

CHILDHOOD PROSPERITY: HOW STRONG UPBRINGING MOLDED CORPORATE
LEADERSHIP STYLES

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Introduction

Through analyzing and reviewing extensively the LifeHack website of ten top-level management personal including Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Founders, and Heads of, there are four common themes. After examining each of these interviews numerous times, the common themes that are apparent are (1) leadership, (2) communication, (3) adaptations, and (4) grit. These ideas or common themes take on a whole new look through the non-stop, bustling world of corporate business, dominated by technological advancements. Even though each of the respondents wears an impressive title, human qualities still persevere. Beginning with their childhood, eight respondents set forth with a strong set of beliefs about individuality within a close-knit group, the power of simplicity, and the importance of a strong work ethic. Presently, the respondents have continued to embrace these beliefs and project them onto their own companies. In turn, beliefs about the four common themes have created environments where individuals within the companies can, and do, succeed on multiple levels.

LEADERSHIP

Strong leadership is the foundation of a successful company. It was noted that eight out of ten respondents began his or her entrepreneurships at a young age. In his interview, Anant Agarwal indicated by starting at an early age and visiting a friend's chicken farm, a certain curiosity came over him and this curiosity has served him well in his many business ventures (Orion, 2/22/17). His curiosity and the desire to learn all there is to know about chicken farming, helped lead him to build and establish other respectful high tech companies that are thriving today and will continue on within their own paths for the future.

Luis von Ahn stated in his conversation with Orin, he was inspired by his childhood background in Guatemala, a poor country with limited access to high-education except for

families that can afford the cost, helped he focus on creating a vehicle for free language education to the impoverished countries (Orion, 2/8/17). This accomplishment is deeply tied to his childhood background. This is evident in the configuration that von Ahn leads his institution now and into the future. Luis commented in his interview that he just finished reading *High Output Management* by Andrew Grove; a leadership book that is a must read for all his managerial staff (Orion, 2/8/17).

In his interview Max Levchin specified that in his early years, growing up in Kiev, Ukraine and his family members scientists, he absorbed their work ethic and values constructed from first principles (Orion, 1/25/17). Early on, strong guidance and principles laid the ground work and is quite evident in his series of start-up companies such as Pay-Pal and Affirm, flourishing today prominently mapping roads for additional business enterprises.

COMMUNICATION

Being able to communicate is the pipeline in enhancing any business venture. A consensus among the executives identified communications as a strong tool and skill in the success of their respective business. In David Baszucki's interview, relating back to his days in high school as the captain of TV quiz team and host of his own talk show, recommends conveying your clear and concise message is important in instrumenting your opinions, thoughts and ideas (Orion, 10/12/16). As CEO of Roblox, Baszucki utilizes multiple communiqué tools, SimpleNote, Google Apps, iPhones, Androids, as part of his repertoire. He extends the spirit of creativity along the open dialogue, plus continues to generate and foster the out-of-the-box thinking within his business.

Amir Salihefendic conversation with Orin, conveyed at an early age, as a Bosnia refugee life was hard and chaotic, a struggle from day to day (Orion, 2/15/17). During his college years,

Salihefendic reflected on his past turbulent experiences, steered him in the direction a constructing a remote platform for open communication. He spends the majority of his work time at home, in which he strives and follows protocol for open and complete communication among all associates. He considers this an imperative skill in leading a business. He converses worldwide with his remote team members and continues to support and encourage professional and personal growth for years to come.

ADAPTATIONS

Adaptations and changes are crucial for companies' existence. Reviewing these top corporate leaders profiles, each continuously making changes, doing something diverse in order to adapt to their business plans. Business leaders must remain open and mindfulness of the ever-changing world of business. Noted by Charles Darwin, "It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change" (Kerpen, n.d.). In Carlos Watson's interview he disclosed that he was a journalist at heart (Orion, 2016). Referring back to when he was young, change was crucial after remembering his father's struggles and prospects to the move to the United States. Watson parents were teachers; he decided to follow tradition and teach, later in his life his desire to be a journalist was irresistible. Watson achieved his goal. He is CEO of OZY Media, an online outlet for the ever-changing population. Adjustments are evident in the ways he structures his office environment. One day he is working home, next day could be on a plane, or a train. Fluidity is critically important to Watson as was mentioned in the conversation; striving to not being overwhelmed and shift with the times by giving your best shot and be flexible. Just like in the game of basketball, bumps occur but just move with it. Watson thrives on shifting gears and multitasking hoping to instill these elements with his team and energizing them for new adventures down the road.

In Richard Wong's interview, he recalled how writing code at 10 years old influenced and followed for his whole life (Orin, 11/30/16). Like other executives, motivation and perseverance aided Wong's passion for programming to create a different diverging and alternating path in technology. Starting off at Microsoft, immersed in the world computers, his professional tool was a PC, after 11 years, changes happened then required to learn Apple platform. Wong endured the transformation, not only with his equipment, from PC to Apple, but also in workspace. He extends himself out to his staff with this belief, "...we're far more powerful than we realize and we can take ownership on influencing and outcome for the better" (Orin, 2016). Wong, a pillar of leadership, demonstrates the power of change is healthy, not only at work but in life.

GRIT

Grit is the essence of determination, passion, and motivation striving for a goal. Angela Duckworth, author of Grit, stated: "Passion for your work is a little bit of discovery, followed by a lot of development, and then a lifetime of deepening" (Duckworth, 2016). In the conversation with Orin, Brad Smith, CEO of Intuit stated, "...anyone, regardless of I.Q., talent, or background, can succeed if they have grit-a blend of passion and persistence" (Orin, 4/12/17). Beginning early on as a sophomore in high school, Smith took up martial arts, and reflects back on the training, self-control and discipline along with solid career advice from his father. This guidance was the driving force for where he is now. Using that information and solid determination, fortitude, and passion, he has driven Intuit to top-level echelon in the field. He reveals a sense of strong character and reflects back to instill fortitude; hard work and grit as Intuit along with staff move forward and prosper in years to come.

In his interview Jason Fried noted that in his younger days school did not interest him growing up outside of Chicago. His passion learning did (Orion, 12/28/16). He was introduced to and intrigued by a machine called Macintosh SE during his youth. Exercising pure determination, absorbing the technology involved in complex computer systems, Fried created and sold his first “Audiofile”. Fried’s pure determination including excitement, eagerness and love of his work creates his first project “Audiofile”. Now as CEO of Basecamp, a very successful web-based project management tool, advice from his dad lingers on, “If you don’t ask, you don’t get” (Orion, 12/28/16). This same advice resonates throughout his leadership and management styles at Basecamp. With his company and teammates in mind, Jason, encourages his colleagues to find their own grit and be ambitious, never know what the future has in store. In correlation with Agarwal, von Ahn, Levchin, and Baszucki leadership comes from within and focuses on true passion and belief in accomplishing goal(s) and in doing so, working from the bottom up in being successful and true to themselves and the employees.

CONCLUSION

The opportunities of the eight out ten executives encountered when younger lead them down their respective successful paths. The experiences in the early years equipped these respondents in embracing leadership, communication, adaptations and grit setting in motion true values, ethics, principles and beliefs, lasting lifelong in ideals set forth in their respective company and industry. Each of top level executives are strong innovative leaders and entrepreneurs, marching to their own beat with a thriving and exciting career that was set in motion in their younger years and shaping the future world ventures.

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