

Profiles of Top-Performing CEOs: Rising above the rest

Author: Tatenda Sayenda . November 2019

The Harvard Business Review has released its annual list of the *world's top Chief Executive Officers for 2019*. Topping this year's list is 56 years old Huang, the CEO of NVIDIA an American technology company. In the words of Robin Sharma "*Leadership is not about a title or designation. It's about impact, influence, and inspiration.*" What makes the 100 men and women that make up these top-ranking lists unique is the fact that they have faced an array of outside forces-demanding customers, profit hungry investors, savvy competitors, political and economic turmoil. Nonetheless, their companies have managed to perform remarkably well.

According to Stephen Hahn-Griffiths of the Reputation Institute (a reputation measurement and management services firm involved in coming up with the ranking of the top CEO's), one of the qualities that pushed up some CEOs in this year's rankings is the issue of corporate responsibility. He goes on to say "There was a time and a place when it was good enough for leaders to deliver on financial performance, new products, and innovative agendas, but that paradigm has changed," he explains. "Social responsibility, employee responsibility, and environmental responsibility—that's 32% of the weight of reputation of any given CEO." In a Forbes article of May 2019, an example is given of one CEO who has been able to rank high again this year, *Estee Lauder CEO, Fabrizio Freda*. On becoming CEO of Estee Lauder in 2009, Freda was faced with a big branding challenge, which was convincing millennials that Estee Lauder has something to offer them. He realized that re-branding would not yield the results they wanted so he implemented a global reverse-mentoring program to promote perpetual learning and development for employees and prioritised the hiring of more Millennials, who now reportedly make up 67% of the Estée Lauder workforce. Such shifts have enabled the company to make attention-grabbing moves on the global stage.

Another top performing CEO, is *Amazon CEO, Jeff Bezos*, not only is a top CEO but he is one of the richest men in the world and has managed to make Amazon the second most valuable company in the world. His success can be attributed to the risk he decided to take when he was 30 years old. It was while serving as a vice president at the hedge fund D. E. Shaw in the 1990s that Bezos came up with the idea to sell books over the Internet. Doing so, though, would mean taking a significant risk and perhaps sacrificing his stable job. A risk which he ended up taking with the willingness to either fail or win without any regrets. Other *world renowned top ranking CEOs* that you may be familiar with are the following (in no particular order):

1. CEO of Tesla & Space X-Elon Musk
2. CEO of Apple- Tim Cook
3. CEO of Walmart- Doug McMillon
4. CEO of Alibaba-Jack Ma
5. CEO of Berkshire Hathaway-Warren Buffet
6. CEO of Facebook-Mark Zuckerberg

What are the qualities of a good CEO?

The question now is what these top CEOs could possibly have in common that sets them apart from other CEOs. According to *Forbes*, the following are 7 *personality traits every CEO should have in order to remain successful* in the long run:

1. **Curiosity**- According to Cameron Herold, one of the leaders in the world of business growth and C-suite leadership, “The smartest CEOs are vulnerable, open to hearing what they don't know, and are always trying to learn.” In order to be a great CEO, one must be curious and willing to learn new things and move away from the norm.
2. **Purpose**- According to McKinsey, CEOs tend to show a greater sense of purpose and passion for what they do than other members of company leadership. A good CEO is driven and ensures that they uphold standards and their duties as a leader.
3. **Risk**-A great CEO is not afraid to take a risk. Successful CEOs have been seen as being able to embrace risk in a way that differs from other leaders in an organisation. According to a study conducted by Harvard Business Review a willingness to take risks was found to be a dominant trait for those playing the role of CEO.
4. **Organisation**- CEOs must be organized in their approach to problem solving in the organisation. Without organized thinking, a CEO can fail to lead and may fail to address core issues.
5. **Communication**- According to a Navalent study, top executives share an ability to remain consistent in their forms of communication. They are able to convey information in a language that keeps parties neutral, does not cause or instigate conflict and is easily understandable so that effective action can be taken.
6. **Realistic Optimism**-Great CEOs are able to draw the line and remain curious and grounded at the same time. They are able to tell how certain moves will affect the position of the company and are also willing to consider solutions others might consider as unconventional.
7. **Vision**- Without vision, a CEO is merely a celebrated facilitator. The greatest CEOs find ways to continue exploring and nurturing their vision. They remain open to feedback so that they are better able to refine and nurture the vision. In order to be an effective CEO, you have to be both confident in your abilities and willing to admit your faults. Great CEOs are dedicated to their vision and continue to ask questions and look at possible outcomes.

Becoming a great CEO takes hard work and dedication. The ones we admire did not just wake up great but it took dedication and in some cases failure in order to reach the great heights they have reached.

Tatenda Sayenda-Havire is a consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd a management and human resources consulting firm. Phone +263 4 481946-48/481950 or email: tatenda@ipccconsultants.com or visit our website at www.ipccconsultants.com

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