

Barack obama: leading change in the us



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Having defeated John Mc Cain, in the 44th US presidential elections on the 4 November 2008, Barack Obama became the first African-American president in the history of the US. According to Forbes, he is seen as the most powerful person in the globe because he leads the largest, most powerful and evolving economy in the world. In his capacity as the American president, he participates in the (G8) forum and he is one of the people whose decisions shape the world economy. Additionally, at home, his party holds the majority in both US house and senate; therefore, he is able to wield legislations and policies to his favour. (Forbes, 2010)

His priorities when elected as president was to develop plans to withdraw American troops from Iraq, finish the operations in Afghanistan and close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. His overall political agenda included (a) improving the American Economy, (b) introducing new legislation which aimed to provide affordable accessible health care to all American citizens as well as (c) improving education and (d) investing on renewable sources of energy in an attempt to reduce the disastrous effect of climate change. Last but not least, he aimed to stop Iran from developing their nuclear program.

One of Barack Obama's major concerns was to improve the American foreign policy image around the world, in particular the relationships between the US and Muslim countries, which under the presidency of Mr. George Bush had deteriorated as a result of the war against Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, unlike George Bush who saw himself as the ultimate CEO, who sets big goals and agendas, and runs the Federal Government as a large private corporation, Barack Obama had at the core of his internal policy the interests of the ordinary American citizen. In other words, George Bush, an autocratic

leader was succeeded by Barack Obama, a democratic leader. His vision was to inspire pride in all American citizens so that they would believe again in the potential of the American dream and restore their belief that change was possible and that they could all, together develop a new sense of common goals about their country. Clearly, Obama does not see himself as a CEO, but rather as a community organizer and facilitator whose authority is derived from the American People and whose main purpose is the public welfare. (Burnett, 2008)

What makes Barack Obama a true leader? Barack Obama is true leader because of his leadership characteristics and personality traits. One characteristic that makes him a leader is integrity, that is, the strength of someone able to keep his personal ethics. Obama has this trait because he will not compromise to anything that is unethical to him and he will stick to his position and ethics for the greater good of the country, even if he is risking his career. Another characteristic that represents Obama, with regard to foreign affairs, is his sense of respect of other countries despite their past. This led Obama to support diplomacy, even with countries which were considered terrorist such as Iran.

Barack Obama is characterized for his belief in equality for every American citizen. According to a tax plan that he introduced, middle class families will relief from taxes and so will small business because they create more jobs. Another typical characteristic of Obama is his sense of citizenship. Back in 1992, when he was still a community organizer in Chicago, he helped to create a job training program, a college preparatory tutoring program, and a tenant's rights organization. This showed Obama's self-will and motivation to

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be an active member of a community and make changes for the greater good.

Obama's sense of caring and solidarity to the American people, led to a new legislation which reformed the public health care sector as well as the education sector in the United States. This shows that the welfare of each American is at the top of its agenda. Not many leaders have the ability to have time for both their families and the public welfare, but apparently Barack Obama keeps balance of his time and also devotes time to his beloved family. Confidence is another virtue of Barack Obama, which is particularly obvious in his speeches and the way people perceive him. His confidence is inspiring; it boosts their morale and encourages them to act for a common purpose with their own goodwill.

Barack Obama was elected with a majority of 53%. A remarkable thing to say is that a few weeks after his election, a Gallup poll revealed that the 83% of the population approved of his action. This shows that the 30% of the voters who hadn't voted him at the elections changed their minds and gave another chance to the 44th American president. What made them change their mind about Barack Obama?

Since day one, Barack Obama tried to introduce important changes in domestic policies and the foreign affairs as he had promised from his campaign. His activities caught the eye of the public and gained him their trust, with his charismatic nature. One century earlier, the German Sociologist Max Weber, stated that "charismatic leaders are characterized by a certain quality in their personality by virtue of which they are set apart

from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities". Barack Obama has this charisma and his followers think of him as a leader with special qualities that he deserves their devotion and faith. This charismatic ability enabled him to bring the people to his side, especially young people and prompt them to achieve goals larger than their expectations and strengths. During his speeches he uses the expression " we" a lot, which enables him to have direct communication with his audience. Also, in his speeches he uses expressions such as " we are hurting", in order to awaken them and get their attention to important issues that affect them and make them believe that they can contribute to his work. (Fellahi, 2009)

According to Barack Obama's doctrine, a complete change will come from the transformation of the politics of America to heal America's pain and change American lives for good by replacing the politics that breed division, conflict and cynicism with a policy that increases unity and brings peace in America and the whole world. From this doctrine we can see that Barack Obama's charisma springs from empathy and inspiring power rather than authority and muscular strength such as Bush's administration. (Fellahi, 2009)

Is Barack Obama a transformational leader? Looking so far what Barack Obama has done as a president for this short term, we can see an extraordinary person who has climbed the ladder of power with a vision. One of the dominant mottos in his presidential campaign was " Change We Can Believe In". This referred to hope for a better future and a better country. So far, Barack Obama has made a lot of changes in the health care legislation

and the economic system in an attempt to fight recession. His activities have inspired many people and provide them with a new vision that increases commitment and performance.

After eight years under George Bush's transactional leadership with rewards and penalties in an attempt to force people to comply, came the transformational leadership of Barack Obama who presented himself as an initiator of change able to inspire people with his vision and create a need for change by making the people to deal with the problem, by creating a new culture of urgency and energy and not by ignoring it. (Bateman, 2010)

According to the contingency theory in leadership, different management styles will be more effective in different situations. In that case, during his presidency Barack Obama has been able to respond to different situations with different styles. For example, when he was travelling abroad he was humble and listened patiently before he spoke. However, in other cases he showed his tough side and forced the automobile industry in the US to follow some standards and change their business actions. Finally, he showed the world that he is willing to work hard to accomplish the changes he promised to bring and overcome all types of challenges in order to keep his promises. (Coggins, 2009)

In conclusion, Barack Obama's leadership has taught us that every leader needs to set his goals and create his own strategy of implementing them. Definitely, having a vision helps to set priorities and makes you confident so that you will work hard in order to achieve your goals. Barack Obama's vision has enabled him to set goals and priorities such as the welfare of the

American citizens, to be self-motivated and confident of what he was doing and inspire others to follow him. Finally, Barack Obama is characterized as an initiator of change; with his vision, he has created a need for change by making people deal with their problems and create a new culture of urgency and energy.

Sources

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