

Leadership models in action

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



Introduction

Leaders are born while others are made probably sounds cliché but one undisputable fact is that leadership is critical to steering a business or organization to success. As Jack Welch quotes ' Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own and relentlessly drive it to completion. (www. thinkexist. com.) Notably, there are many leaders who have existed in past century but arguably very few great leaders exist. Additionally, the different great leaders apply different leadership approaches as well as possess different leadership traits. Nonetheless, there are various aspects that cut across the many leadership models and traits, for instance, commitment, drive, passion, empowerment, decisiveness and resilience. (Bennis, 2002). In order to clearly demonstrate leadership in business this paper will focus on AT & T Network manager Thomas Reeds who is arguable a role model in the leadership circles. His leadership approach is both influenced and inspiring and later in the paper a few examples will be used to demonstrate why is make this claim.

Jack Welch commands attention in corporate leadership circles as his visionary leadership revived the corporations in the US during 1980 and to date; his philosophies continue to transform during ordinary companies to legendary companies Thomas Reeds. Follows in the footsteps of this great CEO and his leadership approach is always transformational. His ability to inspire and energize followers to a certain direction in achieving the company's goals is brilliant.

Some, how he aligns corporate strategies to daily operations of employees and clarifies issues to the employees that they get a greater picture of what

is expected. In this way, he excites and ingrains commitment of employees to future goals. More to that, his emphasis on transactional aspects of leaders i. e. more of the bread and butter is also manifests in his leadership approach. This is seen in the way he encourages a give and take ‘win win’ situation in leadership. Employees are regarded for meeting targets and compliance to aligned expectations. His two years in that post has generated AT&T a neat amount of profits which is deemed to continue. Thomas may sound like a larger than life person and possible act as such. However, his ability to combine humility and deep passionate will for success is almost paradoxical. He’s is truly a level 5 leader.

By level 5 leaders it means a leader who has reached the highest hierarchal level of his leadership capabilities and has been able to lead a company from a good to a great company with substantial sustained excellence (Morris, 2006). Admittedly, the improved status of AT&T company has not been a function of Thomas Reed’s leadership approach alone, but rather he has used his influence to ensure that other factors necessary to transform AT &T are present in the company, the right organization culture and strategic resources among others. He has been at the helm of it all. Leadership is not about showing off what one can but actually doing it so that others can see what ought to be done and how it is done.

This is what Thomas Reeds always says. His dressing and happy demeanor can almost make one mistake him for an intern. He mingle with the employees at AT&T to know what their views are and get input on what needs to be improved or changed. This is not to say that Thomas Reeds is one to joke around with. His unpretentious and vicious determination in life

also makes him a person to stand up to be counted. Most times, it is possible to find Thomas sharing his early life experiences with other aspiring leaders under his stewardship of how he grew up in the firm, struggled through college and university to where he is now. His experiences are always refreshing and empowering and it is not hard to notice the iron will and passion to nurture talent in his followers. He inspires them to be the best they can be. Adversities will always come your way he says but it is up to you make a firm resolve to stay ahead or hang in there rather than quite. Seemingly, tough times cut out leaders to be perfect and strong.

Indisputably, Thomas Reeds leadership approach has been influenced by Welch's rules of thumb for instance, the important of erasing bureaucracy in the business ranking the customers and shareholders highly and dominating market share. These teachings applied coupled with unique attributes such as streamlining the workforce set out Thomas leadership styles as the reason behind the company's success.

Nevertheless, Thomas feels that change and dynamism in leadership is an indispensable attribute to effective leadership in today's business environment. He is quick to note that although Welch and Sloan's philosophies were no less than brilliant; their applicability is now wearing off. He feels that the challenges that the leadership approaches developed by the two masterminds of leadership success were designed to surmount the barriers and problem of the then times and new leadership approached need to be developed to effectively face the new challenges in the modern era. Yet he does not discount the fact that Welch techniques are still usable and can contribute immensely in the success of a company.

Leadership inspires people or rather captures the minds and souls of people. According to writers Goffee and Jones (2000) leadership is about results yet at the same time is not only about performance but also meaning. True to this expression, it is impossible to excite people to extraordinary levels without enabling them first see the meaning and worth behind the actions. In this case extemporary leadership doubles performance and perhaps this is what makes companies with great leaders excel differently from the ones that merely have ok leaders. This they do by making performance meaningful. (Goffee & Jones, 2000).

Given this insight a critical look at AT&T Network manger, Thomas Reeds leadership approach, it is evident that he makes his employees or followers find meaning in their endeavors. This is done in such a way that corporate strategies are translated ot actionable plans and particularly daily task of the employees such that the change and improved performance starts from the bottom to the top.

After board meetings with corporate committees, Thomas Reeds goes out his own way ot call for separate meetings with different groups of staff to discuss how the corporate strategies affect them and how the staff stand to benefit from implementing the objectives of the company. This has helped AT&T workforce to achieve meaning and ultimately commitment to outstanding performance. While others may think of Thomas' strategy as labored and draining, Thomas feels that it is a necessary price to pay if a leader is ot see any result of his actions. It is also at this time that a leader's qualities and passion for distinction and excellence is tested.

Notable, there are leaders and then there are authentic leaders. This leads to the quest of finding authentic leadership in AT&T manager Thomas. Authentic leaders are selfless yet are not afraid to express the self, morally guided rationality and not merely instrumental reasoning whereby the end justifies the means among others. From my countable contacts with Thomas, it is evident that his selfless nature as well as stoic philosophy of detaching one self from unethical practices and pitfalls. In disguise clarify his authenticity as a leader.

Welch exemplifies the principles of leadership quite well, for instance, he was well versed in the employees tasks and his own duties. In addition, he harnessed the need to be on the look out for new opportunities that could lead GE to new heights and where things went awry; he was not shy to take responsibility for his actions other than seeking a scapegoat. According to Welch, the important thing is to analyze the situation, correct it if possible or find lesson/s from it and then proceeds to the next challenge with courage and better knowledge. In leadership position, decisions are made every time and a leader should be capable of making timely and accurate decisions fast if it is to have any impact. This Welch had mastered. Leadership is all about looking out for the well being of the workforce, keeping them informed as well as leading by example. It is evident that Welch exemplified these traits too.

Conclusion

It is not uncommon to hear people say that they want to be more effective leaders. Great leaders are made better through practice and years of learning from previous successes and failures. The challenge therefore is for

young aspiring leaders to build in the basics lend by the outstanding leaders such as Welch and Sloan and most of all have commitment and passion to charting extemporary leadership which, who knows might be a legend for future generations.

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