

Proposed sample answers. There is only one good way... YOUR WAY!

Alternative answer to question 1.1

This is a different perspective for answering the same question. You can use this version as a sample, the previous one or a mixture of both.

CASE 1

06 August 2021

Steve Jobs and the Rise of the Celebrity CEO

URL Link: <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/steve-jobs-and-the-rise-of-the-celebrity-ceo>

Please read the above article published in Harvard Business School's Working Knowledge website - along with the additional material proposed at the bottom of the article - and answer Questions 1.1 and 1.2.

Question 1.1 (25%)

Having in mind the commonly known leadership models and theories available in the academic literature you are asked to identify the one that best represents Steve Jobs.

Sample Answer

Steve Jobs' form of leadership remains an inspiration to this day and examined by different authors. Steve Jobs ensured that the regulations, goals, and visions of the company were attained and is very difficult to choose a specific style that best fits for him. In fact, he exhibited various characters of a leader in different times of his life. For example he emotionally made erroneous moves before quitting the Apple

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Computer Company but he was transformed, when he returned to Apple Computer Company. He could balance not only his emotions but also those of his employees for the benefit of the company. One would say that Steve Jobs changed to a transformational leader. Such a leadership model worked for him flawlessly.

Transformational leaders are visionary as they inspire their employees towards achieving the set goals. They use charisma to motivate employees while at the same time using icons or slogans to keep their employees focused on achieving a particular goal. After Gil Amelio was fired following a series of poor performance instances, the first step that Jobs took after assuming the position of an interim CEO was to reinstate confidence among employees. He introduced an innovative marketing plan under the motto 'Think Different', which was met to motivate consumers and employees. His idea worked well. Within six months after assuming his office, the company was accounting for profits. Furthermore, he prepared a digital hub strategy that provided a roadmap that all employees could refer to as they proceeded with their tasks.

According to Rowold (2014), a transformational leader is self-reliant. Jobs identified and exploited all available opportunities by adjusting the organisation to fit the opportunity. After establishing the company's vision, he created trust among his workers to focus on accomplishing the eminent business opportunity. From the onset, when Jobs saw Apple II that could transform the IT industry, he decided to exploit the available opportunity by looking for interested investors whom he successfully found.

A transformational leader gets the right team that will help him or her to accomplish the vision and objectives of the organisation. For instance, if a manager wants to introduce an innovative programme in an organisation, he or she should get individuals who he or she knows are best qualified to market the programme. Such individuals can offer proper training with regards to the product and then develop evaluation systems followed by the implementation of the programme. Although

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critics have noted that Jobs did not maintain cordial rapport with most of his employees, he chose the most talented individual to help in achieving the goals of Apple Inc. He had a zeal for innovation. He appreciated the efforts of his team whenever they (efforts) successfully worked on an innovative project. He often reiterated that innovation had little to do with money but the team (Steinwart & Ziegler 2014).

Under the trait theory of leadership, Jobs exhibited several traits. His form of leadership portrayed a blend of eccentric and distasteful traits. Scholars of trait theory assert that the most acceptable traits of a leader include extraversion, perfectionism, intelligibility, and minimal neuroticism. Although his affability is in doubt, he was highly confident. He was never hesitant to share his mind. He often preferred face-to-face communication. He was meticulous and always determined to achieve his goals. On the part of the transparency that is also questionable, he sometimes executed the ideas of others and took their credits.

Commentators have declared emotional intelligence another effective skill of leadership. A leader should be in the position to understand his feelings and those of his or her employees. He or she should have a plan of using them (workers) to get positive results in the company. In the earlier years of Jobs at Apple Computer Company, when he was in charge of the Apple II project, the management board considered him too temperamental to be discreet. Indeed, the way he handled his differences with Wozniak, his longtime business partner together with his vengeful tendencies and plans to overthrow the then leader would be termed as wrong emotions that hampered the performance of Apple Computer Company. He also once broke into tears publicly when he thought that he was being unappreciated. Despite Jobs' low sides, he was self-confident.

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Jobs also exercised the behavioural leadership model, which reveals how individuals behave while in leadership positions. The behaviours are grouped into several categories. First, some leaders show more care for the task, products, and how to achieve the company's goals. Secondly, another group of leaders prioritise the employees over the products and tasks. Thirdly, other leaders are good at giving directions and playing the supervisory role. Moreover, another category of leaders prefers to participate in decision-making processes with their followers. Jobs was a transactional leader since he had the enthusiasm to participate in almost every activity in the company. He solved problems as soon as they arose. According to Hughes and Curphy (2014), he did not insult employees, even though they were prone to errors.

Using leadership theories, we have established that Steve Jobs was a transformational and transactional leader who applied various traits in the management of Apple Inc. His technique was effective in ensuring that the goals and visions of the organisation were accomplished. Nevertheless, he was considered temperamental.

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References

Hughes, L & Curphy, G. (2014). *“Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience”*. McGraw-Hill Publ. Comp., New York, NY.

Rowold, J. (2014). *“Instrumental leadership: Extending the transformational-transactional leadership paradigm”*. Zeitschrift für Personalforschung, vol. 28 no. 3, pp. 367-390.

Steinwart, C & Ziegler, A. (2014). *“Remembering Apple CEO Steve Jobs as a “Transformational Leader”: Implications for Pedagogy”*. Journal of Leadership Education, vol. 13 no. 2, pp. 52-66.