

The Review

INSIGHTS, IDEAS & INFORMATION

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White Maple is a strategy consulting firm. We aim to deliver results for clients that produce lasting improvements to performance through facilitating alignment between strategy, the market and brand, and the organisation's people, structure and processes.



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- Government
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White Maple Consulting Ltd
3 Shortlands, Hammersmith,
London W6 8DA

T +44 (0)20 8822 3320
F +44 (0)20 8822 3357
E info@whitemaple.net
W www.whitemaple.net



Guru or grouch?

BY MARY HAYES

The popular and award-winning TV series "The Apprentice" has prompted scathing comments from some well-known commentators. This article explores some of the issues raised about leadership styles and bullying.

Sir Digby Jones, Director General of the CBI wrote in May for The Independent that: "The Apprentice has nothing to do with modern business" and that "you don't have to be a bully to succeed in business". Sir John Harvey-Jones (of Troubleshooter fame in the 90s) was also quick to criticise, labelling Sir Alan Sugar "a power-exploiting bully with an aggressive style".



Sir Alan Sugar, or Sir A as he likes to be called, disagrees, commenting "a lot of people are going to learn some great business tips". One may be forgiven for thinking he was right. The second series was compulsive Wednesday night watching for 2 million viewers for twelve weeks; Sir A took home the Best Feature Award at the TV BAFTA ceremony in May; M&S have commissioned a board game of the same name; and bookings are up 25% at London's Tower Bridge, the battleground where the two final contestants pitted their teams against each other.

Just in case you haven't a clue about The Apprentice or its fame; it is a BBC2 series in which 14

candidates (selected from over 10,000 applicants) slug it out on TV for a job and six-figure salary with Sir A. As Chairman of Amstrad plc, owner of Viglen Computer Company and Amsair (a private jet company), with an extensive property portfolio and a stake in Tottenham Hotspur, the 'boy's done good!' Reality TV meets the business world!

In the wake of The Apprentice, with these high profile criticisms of Sir A's style, this article places leadership styles and bullying under the spotlight. It aims to prompt organisational leaders, at all levels, to consider their own personal style, its relevance and the impact on individuals and the bottom-line!

LEADERSHIP STYLES

There are myriad volumes and as many views – some complementary, some conflicting – written and expressed on leadership styles and their likely success. Bennis favours the visionary style where the emphasis is on the leader's personal vision, drive and charisma to achieve success. This supports Bryman's 'transformational' style where the leader oozes charisma and inspiration. The underlying assumption is that organisations follow these heroic individuals. Think Jack Welch, ex-CEO of GE?

Heifetz and Laurie write on 'adaptive leadership' believing success today requires leaders who ask hard questions and knock people out of their comfort zones; then they manage the resulting distress. The leader does not know all the answers but certainly asks the right questions. Remember the number of times Sir A asked candidates "what does that do for my customer?" and "how does this affect my bottom-line?"

Goleman, best known for his seminal work on emotional intelligence at work and its influence on performance, identifies six styles that a leader can choose in any given situation. This categorisation

REFERENCES

The New Leaders: Transforming the Art of Leadership

An inventory of six leadership styles and their different effects with ideas on when each is appropriate.

By Daniel Goleman.

Time Warner, 2003.

Making Sense of Change Management

A complete guide to the models, tools and techniques of organisational change offering practical guidelines and examples. Excellent book.

By E. Cameron & M. Green.

Kogan Page, 2004.

Why Should Anyone be Led by You?

Aims to change forever how we view, develop, and practice the art of leadership.

By R. Goffee & G. Jones.

Harvard Business School Press, 2006.

Chartered Management Institute (CMI)

www.managers.org.uk

From the homepage go to Management Community and Access the Latest Thinking. The report on bullying is found under Research.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

www.CIPD.co.uk

From the homepage go to Information Resources, All Resources by Subject then Diversity and Equality and finally Harassment where you will find 'Bullying at Work' under Surveys, research, reports...

Fierce Conversations

Shows how to have conversations that count, even difficult ones! Useful for leaders and those being bullied alike.

By S. Scott.

Piatkus, 2003.

labels them as:

- Coercive: good in a crisis when urgent changes need making.
- Authoritative: works for turnaround especially when the leader is a respected visionary.
- Affiliate: useful to repair relationships and to get over a difficulty.
- Democratic: effective with an experienced team who often know more than the leader.
- Pacesetter: useful for advancing the game with a high performing team.
- Coaching: increases the level of skill in the organisation.

"THE PUTTER IS UNLIKELY TO HELP IN A BUNKER!"

He compares these styles to clubs in a golf bag; the skill being in knowing which one to use in any given situation. The putter is unlikely to help in a bunker! The leader must be self-aware to know their default style, self-managing not to allow their dominant style to rule pervasively and socially adept to a point where they can engage any of the styles to achieve the desired result.

Goffee and Jones argue that effective leaders are authentic and highly skilful at being themselves, even as they alter their behaviour to respond effectively in changing contexts. Sean Yazbeck, who won the US version of The Apprentice, commented after the show that he had learned "the value of being yourself and trusting your gut instinct". I think it's fair to say that Sir A was being himself in a very 'what you see is what you get' kind of way.

The Apprentice portrayed Sir A as coercive and authoritative, generally a 'his way or the highway' type of approach. The important message is that leaders with different styles can be equally successful but there are certain styles that work better in particular situations. Professional service partnerships, city dealing rooms, public sector agencies and charitable organisations have very different challenges that will require differing leadership styles. The 'one trick pony' style as popularised throughout the series is not likely to cut it.

BULLYING

Sir Alan revealed he never uses the catchphrase "you're fired" in real life. "It's not a nice thing to let people go. There are families to consider. People in the show know it's coming." It is true that the candidates knew what they were letting themselves in for on an entirely voluntary basis but does this stop him from being labelled a bully? Some, as we have heard at the

outset of this article, call it bullying.

Bullying is generally a word that is associated with children and schoolyard incidents. In the absence of a legal definition, the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) defines bullying as: "Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or abuse or misuse of power, which violates the dignity of, or creates a hostile environment which undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures, the recipient".

It certainly finds its way into the workplace; the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) found in 2004 that 83% of UK employers had policies on bullying/harassment to help prevent this behaviour. CIPD established that one of the major challenges in tackling bullying was managers' belief that 'it doesn't happen', coupled with a belief by staff that 'only managers bully'.

It is impossible to define bullying in a universally understood fashion. Control for one person is bullying to another. Tackling underperformers, a necessary competence for a leader, can be seen as bullying behaviour. With 'spreading gossip' being cited as one of the examples of bullying behaviour, most of us have probably been guilty at some time! Tough does not always mean being a bully; tough can often raise the standards and assertive management get results.

There are several interrelated factors to be considered in a bullying situation; the bully, the behaviour, the victim, the impact, the organisation and how to handle it. Both the bully and the victim need support. However, there is one place where all views converge; for a bully who doesn't change with coaching, the only solution is the disciplinary route, Sir A's equivalent to "You're fired!"

When discussing Sir A's behaviour, several people have expressed that he made them feel very angry or that it was excruciatingly painful but compelling to watch. Does this make Sir A a bully or a coach? Does his direct interrogation and blunt feedback represent a threat or a learning opportunity for the candidate? Hence the opening question, guru or grouch? Ultimately the answer is your call. Our view is probably a bit of both, but certainly more guru than grouch!

MARY HAYES is a Senior Consultant at White Maple Consulting and works with clients on strategy and management/organisation development. She has an MBA from Manchester Business School. Mary is also a Community Governor at Canonbury Primary School in Islington, London.

T +44 (0)20 8822 3320

E mary.hayes@whitemaple.net



Market Research A-Z

BY BOB EMPSON

All organisations will regularly need to undertake some forms of research as they develop their strategies and evaluate their market performance. Research not your speciality? Here's a concise dictionary of market research to get you going!

Average. One of the most common statistical expressions. An average is a "measure of central tendency" whereby a single value represents the central value of a set of data. There are, of course, a number of types of average. The most common are: mean, where you add up all the data values and divide by the number of values; median, the midpoint of the values when they have been ordered from the smallest to largest; and mode, the most frequently appearing value.

British Market Research Association. The BMRA web site (www.bmra.org.uk) provides guidance on issues such as market research techniques and writing a research brief.

Competitors. In my experience, businesses usually give insufficient attention to understanding and monitoring their competitors. Such research and intelligence is vital for: ensuring that your offering is distinctive; learning from their ideas and initiatives; and anticipating threats.

Data processing. The processing of questionnaires to produce data and statistics that can be analysed. You can DIY, or specialist agencies can provide a very cost effective service.

Evaluation. Market research is used to evaluate a wide variety of issues. These can include, for example: customer expectations, satisfaction and behaviour; staff and other stakeholder views and perceptions; market shares, trends and scenarios; competitors; the potential for new products/services; price sensitivities; and communications activities.

Face-to-face interviews. An important technique (but usually relatively expensive) for gathering information in both consumer and business surveys. There are agencies who can provide the services of field forces to undertake consumer surveys.

Groups. Groups (also known as focus groups) are a method of gaining views with selected groups of individuals about their opinions and experiences. Recruitment of an appropriate profile of participants is key to the success of this method, as is having a competent moderator. It is sometimes necessary to give participants an incentive/reward to attend.

Hall test. A research technique in which customers are interviewed and/or observed in a room where they can use, handle or taste products.

Insight. The term "customer insight" is usually taken to mean a deep understanding of customer needs, behaviours and perceptions, beyond that which customers can articulate for themselves. Gaining insight will normally

require organisations to go beyond traditional research methods including the use of sophisticated analytical techniques and extensive direct contact/observation.

Judgement sample. A type of non-probability sample where the selection of the sample is based on the judgement of the researcher.

K. In statistics, K is used to represent 1,000.

Likert scale. A scale of responses often used in surveys in which respondents are invited to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a particular statement, usually on a 5-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Market Research Society. The MRS is the world's largest association representing providers and users of market, social, and opinion research, and business intelligence. The MRS web site (www.mrs.org.uk) offers all sorts of useful information, including guidelines for questionnaire design and codes of conduct.



N. The symbol N is used to denote the total number of a population. A lower case n normally represents the number in a sub-set or sample of the total population.

Omnibus surveys. These are large scale and regular surveys undertaken by market research agencies in which clients can pay for some of their own questions to be included. They are a very cost effective way of getting reliable data without setting up a tailor-made survey.

Pilot. It is important to pilot a questionnaire before using it for real. Testing it on just a few representative interviewees is a key step in the questionnaire design process.

Quantitative. These types of surveys are about quantifying things and will produce numeric data. Typical techniques are surveys which require completing a questionnaire and "ticking boxes" to produce statistics. Q is also for Qualitative: these surveys are more exploratory and will try to understand attitudes, opinions and behaviours; questions will normally be open, without prompted lists of options.

Random sample. For practical and cost reasons it is usually necessary to undertake a survey amongst a sample of the target "population". Small samples can produce results that are likely to be very close, plus or minus just a few percent, to the results from a total survey. The principle of random sampling is that everyone within the defined population has the same chance of being included in the survey. You might also come across "stratified random sampling"; this is when random samples are collected from sub-groups (strata) of the total population, usually in proportion.

Sugging. The unethical practice of selling under the guise of research (ie a company or agency contacts a potential customer pretending to be undertaking research but uses the contact to try to sell a product or service). Sugging compromises professional research, surveys and opinion polls.

Telephone surveys. A common research technique. They can be relatively quick and inexpensive but they are increasingly unpopular with the general public due to overuse, sugging and intrusive calls at home. However, they can still be very effective in business-to-business situations if they are well-designed and professionally conducted.

Universe. Another term for the overall population of people or organisations from which a survey sample is selected.

Verbatim. You can ask agencies to provide lists of verbatim responses to qualitative questions. Normally such responses will have been given in confidence so the respondents cannot be identified.

White Maple Consulting. Apologies for this blatant self-promotion; but we couldn't come up with anything else for W (other than web surveys)! We advise clients on their research needs and can undertake a wide variety of research projects.

X-axis. The horizontal axis used in graphs and charts.

Y-axis. The vertical axis used in graphs and charts.

Z-score. A statistical measure used to express the distance, in standard deviations, of a sample from the mean.

BOB EMPSON is Principal Consultant at White Maple Consulting. He works with clients on strategy, marketing, and organisation/management development. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultancy and of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. He has an MBA from Warwick Business School, where he is also a tutor on the MBA programme.

T +44 (0)20 8822 3320

E empson@whitemaple.net

Book Reviews

This issue reviews books by two of the best known and most influential management writers and teachers of our time. One is a collection of articles by Peter Drucker, who influenced management thinking for over 50 years. The other is Charles Handy's autobiography.

WEB SITES

Summer holidays herald the arrival of at least six weeks of freedom for children, but often a stressful time for adults! If you have little (or big!) darlings to occupy, here are some ideas that might help!

Parents Centre

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/schoolholidays/

A collaborative site between DirectGov, Parents Centre and Break.out that provides a range of ideas to help you keep your children occupied, whatever their interests. Inspiring!

OVERALL RATING 

Agreatplace.co.uk

www.agreatplace.co.uk

A useful portal that offers a wide choice of places to stay, eat and camp, as well as things to see and do. Very comprehensive indeed.

OVERALL RATING 

WhereCanWeGo.com

www.wherecanwego.com

A very useful site that does exactly what it says in the name. Just enter a location, type of activity that you're after and it returns a comprehensive list.

OVERALL RATING 

Time Out London

www.timeout.com

The ultimate guide on everything that is on in London, it's the magazine on-line. It is easy to search and the site provides contact details for every venue to enable booking direct.

OVERALL RATING 

Disneyland

www.disneylandparis.com

This site promises magic, adventure, mystery and excitement for all the family at Disneyland, Paris. It provides everything you need to plan your trip and you can book online.

OVERALL RATING 

Camp Beaumont

www.campbeaumont.co.uk

This site provides all the information that is needed on this established company: the camp, activities, information for parents and children; and you can book online.

OVERALL RATING 

Myself and Other More Important Matters

By Charles Handy

Charles Handy is the renowned management thinker, social philosopher and author, with sales of over a million copies of his books. This autobiography takes us through his life from early days in Ireland, school-life ("I hated my schooling"), experiences with Shell in Borneo, his ground-breaking work at London Business School, warden of St. George's House in Windsor ("a think tank on social and ethical issues") and latterly his "portfolio life" and "guru times".

In describing his life he also dwells on related "other more important matters". These range from, for example, reflections on the purpose of life ("living, learning, loving and leaving a legacy"), the importance of learning by experience (prompted by his new exposure of a mistake he made as Shell's marketing representative in Sarawak), to families, schools and capitalism.

This is an intensely personal book. You can be moved by his description of his feelings on his father's death and his sorrow that he had never understood him and "had been judging him in the wrong way." And he, like most of us, has regrets about his life. He feels that he didn't do enough with his youthful years. He also regrets that he "never worked with the poor or the unemployed, only wrote about them... Even today, while I write cheques to some good causes, I keep my own hands clean."

You will have to judge this book for yourself. You might decide the emphasis is too much on "myself" (but it is an autobiography!) and perhaps even self-indulgent (writing it was, apparently, part of Handy's search for his "full identity"). On the other hand, some readers will find his openness about his varied and successful life inspiring and his reflections on related wider issues thought-provoking and instructive.

OVERALL RATING 

William Heinemann, 2006. £11.38 (Amazon)

Classic Drucker

By Peter F. Drucker

Drucker died, aged 95, in November 2005. This book is a tribute to his life by the Harvard Business Review, in which he had 38 articles published.

Born in Vienna in 1909, he moved to the United States in 1937 having witnessed the anti-Semitism of the Nazis. A management consultant, journalist and teacher, he wrote nearly 40 books. Described as the man who invented management, he was once also called the gurus' guru but, typical of his humility, he hated the title; Handy recalls (see the other review) that Drucker "once quipped that journalists only came up with the word because charlatan was too long for a headline"!

Classic Drucker brings together 15 of his best HBR articles. My favourite is "What makes an effective executive" (2004). He suggests that the best Chief Executives are not stereotypical charismatic leaders, but are people who follow 8 straightforward practices. Other articles include: "The Effective Decision" (1967) in which he describes the 6 sequential steps for effective decision-making; "Managing for Business Effectiveness" (1963) where he poses and responds to key questions such as "Just what is the manager's job?" and "What is the major problem in it?"; and "They're not employees, they're people" (2002) in which he refocuses attention on the need to "look for people's potential and spend time developing it", even if these people aren't traditional employees (eg temps, contractors, outsourced).

Drucker challenges us to the end with the final paragraph of the book: "I'm not comfortable with the word manager any more, because it implies subordinates ...[and]... dominion over people"; he suggests that we need to move on from organisations built on "rank and power" to structures established on "mutual understanding and responsibility." Amen to that.

A fine tribute to a great man.

OVERALL RATING 

Harvard Business School Press, 2006. £9.89 (Amazon)

WHITE MAPLE NEWS

NON-EXEC DIRECTOR

Bob Empson, Principal Consultant, has been appointed as a Non-Executive Director of the NICEIC Group Ltd. The Group is the newly formed commercial arm of the Electrical Safety Council and has an annual turnover of c.£25 million. The Group's activities include certification (eg quality management systems and products), training, insurance and electrical contractor/installer registration. NQA (National Quality Assurance Limited) is a key component of the Group and has offices in nearly 20 countries.

1%

We have a policy of giving both free consultancy and also at least 1% of net profits to selected charities. We have again made donations to Macmillan Cancer Relief, Alzheimer's Society and Médecins Sans Frontières.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Having been trading since July 2002, we are celebrating our fourth birthday. We are very grateful to our clients, partners, associates, suppliers and other friends for all their support, advice and help. Thank you!



THE REVIEW: FORMATS

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