

Leadership in crisis:
ernest shackleton
and the epic voyage
of the endurance
flas...



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. What were the underlying causes of the Endurance crisis? Two major underlying causes of the Endurance Crisis are: A. Bad evaluation of circumstances and stubbornness instead of perseverance. Shackleton was ready to depart to Antarctica however; just when he was at South Georgia, local seamen warned him that he might get trapped and advised him to wait until next year. At this point he had the opportunity to make a decision and wait, but due to the compromises reached with his sponsors and the conditions in Britain getting in WWI he took a risk to go forth and as a result, underestimate the situation.

This I can consider to be the main crisis. B. Impulsive decision making skills. Another minor crisis occurred, for example at Elephant Island, where Shackleton had to make another decision leaving the majority of the men in there, and going out to seek for help. At South Georgia the ship damaged beyond repair, which forced Shackleton to take another risky decision, that lead him to hiking 29 miles of glaciers. 2. Two criteria often used to evaluate management and leadership are effectiveness and efficiency.

Using the 4 functions of management (planning, organizing, directing, and controlling), as your framework, plus other information you may locate, develop your argument regarding the extent to which Shackleton may be characterized as being effective/ineffective and/or efficient/inefficient. Provide some specific examples to support your argument. My argument is that Shackleton varies between being an effective and ineffective leader. However he always demonstrated efficient characteristics that enable him to be more successful.

His trip to Antarctica illustrates his wavering skills on effectiveness, for example: Shackleton did his job conscientiously, he planned every detail, he organized and directed, getting involved even in the quality of the supplies (food, clothing, camping and traveling gear). He controlled as well, making changes in the course to the south at the final point before departing to the Antarctica. In every day operations managers have to make adjustments in order to be effective, however they must take in consideration all the possible variables in every decision.

When a strategy fails or new situations appear, a manager needs to make adjustments. Sometimes these adjustments set a brand new goal that was not anticipated at all. For Shackleton his inability to do this is exemplified when the endurance sank, failing to his original goal however, new mission present itself at the very moment the Endurance sunk. His goal: bring home all the men. For this new objective, Shackleton did not plan accordingly due to the nature of the event, it was more of analyzing options (planning), choosing one (organizing), trial and error (directing), and start all over again (control).

The functions of management were implied at a very small scale. Due the conditions (low temperatures and strong winds), efficiency was in the mind of the " boss" at every moment. His strategy was to do his best in the least time possible and spending the minimum resources as possible was always the strategy. To exemplify this point of efficiency more, we can look at the food. They had limited resources and they had to manage the best way so they will not starve to death.

Tasks were assigned and they had a stricter schedule for meals and meal consumption. 3. What are the lessons from this case for leaders/managers in business situations today? A. Support and awareness of the team. A leader never leaves his men behind. Shackleton always kept an eye on them to assure that they were in good health conditions, providing them with more food and hot milk when the tasks were so demanding. B. Consult with the experts. A leader understands that does not have the expertise in every situation and in every area.

A leader must be ready to ask for help so he can make informed decisions for the good of all parties involved. Several times Shackleton demonstrated this ability when he got together with his men of trust and chose the best option for the current situation. C. Respect. Shackleton gained the respect of the crew; it was not solely respect of authority due his position or rank. He earned the title of “ boss”, in his approach of talking with the people, taking care of them, and always considering the best option at every situation that presented.

D. Authority. When there are several opinions on what to do, and a leader can't make a consensus, he has to take the decision and make it clear, that this is the direction the team has to follow because represent the best interest for the group. E. Perseverance. There are always obstacles and unpredictable situations that arise when reaching a goal. One must persist with an open mind to be wise enough to understand where perseverance ends and when stubborn begins. I allude to this in question one as a principal cause of the Endurance Crisis.