Evaluate the strategic leadership of michael o'leary

Business, Leadership

Is Michael O'Leary an asset or a liability to Ryanair? The case suggests that he is both. Students could debate the pros and cons of Michael O'Leary's continuedleadershipof the company. The characteristics that have driven the company forward – his enthusiasm and energy, his strategic insight, his determination and mission orientation – can be carried too far. Is it all part of an integrated inseparable whole, so do you have to take the good with the bad?

Is this where we may enter the realm of Sidney Finkelstein'sfailurewarning signs, when you have too much of a good thing? In fact, some schools of thought would value Michael O'Leary's relentless energy and his thriving onadversity. It shows a lack of complacency – quite the opposite of what Finkelstein points out as a danger signal. The capacity to irritate may bring about conflict and change. Also, in Michael O'Leary's favour, as Ryanair's largest single shareholder, he literally ' puts hismoneywhere his mouth is'.

Another way of looking at Michael O'Leary's leadership is whether he was the right person for the job during the change era, but does the company now require more of a ' manager' than a ' leader' during a consolidation era? In other words, this is a ' horses for courses' approach to the evaluation of O'Leary's leadership. One may ask whether and/or for how much longer Michael O'Leary wants to stay in the job. Will he get bored and retire to his cattle farm, currently his hobby?

There is a suggestion that he would not be happy to preside over a static comfortable situation. Or, would he be headhunted by another airline or by another business altogether? Students might consider whether they would

headhunt Michael O'Leary, and why or why not. Chapter 10 discusses types of leaders, i. e. transformational versus transactional and types of leadership emphases and approaches. It is an interesting exercise to see how students would categorise Michael O'Leary. Perhaps what emerges is that he is difficult to categorise. What does this imply?