

Marshall on Leadership

"If leadership depends on seniority, you are defeated from the start...."

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A collection of articles and opinion pieces from popular media and the blogosphere thematically reflecting the spirit of George C. Marshall's enduring legacy of leadership and strategic vision.

Apple's secret has always been pursuing bad ideas

By Shane Snow, *Linkedin*

In the history of bad ideas, becoming a pirate ranks near the top. Pirates rarely die old, and hardly go quietly. And yet, Steve Jobs, the famously innovative founder of Apple, said, "It's better to be a pirate than join the navy."

Knowing the man, and the company he built, counter-intuitive statements like this come as no surprise. He's known for zigging when the rest of the world zags. But clearly his legacy with Apple is in no danger of an untimely decapitation, so the "piracy" he advocated seems to be working extra well. For what pirates lack in job security (and, often, Vitamin C), they make up for in speed, autonomy, and the ability to keep competitors guessing. Which is what it turns out Apple is very good at, even if they guess right.

With this week's announcements at Apple's launch event for iPhone 6, Apple Watch and Apple Pay, I've been thinking a lot about how Apple seems to capitalize so well on ignoring common wisdom. Here's how the company does and has leveraged seemingly "bad ideas" to spur success.

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Five signs you're the type of boss everyone loves

By Jacquelyn Smith, *Business Insider*

Most bosses want to be liked. You sometimes have to deliver bad news, enforce the rules, assign dreadful projects, and give critical feedback. However, if you're a truly great leader, your employees will like and respect you despite those occasions. Here are some of our favorite signs you're a great boss:

1. You have a clear vision and effectively make decisions

"The captain must steer the ship," Marr says. The best managers have a clear vision of the department or company's future that he or she can communicate to

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their employees. Effective bosses are also effective decision makers, Marr adds. They don't overthink every tiny thing. "Being able to make decisions quickly and decisively, and then take responsibility for the outcome, is an important business skill, especially when managing others," he says.

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What leaders really do

By Kotter International, *Forbes*

Fostering more and better leadership is a challenge for executives across all industries. But what are the fastest ways to cultivate leadership within a company? What lessons can leaders apply as they strategize new ways to encourage employees to step up and drive efforts toward achieving the organization's major goals? How can leaders effectively communicate the company's vision?

First, executives need to start from a position of wanting to develop new leaders. Some executives fall into the trap of feeling entitled to their leadership role, whether by virtue of an over-strong belief in their own abilities, or simply a loss of perspective regarding the potential of the team around them. Taking a moment to step back, consider how those above, below and around you view you as a leader can help executives avoid this trap and better relate to the employees they seek to develop as co-leaders.

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Are you a leader or a manager?

By Jeff Oddo

The leader's job is understanding the big picture and getting people to buy into a larger vision. Unfortunately, leaders can sometimes lose sight of the day-to-day processes that help the business run. As a result, they can create policies, goals or even new products that aren't realistic. Leaders need to know how staffers' time is being spent and what obstacles might be getting in their way. Leaders need staffers to feel empowered sharing big ideas that can transform the company. So-called "skip-level meetings" with those taking direction from your senior managers is one way you identify if your teams have their priorities in alignment with the company's.

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People join because of great vision, people leave because of poor leadership

By Ekaterina Walter, *Forbes*

It's that simple. And that complicated.

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Unfortunately, most entrepreneurs think that possessing a great vision or idea is enough. The reality, as most of them find out, bites.

In my conversations with an investor who was burnt several times in the past by investing in businesses that didn't take off the ground, I kept hearing him say: "Having the idea is only a start, the hard part is executing to make it a success."

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