

Ethical Leadership: Rosalind Brewer

Organizational Behavior, MBA

Stephanie Mueller

“If you are going to be something, be in charge”, words to live by according to David Mueller. My father instilled this advice into younger sister and myself. But what does it mean to be in charge?

A boss is someone who manages you at work; however a leader is someone people follow. A leader does not necessarily have to be a boss, but does have some responsibilities in order to be a good leader. I believe my father was trying to teach how to be a leader, not just a boss.

Leaders are held to a higher standard; whether it's as a member of a small organization or a chief executive officer of a major U.S. corporation. Several chief executive officers use their leadership to create a better world by their influence. Organizations need great leadership in order to thrive.

While in Organizational Behavior, we learned about different leaders throughout history. All these great leaders had a common trait: the power to influence. The men who built America consisted of J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Henry Ford. These men created the industries of today. Vanderbilt created monopolies, but gradually competition and the government became an issue to keep the industry monopolized. The remaining innovators used new tactics to create successful businesses.

Emerging leaders learn from these men's tactics to be able to change the world through influence and power. Leaders are influencers to their followers. One factor of being a leader is to be ethical. The men who built America were not always ethical in decisions; however they created the structure of industries in America. By having

anyone in the business world to follow an ethical code, it guides people how to think and act.

“Ethical behavior, in its simplest terms, is knowing and doing what is right. The difficulty is in defining “right.” Different individuals, different cultures, and different religions define it in different ways. The accepted treatment of women and attitudes toward slavery in different cultures and at different times in history provide prime examples of how what’s “right” can vary. (Community Tool Box, 2015)”

According to the Business News Daily and author Linda Fisher Thornton, there are seven steps to ethical leadership. The author advises about how to be an ethical leader; it’s not just about following rules and regulations. It’s about making consumers aware of the ethical behaviors. By conveying the ethics to stakeholders, employees, and consumers, those people will be more willing to buy or work for the leader.

Ethics are day-to-day and ongoing, it is not a training once a year, it's the way the organization operates daily. If you as a leader are being ethical, hold everyone to that ethical standard. There are no exceptions to being ethical. It creates a trustworthy environment, which allows everyone to be upheld to the standard of ethics.

Celebrate ethical moments. Create a positive reaction when ethics are recognized to encourage the behavior. By following these steps, one can become a great ethical leader.

Ethical leadership responsibilities are to the group, to self, and to the community. The responsibilities are similar to the responsibilities of the service organization I belong

to during my undergraduate career. While involved, I learned how to become an effective leader through training and holding positions on the board.

To be an ethical and effective leader, it is very important to me to gain the trust of those around me. After building the rapport and gaining trust, it is easier to influence and make people believe in my leadership. My biggest challenge in being a leader is how young I am and that I am a woman.

As a manager of well-established groups, my biggest challenge is to build the rapport to lead the group. Once the rapport and trust are established, it seems easier to lead a group to success. I noticed in my previous position, the core group really trusted my thoughts and ideas. The international conference I ran became better each year due to the effective leadership.

I thought I had leadership handled with my previous job. Now, I am in a new position and still trying to figure out the best way to be a leader and manage a team of fifteen people who rarely see me. As a show manager, I need to have these people trust me and respect me as their leader. It's a different role since I'm responsible for someone's pay. It's hard to be strict yet flexible when someone is part time. You need them for shifts, but realize the job may not be their top priority. It's a balance that is taking a few months to achieve. The research for organizational behavior is definitely helping me understand how to lead.

The MBA program at Point Park University has taught me about various leaders to look as role models. As an aspiring marketing director, I realize I need to start to become an ethical leader now to perfect it for the future. One CEO that struck me as a great leader and role model for my career is the CEO of Sam's Club, Rosalind Brewer.

I have always admired the way Sam's Club conducted business. The employees always seem happy, the individual clubs donate time and money to various charities, and overall the operations similar to run smoothly from a customer's perspective. Rosalind Brewer started her career as a chemist and working her way up the ladders at Kimberly - Clark Co. She spent 22 years at that organization before joining the Wal-Mart Corporation.

According to the Wal-Mart's website, "Throughout her career, Roz has served as a high-impact strategist with experience spanning global manufacturing operations, research and development, marketing and strategic business unit leadership. She has focused relentlessly on revenue growth and customer satisfaction and has extensive expertise in turnaround assignments. Roz is also known for building strong teams, inspiring mentoring networks and having a passion for improving communities."

Brewer is considered one of the "100 Most Powerful Women in America" according to Forbes magazine. She has been with Wal-Mart since 2004. She became the CEO of Sam's Club in 2012, making her the first woman and African American to run a Wal-Mart Division.

"To make up for competition from Costco and lagging sales to small businesses, she has introduced a suite of services including a private health insurance exchange and access to payroll systems and legal services through a Sam's Club membership. She is also integrating the company's digital offerings, introducing Club Pick-up, where members can order goods online and fetch them at the store the next day. (Forbes, 2015)".

By creating these new systems and decisions, she is taking Sam's Club to the next level. One way to analyze her leadership skills are to check the reviews on Glassdoor. 53% of employees approve of the CEO and overall employees like the culture of the organization. She seems like the type of leader I am striving to become.

After reading a review of a speech she gave during Leadership Atlanta conference, her philosophy would be a great tool to follow throughout my career.

Rosalind Brewer's leadership philosophy consists of six points.

1. Create a clear vision for your team and inspire them to march toward it
2. Live the values you want to instill in your organization.
3. Be ready to lead. Be prepared to follow when you're not the leader.
4. Lead for change.
5. Keep it simple and consistent.
6. Own your mistakes. Communicate a lot, early and often, and have a plan for how to correct your mistake.

Brewer's philosophy helps understand the importance of leadership. By using this as a guideline to my own leadership style, I will become an ethical leader in no time. I started by creating a clear vision for my team. I was able to gather them all in one room and make them understand the importance of show marketing. Although being ethical is not a once a year meeting, it is important to gather the team and remind them what is important of a corporate message or vision. It may take some time before I become the greatest leader, but I am learning and understanding how important it is to be ethical.

Ethical leadership is important as a president of a volunteer organization or the CEO of a major corporation or even just a team member who needs to help encourage and

inspire the team to do better. It's much more than just getting people to like you but to really influence and create a change in the world. As a future leader, I plan on creating a change in the world, through whomever I lead and whatever I decide to do.

Bibliography

Begin the Begin: What I learned from Sam's Club CEO Rosalind Brewer, Hilimire, Jeff. (2013, January) Retrieved October 6, 2015 from <http://jeffhilimire.com/2013/01/what-i-learned-from-sam%E2%80%99s-club-ceo-rosalind-brewer-via-leadership-atlanta/>

Forbes. Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://www.forbes.com/profile/rosalind-brewer/>
7 Characteristics That Separate A Boss From A Leader. (2014, August). Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://elitedaily.com/money/entrepreneurship/things-distinguishes-leader-boss/>

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP - Roles, Responsibilities, and Tasks (Your free e-COACH: free tips and advices). Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://www.1000advices.com/guru/leadership.html>

MSG Management Study Guide. Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://www.managementstudyguide.com/leadership-ethics.htm>

Rosalind Brewer - President and CEO, Sam's Club. Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://corporate.walmart.com/our-story/leadership/executive-management/rosalind-brewer>

Sam's Club Reviews. Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://www.glassdoor.com/reviews/sam-s-club-reviews-e7811.htm>

Sam's Club Reviews. Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://www.glassdoor.com/reviews/sam-s-club-reviews-e7811.htm>

Section 8. Ethical Leadership. Retrieved October 6, 2015, from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/leadership-ideas/ethical-leadership/main>