

Winston churchill and functions of management

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Winston Churchill has been one of the most celebrated and influential leader during the most critical moment in the 20th century history, namely onslaught of fascism and World War II. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill was born an aristocrat and attended Britain's famed Sandhurst military academy. Though Churchill had an eventful military career, his natural tendency was leaning towards politics and he identified himself with the Conservative party. In 1900 Churchill became a member of the parliament and held various high level posts during the first three decades of the 20th century. He served as First Lord of Admiralty during the outbreak of First World War and played an important role in naval policy. Churchill was again appointed as First Lord of Admiralty with the onset of Second World War and replaced Neville Chamberlain in 1940 as Prime Minister of Britain. As a wartime Prime Minister during the crucial phase of Second World War Churchill played a pivotal and inspirational leadership role which ultimately resulted in victory over Axis forces. For his far reaching contributions Churchill has been accorded various honors including honorary citizenship of United States.

Churchill's inspiring leadership has been the subject of many studies and his leadership & management skills necessitate a deeper analysis. The onset of Second World War threatened existing world order in terms of ideology and sought to engulf democracies and make them subservient to fascist and totalitarian regimes. Chamberlain's policy of appeasement has wreaked havoc in the British foreign policy and impacted war preparedness of Britain. At this critical juncture in history Churchill exhibited leadership traits akin to the ones demonstrated by business leaders. War has an interesting analogy

to business i. e. its unpredictability presents a great challenges to the leaders (Sandys 2005). A war seen at the scale of Second World War presents manifold obstacles in terms of planning, coordination and seamless execution and Churchill overcame these obstacles under daunting circumstances.

Churchill cogently demonstrated the four main principles of management, namely planning, organizing, leading and controlling, in his quest to conquer the enemies of Britain. Planning is the core skill of management and requires an analysis of current state and forecasts desired future state. The strategy development and decision making are the direct result of planning. Churchill anticipated the planning required to emerge victorious and consequently framed his political actions based on the requirements. During the early stage of World War United States practiced a policy of neutrality and Churchill predicted that Allies needed industrial might of United States to swing the war in their favor. Churchill then engaged with the political leadership, especially with President Roosevelt, to negotiate Lend-Lease Act, which has proved immensely beneficial to the beleaguered Allied Forces during the early stages of the war. Churchill cleverly planned and swung the policy makers in the United States by emphasizing the need for American assistance to support democracy (Wrigley 2002). Churchill also anticipated the impact of the unrestricted submarine warfare on British dependence on overseas imports and planned the existing resources cleverly minimizing the risk to the British population. Churchill has also been successful in his analysis of internal and external factors that may influence the outcome and

adroitly steered Soviet Union towards Allied Forces, although Soviet Union was a world apart ideologically.

Getting and being organized is the second important aspect of management. Organizational ability is of paramount importance to implement the actions envisioned during the planning stage. Churchill demonstrated his skills admirably in this area as well. As discussed above he identified the threat U-boats presented to the security and subsequently organized and set up an unit to break the enigma code employed by the Germans. Identifying and allocating right resources constitutes an important aspect of organizational ability and Churchill clearly demarcated his priorities and carried out an optimal resource allocation. Unlike political leadership in Germany, Churchill placed a premium on building relationships and forged alliances. This resulted in the freeing up British resources to concentrate on their spheres of influence. Under Churchill Britain organized and fought battles only on two fronts i. e. Western and African theater. Churchill very successfully meshed military, political and industrial objectives towards a common goal (Sandys 2005).

Leading from the front and implementing the strategies from leadership position is the third most important aspect of management. Churchill has provided dauntless leadership to the war effort. The defining traits of Churchill's leadership skill was his ability to motivate and inspire people to perform beyond the call of duty. Churchill's gifted oratorical skills was the central aspect around which his leadership skills were organized. His skills as a great communicator has been crucial driver in his success as a leader (Wreden 2002). Churchill motivated the British populace in their darkest

hours through his speeches and his willingness to lead from the front (Urwick 1965). This trait can be discerned from the fact that he actively engaged with the population during the Blitzkrieg and visited ruined streets of London. Tactical flexibility is another leadership skills that Churchill exhibited to a greater extent. Departing from the existing structure of strict hierarchy and top down instructions Churchill appointed Montgomery to take over African theater and provided him with a relatively free rein. Churchill also demonstrated his superior leadership skills by appointing appropriate persons for the jobs that a wartime nation demanded.

Controlling involves establishing performance standards and identification of potential problems and preventive measures. Controlling is the fourth most important management skill and Churchill had this ability to a reasonable degree. Though he has been criticized for his overbearing personality and his ideas on colonialism, he nevertheless showed appreciable amount of controlling skills during this tenure as war time Prime Minister. Churchill's contributions towards the overall coordination of the war effort, his ability to forge strategic alliances, his willingness to show ideological flexibility are ample evidences that Churchill possessed controlling abilities of leader towards a successful goal completion.

In conclusion it can be said that Churchill visibly demonstrated all the four skills of management. Though he may not have been strong in all the skills, the synergy of fusing all these skills together has played an important role in his development as a leader. Undoubtedly his primary management asset has been his ability to lead from the front complemented by other three skills to varying degrees.

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