



# Research Leader Biography on Frederick “Fred” Smith



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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is for a reader to understand different leadership skills from Frederick “Fred” Smith in order to apply those skills and become a better leader. Born in 1944 in Marks, Mississippi, Frederick Smith is the founder, chairman, and CEO of Federal Express, later called FedEx Corporation. Today, FedEx Corporation is the world’s leading express transportation provider. FedEx has been widely acknowledged for its commitment to total quality service. During his undergraduate years, Smith wrote a paper on the need for reliable overnight delivery in a computerized information age. His professor found the premise improbable, and to the best of Smith’s recollection, he only received a grade of C for this effort, but the idea remained with him. Today, FedEx Corporation is the world’s leading express transportation provider. More than 400,000 FedEx team members worldwide field a fleet of 656 aircraft and more than 150,000 other motorized vehicles, delivering over 12 million packages every business day, to more than 220 countries and territories.



## Methods

- Democratic Leadership Style
- People-Service-Profit Philosophy
- Emotional Intelligence
- Ethical Leadership
- FedEx Purple Promise
- Cultural Intelligence

## Results

Smith communicates his vision through the leaders to all personnel within the organization. This allowed the implementation of Smith’s vision and his corresponding strategies to all the groups and their members. While other leaders sit back and point fingers or complain about problems, Smith takes the time to discern the issues, dig deep into the heart of the matter, formulate a strategy, and then promote it both internally and externally. In addition, Smith has the ability to motivate his employees, so they enjoy working, want to come into work, and believe in the vision he has for the company. Another principal Smith applied at FedEx was to make sure every employee felt they could contribute in the success of the company. For example, FedEx attributes success to People-First Philosophy. The People-Service-Profit philosophy (P-S-P) is based on the belief that by creating a positive working environment for employees, they will provide better service quality to customers, which would then lead to customers using FedEx products and services.



## Discussion

Most importantly, Smith uses his leadership skill to effectively lead his organization to success and competitive advantage. When enabling others to act, a leader’s job is not to push, inspire, challenge, manage, compel, celebrate, but it truly is to get out of the way and let people act. Smith and FedEx are consistently recognized for progressive and innovative policies, programs, benefits, and stimulating working environments.



## Conclusions

This democratic leadership style supports participation in decision making, works with employees to determine what to do and does not closely supervise workers. It is evident that the traits and attitudes of Smith’s leadership personality and his managers directly affected his behavior and his relationship with employees.

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