# LEADERSHIP: Was Ernest Shackleton a Good Leader?

## Introduction

Leadership is one of the integral functions of any organization. Organizations must bring good leaders on board to ensure that the company is efficiently run towards the attainment of its goals, and overall objectives. Good leadership entails having right leaders at the forefront. Good leaders ensure the whole crew is on the same page thus leading to overall success (Ritchie & Hammond, 2005). The issue of leadership in organizations has become an essential aspect in modern day business world. No business enterprise would thrive in lousy administration due to the many risks associated. Notably, Leadership is an old concept that started even before the First World War. As such, close examination has been done on different leaders to find out if their leadership was one of a kind or poor. This essay will focus on the case of Ernest Shackleton, an explorer in 1901 that set for the South Pole with a team of 27 men aboard. The paper Shackleton was a good leader (Browning, 2007).

## Good leadership is about honesty

In modern global business, some leaders have failed to succeed because they are not honest. About the trait theory of leadership, the approach assumes that good leaders must bear good qualities that can make them better suited for leadership. The theory focuses on the different personal characteristics of leaders with the view of identifying successful and unsuccessful leaders. From Ernest Shackleton`s expedition, it can be argued that the man born positive attributes that are linked to a good and successful leader. In the start of his mission, the man was brutally honest with his followers. His expedition to the Antarctic continent never promised a safe return. He wanted to bring men aboard who understood how risky their voyage would be. In his advertisement, he described his journey would be hazardous, dangerous, with little pay and poor weather (Browning, 2007).

## Good leaders influence

Good leaders are influencers. They are capable of getting a massive following from the team they lead. As influencers, they ensure that their followers are focused on the primary goal. According to the great man theory, good leaders bear characteristics that are not found in other individuals. When he developed an advertisement seeking men for his exploring mission, so many men turned up evidence that demonstrates his great influencing skills thus a good leader. Moreover, during their adventure, different tasks needed to be done. He could influence his followers to perform jobs out of their profession but first leading as an example. He expected the team to share chores and duties, regardless of rank or seniority. For instance, the team would hunt for penguins so that penguin feathers could be used as fuel. His team worked as a group. Even though some members were not supportive, Ernest Shackleton would solve such problems amicably (Koehn, 2014).

## Good leaders inspire

Ernest Shackleton is an example of a good leader. His exploration mission was one with the many pitfalls, but he did not let the challenges to overpower his crew. His problems are similar to those that put leaders at a fix in the current global business. He even offered his team pays to ensure they remain focused towards their endeavor.

## Good leaders exhibit supreme resilience

In light of Ernest Shackleton's, journey to traverse the Antarctic continent, the man faced a considerable challenge at the start of his journey. Along the way, their ship became trapped in the ice a situation that almost made his dream unreachable. Their surging optimism together with his team of 27 men was virtually crushing into a defeat. However, Ernest Shackleton demonstrated resiliency and courage. They were hopeful that if they waited for the ice to melt in the spring, they would be able to continue with their journey. In that case, Ernest Shackleton demonstrated excellent leadership. Good leaders do not give up nor quit until they strike (Koehn, 2014).

## Good leaders focus on team`s objective

However much Ernest Shackleton voyage towards the South Pole together with his crew can be attributed to successful leadership, the opposite is true. Good leaders are driven by an overall team`s objective and not their interests. Ernest Shackleton seems to have been driven by his fame. He wanted to be the first man to have reached the Antarctic continent. As such, it is evident he was after his glory. Ernest was aware of how difficult the mission would be but later went ahead to lure men into the adventure. Good leaders are driven by the desire to achieve as a group and not as an individual. About the behavioral theory of leadership, the behaviors and actions of Shackleton were a pull down to their adventure. The behavioral theory approaches leaders from their visible actions. As such, Shackleton`s event of killing three dogs demonstrated his lack of emotional intelligence especially during a difficult time. The dogs had nothing to do with the problematic voyage (Perkins, 2012).

## Good leaders use team resources appropriately

Good leaders do not use resources of an organization in the wrong way. Organizational leaders should be the caretakers of their company. As such, every resource however insignificant is put under their jurisdiction. They should put such resources to ensure the success of the organization`s goals and objectives. Shackleton, however, did not observe the excellent use of resources in the team. Timber that constructed the ship had been used as fuel while part of the ship`s boiler was converted into a stove. Such happenings left them with no ship to sail the remaining section of the journey (Perkins, 2012).

## Good leaders are democratic

A good leader listens to the opinions of his team or followers. Surprisingly members of the organization sometimes may provide the best solution to a crisis, and therefore their ideas should not land on deaf ears. Leaders should demonstrate democratic leadership where every member’s ideas are welcome. After Shackleton destroyed their sailing ship, a new way to sail was needed. The crew’s carpenter had suggested that they build a sloop out of the wreckage of the vessel but their leader, Ernest Shackleton failed to heed to this idea. As a result, the carpenter rebelled and refused to continue working. The standoff between Shackleton and the carpenter is evidence that he had failed to enhance democratic leadership (Koehn, 2014).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Ernest Shackleton`s expedition is one that defies all odds. Traits, attributes an behavior of a leader are core to determining if a leader is good or not. Much of Ernest Shackleton`s expedition was associated with good qualities of a leader. Though some of his actions in the course of navigation never add up to attributes of a good leader, modern-day leaders have something to learn from him.

## References

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