



Bill Gates - From Geek To Great



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Abstract

Bill Gates is a world-renowned businessman known for his wealth, the success of the Microsoft Corporation, and his generous philanthropy. The research presented in this project follows the evolution of leadership styles employed by Bill Gates throughout his life as he progressed from a two-man software start-up in his garage to the greatest philanthropist of our time. Research analysis methods will include leadership style assessments while applying various models such as the Vroom-Jago Contingency Model, Path-Goal Theory, Fiedler's Contingency Model, and Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Theory. Research topics such as leader-follower relationship, trust, types of power, emotional intelligence, and motivation will be reviewed including how Mr. Gates was able to create an open communication culture. The goal of this research is to identify and evaluate Mr. Gates' specific leadership strengths that have had a strategic role in the innovation and success of Microsoft Corporation, a group of complex multidisciplinary Systems Engineering teams while attempting to apply these lessons learned in my own career as a Systems Engineering leader.

"As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others." – Bill Gates

Methods

- Vroom-Jago Contingency Model
- Path-Goal Theory
- Fiedler's Contingency Model
- Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Theory
- Leadership Assessments



Results

- Conscientiousness
- Transformational
- Open Communications
- Goal-Oriented
- High Emotional Intelligence

	SELF	OTHERS
AWARENESS	Self-Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional self-awareness • Accurate self-assessment • Self-confidence 	Social Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Organizational awareness • Service orientation
BEHAVIOR	Self-Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional self-control • Trustworthiness • Conscientiousness • Adaptability • Optimism • Achievement-orientation • Initiative 	Relationship Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of others • Inspirational leadership • Influence • Communication • Change catalyst • Conflict management • Bond building • Teamwork and collaboration

Discussion

Developed in the trenches of a high stress and high anxiety environment during the creation and operation of Microsoft, Bill Gates' leadership style began with a harsh demand for perfection and production. His approach softened over time as he transitioned from a task-oriented to a people-oriented focus, fueled by his recognition that his company's success was dependent on the satisfaction of his employees. He learned that he needed to understand what motivated his employees and structured the tasks, roles, and rewards for his employees accordingly. This realization was a key tenet in the development of a high level of emotional intelligence. Today, his followers admire his capacity to lead from a position of authority while simultaneously having respect for his personnel, earning his worldwide recognition as an excellent leader.

Conclusions

- Leads with referent/soft power based on respect and concern for employee well being.
- Lack of hubris allowed him to accept his limitations and pursue sources to support his goals and personal growth.
- Highly respected by his peers for approach and methodology to leadership.

References

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