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Executive Search & Board Advisory

WHO BECOMES THE LEADER?



"Take the time to deliberate, but when the time for action has arrived, stop thinking and go in" Napoleon Bonaparte

The question of which type of personality and character traits are prevalent in those that get to the top can be complex and a result of many factors at the time.

However, one question which fascinates many is whether organisation's senior positions are held by introvert or extroverts?

In conducting our research, Blenheim Partners found that the majority of business leaders, in fact over 90%, are extrovert.

There are numerous reasons, which include:

- Leaders need to be clear communicators with the skill to engage, influence and inspire their teams to execute their business plan or the leader's ideas.
- They are rainmakers, that is, they have the ability to impact revenue and have a strategic sales/consultative style, to present and push forward their ideas.
- In a similar vein they are good networkers, they value the ability to know people and see every individual as an opportunity, a new client or supporter of them now or in the future.
- Extroverts enjoy being busy outside of the office and are often on charity boards, particular committees or in other ways supporting community groups.

A fundamental reason as to why they are promoted and tend to move to the top is not necessarily based on intellect but, the ability to articulate a story, a plan, a vision and convey the message effectively so others follow.

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How many people do you know complain and say, “Why am I working for someone who is not as smart as me?” It is simply because relying on intellect and industry ability can only take you so far. Leadership and bringing the team with you to achieve the outcomes desired is different to technical ability and raw intellect. Good leaders surround themselves with the very best people, often technically and intellectually superior to them.

Does this mean that an organisation employs only extrovert type personalities? The answer goes to the saying “too many chiefs, not enough Indians”, meaning you can’t have too many bosses. The extrovert needs the introverts, there needs to be the balance.

Extroverts can self-destruct listening to their own advice. The best leaders listen to the very best around them which includes the introverts. The introverts tend to be good listeners, take the time to consider consequences and are regularly the creative and innovative thinkers. The extrovert can get the very best out of the introvert and the introvert can get the very best out of the extrovert. There is of course the introvert personality who adopts the extrovert persona, similar to the shy and retiring actor who comes out on stage to a live audience day and night and performs without any hint of stage fright and fear. They take on the character.

There is obviously not one style for all occasions and the very best leaders have many qualities and adapt their style. However, the point is that whether you are a natural extrovert or a natural introvert, you have to adopt an approach of ensuring that you convey a message and inspire others around you to join in and follow you.

Being surrounded by the same style of person will not help you succeed. Being the first among equals requires the talent of engaging those around you through selling the messages, listening to the great ideas of others, bringing the best out of those individuals and having everyone aligned to execute the plan. Extroverts need introverts and introverts need extroverts. This is essential.

The extrovert who cannot listen will never make it, or if they do, it will be only fleeting. The very best extroverts or those that take on the extrovert persona recognise the talent of the introvert and create the atmosphere and environment to allow them to flourish and as a result flourish themselves.

Some successful introverts in history include:

- Bill Gates
- Albert Einstein
- Sir Isaac Newton
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Mark Zuckerberg
- Larry Page
- Abraham Lincoln
- Warren Buffet
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Elon Musk
- Frederic Chopin
- Dr. Seuss
- Steve Wozniak
- Barack Obama

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Gregory Robinson, Managing Partner, “Ultimately its building the right team and recognising everyone’s capability. Statistics may favour the extrovert, however it’s the individual who surrounds themselves with the necessary complimentary skills and can inspire others becomes the leader.”

Blenheim Partners specialise in:

- Executive Search;
- Non-Executive Director Search;
- Board Strategy and Structure Consulting;
- External Succession Planning; and
- Executive Re-Engagement / Transition.

Founded in 2012, our team have acted as specialist adviser to many of the world's leading corporations on Board and Executive performance, capability and succession planning.

Our consultants have worked with clients from all sectors and a broad range of geographies. They include over 80 of the ASX 100, 10% of the FTSE 100, Private Equity, Multinational, Private Family and Mutually Owned Companies.

Our work includes assignments that are both local and international in scope.

Our team consists of senior Search Consultants, Human Resource Directors,

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Blenheim Partners is continually investing in knowledge and understanding as exemplified by our Thought Leadership "The Challenges of Attaining Growth", Industry Papers and monthly Market Intelligence reports.

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Our culture is built on pride, professionalism, esprit de corps and client service.

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Contact us

Sydney p +61 2 9253 0950

Melbourne p +61 3 9653 9510

w www.blenheimpartners.com