

Leadership Lessons from Today's Most Successful and Passionate CEOs



By Jo Eismont, Social Media and Web Editor, [Insights Learning and Development](#)

As a social media editor, it's my job to spend great swathes of my day trawling the farthest reaches of the Internet for new content ideas – or, at least, new and innovative ways to package old content. And, boy, can the Internet be a tangled web of terrible, hackneyed, clichéd 'leadership lessons'. I've lost count of the days I've spent shaking my head, thinking 'I can't believe that so many people have shared yet another Dr Seuss quote' and worrying that I'll never stumble across anything useful and meaningful ever again.

And then, in the way of social media, you just do stumble across some gleaming, glittering pearls which sing out to you through the noise and chaos of the world's unfiltered ideas.

And as far as I'm concerned these leadership lessons from some of the 21st century's most famous and successful CEOs are right up there with the best of them. So, what can we learn from the leaders of today?

Vision + Passion = Success

You may be a leader with vision, but if people can't really take it to their hearts and make it their own, then you're sunk. You need to find a way to inscribe your vision on the hearts of your team, and fire up their passion the way yours

has been burning for years. Fred Kofman, a LinkedIn VP says about his CEO Jeff Weiner;

“Most CEOs sit at the front of a boat and tell their employees where they need to row; Weiner grabs a surfboard and catches a huge wave, inspiring everyone behind him to do the same. The surfers are all riding the same wave, sharing the same vision, but are putting much more of their heart and personality into their work.”

It's this ability to get everyone not just on board, but willing to take the biggest, scariest ride of their lives with you, that takes you from an 'average' to 'rockstar' leader.

Demonstrate Unflinching Trust

[Raul Leal](#), CEO of Virgin Hotels is a man with a big job, who reports to a man with a bigger job – Virgin Founder [Richard Branson](#). And when Leal picked the Old Dearborn Bank Building in Chicago to be the flagship Virgin Hotel, Branson was unconvinced, saying;

“Raul, you must have more imagination than me because I just don't quite see it yet. (But) If you say that it's the place, then I say it's the place – I trust you; you're the hotel guy.”

That's one cool leadership lesson right there. Hire the best people you can, then get off their case. Oh, and let them know that you're not interested in managing them or their decisions – the responsibility is totally on them and you'll just be around to congratulate them when they've knocked it out of the park. Mr Branson, I salute you. The hotel opened this past February with amazing accolades thanks to Leal's bold idea.

Work Where Your Passion Lies

And now a word from our Millennial CEO of choice – The Zuck. [Mark Zuckerberg](#) makes kind of an odd CEO, right? A techy geek

with a passion for coding and a fear of public speaking, he's often been ridiculed for not fitting the traditional image of a powerful CEO.

But he's been misunderstood, and I think he may just be the most fearless of the lot. I think he is pretty happy to project exactly who he is, what he believes in, and what he stands for, with a complete lack of artifice. For someone who has spent his 20s on the steepest learning curve imaginable, he's pretty sanguine about the image he projects.

"If you just work on stuff that you like and you're passionate about, you don't have to have a master plan with how things will play out."

Of course, he is downplaying his overwhelming ambition somewhat. At the heart of 'working on stuff that you like' is the notion of working extremely hard, perhaps for years, on things that other people might not see the value of. But this is the example he has set to his colleagues and his extended Facebook family, and I – well, I just like it. It's no frills, no fuss, do as I say AND as I do kind of leadership.

What are the leadership lessons you can take from some of today's most prominent CEOs? Weiner, Branson and Zuckerberg may not inspire you as they do me, but search the Internet for other gems or check out more leadership tips from our blog [here](#) that will help you begin to frame your own style, and then get out there.

***About the Author:** Jo Eismont is a social media and Web editor with years of experience in the learning and development industry. She is very passionate about sharing the philosophy of 'doing what you love and loving what you do.' With two small children at home, a Twitter addiction and a burgeoning love of blogging, Jo strives to share the Insights' values so that her audience finds the right new position or way to love their job as much as she does.*

