

Got Character?

See *New York Times* columnist and cultural commentator David Brooks discuss character, Marshall's character (minutes 17-25) and why Marshall was a leadership genius in his videotaped talk, "[Genius, God and Morality.](#)"

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A collection of articles, comments 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.

Are you 'top talent'?

By Beth Kuhel, *Business Insider*

"Top talent" tends to embrace change and enjoys the challenge of working in a dynamic environment where everything isn't predictable. They tend to be more innovative and flexible in their approach to solving problems and have an entrepreneurial spirit.

Here's what it takes to become "top talent."

- * **Adaptable**
- * **Collaborative**
- * **Adept problem solver**
- * **Humility**
- * **Leadership**

When faced with a problem as a team member, "top talent" intuitively knows the appropriate time to step in or step back; he or she focuses on the project's success, not on a rigid leadership structure.

Great leaders tend to be inclusive, humble, self-directed and mission focused and inspire others to action. An employee who exhibits leadership ability is generally well respected by co-workers. They have demonstrated competence and are often known to seek feedback (both positive and negative). Top talent shows genuine concern for the well being of the group.

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Effective leaders must grasp what strategy means

By Tommy Weir, *The National*

Effective leaders have to know what is meant by "be less operational and more strategic." This also raises another commonality, understanding what strategic

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leaders do.

Strategy is not about the planning, albeit a plan will be necessary to deliver on the strategy. But before leaders dive into the planning, they actually need to have a strategy. They need to choose where to "play" and how to "win."

That is the essence of strategy, making a choice about what you will be doing in the future and by default making choices about what you will not be doing. Strategy is what you will focus on. Strategy is placing bets on what the future will be like, deciding what to do then shortening the odds.

Instead, the crux of strategic leadership is understanding the conceptual side of the business. Leaders need to be able to synthesize knowledge, be capable of abstract thought, able to determine what does and does not constitute evidence, to be able to collect evidence and rigorously analyze it, and be able to select a course of action based on evidence. That is what strategic leaders do.

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One question every CEO needs to answer

By Joel Trammell, *Forbes*

It can be lonely at the top, especially for CEOs. Most CEOs have no way to systematically gather the right information from all levels of the business. While they may be drowning in data, it is almost always historical in nature and provides little help in answering the key question of "How likely is my company to meet its corporate goals?"

It seems like such a simple question, but for many CEOs it is very difficult to answer, especially as companies grow. Once a company reaches about 25 employees, CEOs no longer have a direct influence on the day-to-day work and priorities of every employee. Without a clear vision and an effective system of two-way communication, CEOs are steering a ship without any timely feedback. They are unable to guide employees in the right direction or in turn, receive the information from employees that they need to make course corrections. The information that CEOs do receive is often tactical, outdated or simply irrelevant to the future of the business.

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Speak first to declare the high ground

By John Baldoni, SmartBlog on Leadership

I have always advised leaders to be the last to speak up about important issues to allow others to state their points of view.

But sometimes a leader must be the first to speak up, as Abraham Lincoln did when he issued the Emancipation Proclamation and linked the cause of

preserving the Union with the abolition of slavery

preserving the Union with the abolition of slavery.

Such a measure had three key elements: importance, impact and integrity.

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Is your personality sabotaging team trust?

By Eva Rykrsmith, *The Fast Track*

Lack of trust sabotages team productivity by enabling interpersonal conflict, apathy, or cynicism. Not only does it make innovation impossible, it makes meeting ordinary expectations difficult. When low trust exists between team members, there is a tremendous emotional cost, creating doubt, fear, anger, frustration, resentment and resignation.

Creating a consistent environment of trust is difficult because despite our best intentions, we may be delivering mixed messages. Trust isn't about truth and facts; it's about perceptions of authenticity and caring.

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