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By

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**PART "I"**

I am the type of leader that is always open to take risk and promote change looking for better ways to reach success. At least, I consciously “try it” and observe the results. I will be ascribing only a summary of a successful campaign I had the opportunity to implement few years ago while working for a car dealership company in Brazil.

I was initially hired as car sales manager for new and used vehicles. Few years later I expanded my experience and improved my knowledge working for other departments such as financial, customer services and parts. As a result of these successful experiences, I was promoted to General Manager of the company.

After two year working as GM, I was nominated as the CEO/President of the company, a Volkswagen Car Dealer in Parana, Brazil; a company with U\$15 million income/year and more than 150 employees. As CEO/President, I started various processes to promote the organizational development and changes into the company. During that time, I had the privilege to apply my leadership skills in creating a vision, and connecting it to the company’s future goals.

Working through the company’s issues and being capable of using good communication with all the department managers and their staffs, I established the sense of urgency and formed a powerful coalition. I proposed a new strategic plan for the company, and as a result, four years later, the company was chosen as one of the best car dealership in all Parana state and featured as a reference in dealership in all country.

### **My feelings, opinions, views and emotions concerning the organization**

After a boom in vehicles sales between years 1997-2004, Brazil was passing through a though economic and financial situation; the marketplace was struggling to keep the car dealers "alive". If nothing was done, the company certainly would fail and go to a bankruptcy. The scenario was not favorable. As a CEO/President of the group, I identified potential threats, and

developed scenarios which showed what could happen in the future if nothing was done. I examined opportunities that should be, or could be, exploited. I started honest discussions, and gave dynamic and convincing reasons to get people talking and thinking about the situation, and also, I promoted some meetings with customers to hear from them about the whole situation.

Managing change was not enough, I had to lead it. I had other leaders in my company that were responsible for various departments. I promoted many meetings with the managers, the supervisors and also, key people elected by employees to represent them. I worked on team building using some emotional commitment from them. Everyone performs better when they take charge of change (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 169).

I established the company's vision, mission and strategic direction as conveyed through policies and concrete objectives which were met through the effective management of human, financial and material resources. I named the campaign as "The Great Turning" in order to promote the changes that would redirect the business to the future.

The changes started in all departments. I used to talk to my team about my vision openly and honestly addressing people's concerns and anxieties. I allocated material, human and financial resources to implement organizational policies and programs; I established financial, market and administrative controls; I formulated and approved small promotional campaigns; and approved overall human resources planning. I also hired a consultant for a 2 hours motivational speech to all employees and the day after I offered an enjoyable breakfast to all employees to commemorate the beginning of "The Great Turning" campaign. Along with this, many folders, letters, signs and small outdoors were used to create the involvement in all areas.

Successes that come quickly, as long as they are unambiguous and visible, demonstrate that a vision of the future has credibility (Kotter, 2008, p. 158).

I selected middle managers, directors or other executive staff, I delegated the necessary authority to them and created optimum working conditions according to the vision to ensure they were in line with “The Great Turning”. I also started to recognize and reward people for making the changes happen. Few barriers started to bubble up and unfortunately I had to fire the manager responsible for the bodywork and painting service because he was resisting implementing the proposed changes. At that time he was one of the oldest employees of the company. Kotter (1996, pp. 132-133) declares that irrational and political resistance to change never fully dissipates. Even if you’re successful in the early stages of a transformation...But instead of changing or leaving, they will often sit there waiting for an opportunity to make a comeback.

Nothing motivates more than success. I was responsible for ensuring that the Board of Directors and its members were aware of and fulfilled their governance responsibilities, conducting board business effectively and efficiently. Also, I made them accountable for their performance. Included in the campaign, each change accomplished successfully was commemorated as a victory, in mind that the battle had not ended yet. The results should be seen for each employee of the company and the motivation should be in each one.

Each success provided an opportunity to build on what went right and helped the managers to identify what went not so well and find ways that we could improve the campaign. Some goals were realigned. Furthermore, I created a system to bring “new” key people and

customers to enjoy the team and contribute with “new” positioning for the changes and also to commemorate the results.

I made continuous effort to ensure that the change was seen in every aspect of my organization. I also ensured that the company maintained positive and productive relationships with media, funders, donors, and other organizations. In this capacity, I served the company as primary spokesperson for the organization which included: representing the organization to the media and representing the organization on governmental or nongovernmental organizations and committees. These duties helped me to approximate the company to the market, where I could talk constantly about our progress and show them the new company. The “Great Turning” campaign was a total success.

### **Conclusion**

I’ve been leader since I was a little child. I remember my old past days playing with other kids and always I was in the position of the leader, giving new ideas, different ways to play together, discovering and making new friends, etc. As a youth, I used to participate in the Pathfinders where I was always in the position of captain or counselor. At school and university, I always participate as a head of the groups or teams with the responsibility in give them the direction as school students. Talking about business man, all my jobs I was entitled the leader, the president, or the head of the organization.

Today, I work as Music School Director and Assistant Pastor for SDA Church. I certainly give all the merits of my leadership to my father who always inspired me. He used to call me the entrepreneur of the family and still does it.

In my own opinion, leaders are made, not born. Obviously that to form the great leader I want to be I have to add knowledge, skills and develop new paths and ways to lead. My leadership style is defined as - a leader with a vision, positive thought, positive person, an individual of integrity, a risk-taker, always trying to reach the balance in life, motivator, dynamic, able to form groups and lead teams, achiever, strategic, learner, communicator, includer, focus, entrepreneur, creative and pro-active. My strongest thought pertained to leadership is resumed on “Never give up – keep doing – I can do it - Try it and I will succeed”.

The world is in a crescent and continuous curve transition in many aspects including leadership where we try to accommodate our personal leadership styles. As a leader in the position to exert a good leadership, if I understand the complexity of culture of the country and organization, working by worldview and values I am inserted, I can better understand my own behavior and values; however, I also live in a world that also includes other people. I may find that making sense of their behavior requires understanding their worldview, something that may present challenges to my own beliefs and values. I would say that, in this context, the leader's role would be a complete understanding of culture, applying the worldview, values and principles in a right way moving forward the vision. Doing so, I can exert a better leadership.

I believe that there is always something new that I can add in my day-schedule, knowledge that can contribute to reach my goals and make me better as a leader. Leaders face dilemmas that require choices between competing sets of values and priorities, and the best

leaders recognize and face them with a commitment to doing what is right, not just what is expedient (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012, p. 150).

Previously, I had already defined that to be a Leader is to mix Science and Art. It is a Science because there are core values and true principles using the appropriate ethical, regulatory, and legal limits to be applied together with rules to be followed. To be a Leader is an Art because it will measure the capacity of the leader to apply as clearly as possible those principles to achieve the vision. In other words, it's not just where the leader will end up that counts, but how the leader will get there. Leader is also the position where a person, in order to accomplish something, belonging to a certain environment, committed to an inspired vision with focus in direction and efficiency, act of gaining involvement and cooperation from people to achieve both interests.

Important values in my life and as leader are: God is all; Home, a piece of heaven in earth; Open heart for changes; A leader with a vision; Positive thought, positive person; An individual of integrity; A risk-taker; Always trying to reach the balance in life; Achiever, learner, communicator, motivator, focus; Value the relationship with others.

Explaining and understanding the nature of good leadership is probably easier than practicing it. Good leadership requires deep human skills. When we talk about human skills is almost impossible not to connect them to behavior. In this context, I would say that leadership is mostly about behavior. Because behavior is under conscious control, we can always choose to change our behavior as leaders if we want to. However, the ease with which we exhibit or can change behavior will partly be a function of our values, personality, and intelligence (Hughes et al., 2012, p. 244).

We all have dreams for ourselves. What gives some people the drive to make those dreams happen and bring others along with them? A quest can also begin later in leader's lives, bringing their leadership to different levels by linking vision with passion.

Leading is never easy. The personal and physical price of leadership can be heavy. It is full of negatives. Some days, it may seem that nothing is right. Sometimes a feeling about a sense of frustration and futility as setbacks and sacrifices add up. This creates pressure and stress, causing many leaders to lose their focus. The challenges of leadership and life are too great, and the happiness and meaning derived solely from the ego are too small to sustain us.

This paper helped me to understand, acquire knowledge and apply the theories and other leadership models that positively added skills in my leadership style. However, the truth is – As much as I read and study, as much I perceive that I know too little and I still have a lot to learn in my journey as a leader.

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