
OPINION

Leaders Are Readers

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My recent meetings with former Amgen employees revealed an interesting study on how people handle change.

There were a variety of reactions to the news of Takeda's acquisition. Some candidates appeared to have had inside knowledge and secured positions elsewhere before the announcement was made. The swift action of some left a few of their colleagues bitter. They were wondering why they were ignored and not targeted for positions at competing companies.

Other candidates decided to take the wait-and-see approach, while most of the female candidates were looking to bail out. They did the math and did not count many female managers in Takeda's operations.

But one of the directors was very positive about the change.

He said the true test of character was not what happens, but how we react. He went on to say that every seemingly negative situation in life could have a positive component.

The Oscar-winning *Patton*, about the famous World War II US general, is his favorite film and he often quotes a line from the movie when times are tough. "Success is how high you bounce when you hit the bottom," General "Blood and Guts" Patton said.

When life throws you lemons you make lemonade is his attitude and when asked about his positive frame of mind he listed the two reasons why he felt this way - good books and upbeat people.

He said this combination ensured a winning attitude.

He explained that most people outside of work fill their minds with either negative news through the me-

dia or stimulus that provides little food for thought.

Rather than spending time watching the news or reading the paper, this candidate reads literature that inspires and sparks his creative mind. He explained that some of his best ideas were initiated through reading and in his quiet moments inspiration blossomed.

After listening to this dynamic director I began to think of the other strong leaders who have crossed my path. The most impressive leaders I have met over the years all were blessed with strong people skills. People seem to gravitate towards them.

Their positive outlook on life acts like a beacon to attract other like-minded, talented, ambitious and positive people.

Leaders have great attitudes and are focused on the big picture. To these people, the wins and losses of daily life are like water off a duck's back.

The other common theme was that when a true leader left a company he or she attracted the top talent in the market.

True leaders understand that it takes time, energy, effort and personal sacrifice to lead a team. Leadership is taken, not given.

Leaders aren't born they are made. And they are made just like anything else - through hard work.

And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal says Vince Lombardi.

The Amgen director concluded our meeting by repeating his successful mantra.

"Our next five years will be determined by the people we meet and the books we read," he said.