

Executive Leadership B7720 – Summer 2005

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Overview

This course is designed to help students with their current and future leadership challenges, with a special focus on executive leadership. The major themes of the course are: 1) personal foundations for leadership, 2) strategic leadership, and 3) leadership of change and innovation

I. Personal Foundations for leadership

We will examine the key personal skills required for leading. Researchers have identified a set of personal skills that are important for executive success, including self awareness, self-management under pressure and stress, empathy, and influencing skills. Some of these skills can be described collectively as emotional intelligence competencies. This course is designed to strengthen students' skills in these areas, and prepare students to develop these skills in others. Students will increase their self awareness via a variety of assessment tools and exercises. We will relate these personal skills to the specific challenges of managerial coaching, leading teams, and leading organizational change. We also will examine the dynamics of derailment – the patterns and factors associated with executive careers that stall or fail.

II. Strategic Leadership

Executive leaders must set the direction of their organization and determine how to best deploy their limited resources to create the most value. While the focus of this course is not business strategy, students will obtain a practical framework for "strategic learning" that addresses strategy creation and implementation. This course will also examine a variety of issues related to strategic leadership, including decision-making, leadership communication, and the cognitive and emotional "traps" that can imperil effective decision processes. In addition, we will examine the ethical dimensions of executive behavior.

III. Leadership of Change & Innovation

How do effective leaders influence organizations, groups and individuals to move in a particular direction? What are the specific "levers" that managers have at their disposal to mobilize organizations and shape individual behavior? We will study the key activities and skills required for successful leadership of change. We will examine influence strategies from multiple levels – ranging from the interpersonal to organizational and cultural dimensions of change.

Leadership Development Activities

A critical component of this course is personal assessment utilizing a variety of tools, including self-assessment of leadership style and personal style challenges ("derailers"), and 360-degree multi-rater assessment. Each student will use these tools and data to generate insights and develop a personal action plan.

The tools for this course include:

- 1) Social Styles (paper and pencil self assessment)
- 2) Hogan Leadership Challenges Instrument (on-line self assessment)
- 3) Leadership Compass 360-degree interview self assessment (optional)

Detailed instructions will be provided for each of these tools.

Papers

Students must complete three papers for this course: 1) a leadership "life-line" that describes the key accomplishments, setbacks, experiences and relationships from which you have drawn important lessons about leadership, 2) a leadership development self assessment and action plan based on the tools and frameworks of the course, and 3) a field study that examines the leadership of an organizational change initiative. A detailed description of the guidelines and deadlines for each paper can be found at the end of this syllabus. Papers must be submitted on the established due date in hard copy; no email transmission of papers will be accepted.

Course Format

This is an interactive, "hands on" course emphasizing learning via self-study and personal assessment, small and large group discussion and debate, and personal application projects. This course will include a variety of executive guest speakers and "live cases" that will serve as a basis for class discussion and debate. One of the risks of a case-based approach is to draw prescriptive conclusions regarding a particular style, approach or strategy based upon a single case example. We will use cases to illustrate leadership principles that have been supported by research and scholarship. Sessions will be grounded in theory and research findings while providing students with practical frameworks and tools.

Grading & Attendance Policy

Grades will be based on the quality of your written projects (2/3) and contribution to the class experience (1/3). The weighting for each component is:

- Papers #1 and #2 – 1/3
- Paper #3 – 1/3
- Class participation – 1/3

This course is tightly designed and students are expected to attend all sessions. If you cannot attend for any reason, please notify Professor Fenlon and Ravikant Avva, the course TA.

Grading & Attendance Policy, continued

Students are permitted one absence from the course, and attendance at all other class sessions (barring a medical or religious conflict) is required for a grade of "H." Attendance at nine of the ten class meetings is therefore necessary, but not sufficient, to receive a grade of "H."

A "late penalty" will be applied to all papers that are turned in after the due date by which late papers will be reduced by one grade (except for medical reasons). For example, if a paper of "H" quality is turned in late, it will be assigned a grade of "HP."

Note on Class Participation

Participation is an important part of the learning process in this course. The emphasis is on quality participation, as opposed to your quantity of airtime. Your class participation will be evaluated using several criteria, including: 1) offering a unique insight in a class discussion or debate, 2) relating theory to practice by sharing personal experiences that help illuminate the ideas being discussed and 3) demonstrating insights related to assigned readings and cases. In order to participate meaningfully, it's critical to be prepared via timely completion of readings. Finally, monitor your level of participation to ensure you are contributing and using your "fair" amount of air-time. I'm happy to provide feedback at any time about your level and quality of participation.

Text and Readings

Reading assignments are listed under the class session in which they are due. Reading can be found in the course reading book. Some readings are designated as required for completion before class while others are optional reference readings. In addition, some readings and materials will be handed out in class.

Internet Access & Kill Switch Policy

Because there is no need for students to use the internet during class, the kill switch will be in the off position during class. We will turn it on to enable internet access during the class breaks.

Office Hours with Professor

Please contact me directly to schedule an appointment. I'm happy to discuss any aspect of your learning in the course. I am also happy to provide an executive coaching session based on your use of the assessment tools in the course (this offer has no time limit, i.e. I'm happy to meet with you at any time as a student or alum of the program). Also feel free to contact the TA for a meeting or consultation.

Feedback

I welcome dialogue and feedback about any aspect of the course experience.

Class Schedule

Session One

Date/Time: Saturday, May 21
8:45 AM – 11:35 AM

Topics: **Course overview**
Leadership vs. management

Required reading: Kotter, John, P., What Leaders Really Do.

Tools: Distribution of:

- Instructions for completing Leadership Forecast Challenge Report
- Instructions for Leadership Compass 360-degree feedback
- Social Styles self assessment inventory

Session Two

Date/Time: Friday, June 3rd
12:35 PM – 3:20 PM

Topics: **Key personal skills for leadership**
Leadership Style
Dynamics of derailment

Required Readings:

Deogun, Nikhil, Lublin, Joanne, & McKay, Betsey, Tone Deaf.

Gibson, Richard, Fast Fall.

Hogan, Robert. Trouble at the Top: Causes and Consequences of Managerial Incompetence.

Tarpley, Natasha, A, What Really Happened at Coke.

Reference Readings:

Goleman, Daniel, What Makes a Leader?

Tools:

- Bring your completed Social Styles self assessment to class
- Distribute: Leadership Forecast Challenge Report
- Distribute the leadership lifeline exercise

Session Three

Date/Time: Saturday, June 4th
12:35 – 3:20 PM

Topics: **Coaching Workshop**

Reference readings:

Druskat, Vanessa Urch & Wolff, Steven B. Emotional Intelligence of Groups.

Hill, Linda. Exercising Influence.

Hill, Linda & Gabarro, John J. Managing Performance. 2002.

Parcells, Bill. The Tough Work of Turning Around a Team.

Waldroop, James & Butler, Timothy. The Executive as Coach.

Waldroop, James & Butler, Timothy. Managing Away Bad Habits.

Tools:

- Distribute results of the Leadership Forecast Challenge Report
- Bring completed leadership lifeline to class

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Session Four

Date/Time: Friday, June 10
12:35 PM – 3:20 PM

Topics: **Leading the Boundaryless Organization: Lessons from GE and Goldman Sachs**

Required Readings:

Kerr, Steve. On the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B.

Bartlett, Christopher, and Wozny, Meg. GE's Two-Decade Transformation: Jack Welch's Leadership.

Additional reading to be distributed in advance of this session.

Due: **Paper #1: Leadership Life-Line** (3 pages, double-spaced, maximum)

Session Five

Date/Time: Friday, June 24
8:45 – 11:35 AM

Topic: **Strategic Leadership**

Required reading: Pietersen, William G. Strategic Learning.

Pietersen, William G. Strategy in Search of a Method.

Reference Readings:

Hamel, G., Strategy Innovation and the Quest for Value.

Markides, Constantinos. Strategic Innovation in Established Companies.

Porter, Michael E. What is Strategy?

Tools: Distribute Leadership Compass survey results

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Session Six

Date/Time: Friday, July 8th
8:45 AM – 11:35 AM

Topic: **Leadership, Innovation & Culture: Lessons from JetBlue**

Required Readings:

Gittell, Jody Hoffer & O'Reilly, Charles. *JetBlue Airways: Starting from Scratch*, Harvard Business School, 2001.

Wells, Melanie. *Lord of the Skies*, Forbes, October 14, 2002.
(find updated articles)

Due: **Paper #2: Self assessment & action plan** (3 pages, double-spaced, MAX)

Session Seven

Date/Time: Saturday, July 23rd
11:35 AM Depart from campus; 5:30 depart West Point & return to campus

Topic: **Leadership and Organizational Learning: Lessons from the U.S. Army Field trip to the United States Military Academy at West Point**

Readings:

Jordan, Kathleen. It Paid Off in Afghanistan: Eight Lessons from the U.S. Military That You Can Use.

Pagonis, William. Leadership in a Combat Zone.

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Session Eight

Date/Time: Friday, August 5th
12:35 – 3:20 PM

Topic: **Leading Strategic Change & Innovation**

Required Readings:

Useem, Michael. Convincing a Company to Turn Inside Out: David Pottruck at Charles Schwab and Company. In Leading Up. New York: Random House, 2001.

Reference Readings:

Gabarro, John J. & Kotter, John P. Managing Your Boss. Harvard Business Review, 2000.

Kotter, J.P., "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail." Harvard Business Review, Mar/Apr. 1995.

Session Nine

Date/Time: Saturday, August 6th
12:35 – 3:20 PM

Topic: **Executive teams and Decision Making:
Lessons from Mount Everest**

Required reading: Hambrick, Donald. *Harsa Executive Team* case study.

Roxburgh, Charles. Hidden Flaws in Strategy, *The McKinsey Quarterly*, Number 2, 2003.

Useem, Michael. Guiding Your Guide, in *Leading Up*, Crown Business/Random House, 2001.

Due: **Paper #3: Field Study - Leading Organizational Change
(Max: 6-8 pages, double-spaced)**

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Session Ten

Date/Time: Friday, August 19th
8:45 AM – 1:55 PM

Topic: **Values Based Leadership**
Course Integration and Summary

Readings: Jonah Creighton, Harvard Business School case.

Course Papers

Paper #1: Personal Leadership Lifeline

Use this paper to identify key life/career accomplishments, setbacks and experiences, and role models (positive or negative) from which you have derived important lessons about leadership. Try to summarize these lessons in a few guiding principles.

Length: 3 pages, double-spaced (MAX)

Due: Friday, June 10th

Paper #2: Self- sessment and action plan

Use this paper to:

- 1) Summarize insights from the application of course tools and frameworks (e.g. Leadership vs. Management, Social Styles, and the Leadership Forecast Challenges Instrument)
- 1) Identify insights from Leadership Compass 360-degree feedback (if you used this tool)
- 2) Summarize key actions you will take with your boss, peers and/or direct reports and organization to enhance your leadership, leverage strengths or address weaknesses. Be specific and identify a timeline, expected outcomes and measures of success whenever possible.

Length: 3 pages, double-spaced (MAX)

Due: July 8th

Paper #3: Leading Organizational Change

Each student must submit a paper that evaluates the leadership of an organizational change initiative. You can select an initiative from your own firm or an organization that you can evaluate in a meaningful way. Groups of 2 students are permitted to do this paper by special permission (see Professor Fenlon to discuss your topic and obtain permission).

Length: 6-8 pages, double-spaced (maximum)

Due: Saturday, August 6th

Paper #3: Suggested Structure

1. Summary of background information & context (brief)
2. Describe strategic insights and intended change (brief)
3. Diagnose key leadership challenges associated with the change (brief)
4. Evaluate the root causes of success and failure
5. Key lessons learned about leadership

1) Summary of company background & context (brief)

- Name & brief history of company/division
- Size: revenue, profit, market cap, # of employees/offices
- Product/service offerings, i.e., what business is the company in?
- Current strategy and competencies
- Key drivers of business performance
- Structure, i.e., geographic/functional/matrix/customer groups, etc...

2) Key strategic insights and intended strategic change (brief)

Describe and evaluate: 1) key strategic insight related to customers, competitors, industry structure/dynamics and economics, the firm's own competencies and/or the broader environment, and 2) the change initiative that resulted from this insight.

3) Diagnose key leadership challenges associated with the change

Describe the leadership challenges on all relevant dimensions (personal, interpersonal/team, and organizational). For example, identify the key EQ challenges and behavioral changes required for individual executives or a senior team. Identify organizational challenges from a holistic perspective (think of the congruence model) and consider structure, process, measures and rewards, and culture (shared values and behaviors), people/skills, as well as dynamics related to power and politics within the organization.

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4) Evaluate the root causes of success and failure of the leadership

Assess the performance of the leadership. To what extent were the objectives of the organizational change achieved?

Students should apply a theoretical framework(s) presented in this course (or other management courses) to your evaluation of the root causes of success and failure, such as:

- Kotter's leadership vs. management framework and change leadership principles
- The DVP theory of change
- Congruence model
- Team dynamics and decision-making theory
- The role of personal EQ competencies and derailers

5) Key lessons learned

Summarize the key lessons for leading organizational change.