



Learning Leadership Lessons

January 2009
Volume 8 Issue 1



William E. Caswell

Bill Caswell is an experienced coach of CEOs and senior executives and the author of *The Respect Revolution*, a 12-book series written by a CEO for CEOs as a guide to getting companies to *Excellence*



The Respect Revolution

This 12-volume book series guides a business to *Excellence* and keeps it there.

Get your copy now, available at your local bookstore or at www.respectrevolution.com

Do you have topic ideas? Comments or questions?

Contact Upkar Bilkhu
CCCC

190 Bronson Ave. Suite 201
Ottawa, ON K1R 6H4
Tel: (613) 233-0700

Email:
ubilkhu@caswellccc.com

www.caswellccc.com

What can today's leaders learn from the transformation of Michael Ignatieff to leader of the Liberal party?

First, let's summarize some of the outcomes noted in the recent growth of this new Liberal leader¹.

- By going to the roots in Kenora for example, and supporting 40 other party members over recent years, he became a team player
- At the same time, these connections led to the party members recognizing him
- He provided unwavering loyalty to chief Dion, even in Stephane's darkest moments
- He defined his own position carefully in contrast to the leader's approach, specifically to the 'coalition' issue
- He accepted and learned from his past political gaffs (related to Israel and Quebec, for example)
- He learned how to communicate better, namely he:
 - o Exercised more caution before offering a response – not shooting from the hip
 - o Began to speak with more emotion
 - o Spoke in a language that adapted to his audience's ability to understand the key points of his message

With this knowledge as basic arrows in our leadership quiver, what can business managers and leaders do as they build their business careers? Here are half a dozen suggestions.

1. Be prepared to roll up your sleeves and pitch in at the front lines of your business. The President of Westjet sometimes helps sell airline tickets at the counter or assists on board the aircraft. Thus, you should make an effort to become a real team player.
2. Use this hard work as a deliberate means to gain recognition and esteem of your peers and subordinates (not your superiors by intention).
3. Support your boss and be seen by others as being supportive so that there is no reason for the group to become divisive or ambiguous about loyalties. And thus make it clear you are not seen to be aiming for that person's post.
4. Yet, do not follow the leader blindly, as you must diverge if the leader's ideas are counter

to your own or to your values. Offer a constructive and cautious alternative rather harping critically. Create the agreement on 'the right to disagree' respectfully.

5. Accept and learn from past mistakes for mistakes create the deepest learning imprint. They open the door to innovation.
6. Learn to communicate better, namely:
 - Exercise caution before offering a response
 - Speak with emotion. Find out what your passions are, follow those passions and make others aware of them.
 - Speak in a language that adapts to your audience's ability to understand keeping in mind two aspects:
 - o Summarize and reinforce the key points of your message. (Tell them what you are going to tell them; tell them; then summarize what you have told them – the three keys to speech making.)
 - o Learn the four languages of speech² and intermix all four to general audiences, and single ones to a unique audience, as follows:
 - a. P's want to know what is going to be done and the results that will come from it
 - b. A's want to know that the fine details will be taken care of and be assured no mess will accrue
 - c. V's want the message to lead to new innovations and excitement, and even credit to themselves
 - d. F's want to ensure that everyone involved will be happy or at least not be offended

Hopefully we can all learn lessons from Michael Ignatieff and other exemplary leaders.

Bill Caswell

¹ As detailed in globeandmail.com, 10 December 2008, "Ignatieff makes the journey from academic to politician", by Brian Laghi and Bill Currie.

² PAVF is a trademarked personality system of CCCC. For more, see www.caswellccc.com. Also see Construction Comment magazine, November 2008, Page 10, "Are we Managers Crazy?" by W. Caswell.