't you agree? Ask your team?

- **Passion,**
- **Purpose,**
- **Principled,**
- **Persistence,**
- **Performance oriented,**
- **Positive,**
- **Perspective,**
- **Persuasive,**
- **People builders, and**
- **Pride of ownership.**

Each of these traits can be honed and enhanced. Each of them is a learned and applied leadership success skill.

- What stops you from studying and working to enhance and expand your perspective and performance as a leader where you serve?
- What stops you from taking personal responsibility for your growth, involvement, and career success?
- What stops you from taking personal responsibility for your career and area of responsibility

Only you! So why not go for it? Why not become that leader? Are you willing to step up and take on that leadership role? Are you willing to be included in the list of people who continue to spell leadership with multiple 'P's?

It's really a question of leadership.

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