10 Sins of Leadership

Concluding the EMBA Journey

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10 Cardinal Sins of Leadership

- Wisdom
  - Managing not enough
  - Managing too much
- Justice
  - Taking Credit and Avoiding Blame
  - Lack of Recognition
  - Ignore Employee Ideas
- Courage
  - Overloading top employees
  - Inconsistency and favouritism
  - Not asking for feedback and/or ignoring it
- Temperance
  - Treating Everything as Urgent
  - Taking Shortcuts to Growth

0.0.0.1 The Ten Cardinal Sins of Leadership

Table 1: The Ten Cardinal Sins of Leadership

Theme	**Sin**	**Explanation**	**Personal Example**	**Famous Examp (with Results)**
Manage not enough (Wisdom)	Lack of Clear Communication	Confusing or inconsistent messaging leads to misunderstandings and loss of trust.	In my first leadership role, I focused on technical work and failed to explain, delegate, empower, or follow up. The strategy was only in my mind, not shared.	Steve Jobs, ea in his care was known unclear comm nication with team, which to frustration a turnover at App After improv communication, Apple's te cohesion and in vation significan increased.

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Table 1: The Ten Cardinal Sins of Leadership (continued)

Theme	**Sin**	**Explanation**	**Personal Example**	**Famous Example (with Results)**
Manage not enough (Wisdom)	Avoiding the difficult conversations	Avoiding tough discussions is like allowing a rotting apple in a basket—problems fester and erode team cohesion.	After explaining the strategy, things still went wrong. Team alignment suffered, and people developed their own agendas. Introducing regular meetings and honest feedback improved outcomes.	Jeff Bezos at Amazon encouraged open, sometimes difficult, conversations. This approach led to better decision-making and faster innovation, resulting in Amazon's sustained growth and market dominance.
Manage too much (wisdom)	Micro Management	Micromanaging fails to empower the next generation of leaders. Great leaders build future leaders by trusting and delegating.	When starting a new team, I wanted everything automated and perfect, leading to micromanagement.	Elon Musk at Tesla has faced criticism for excessive micromanagement, which contributed to burnout and turnover, slowing down innovation and growth.
Underestimate Trust (Justice)	Taking Credit but Shifting Blame	Leaders who claim success but avoid responsibility damage team trust and engagement.	N/A	Enron's executives, including Ken Lay, took credit for successes but blamed others for failures. This culture of mistrust and blame led to Enron's collapse and one of the largest corporate scandals in history.

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Table 1: The Ten Cardinal Sins of Leadership (continued)

Theme	**Sin**	**Explanation**	**Personal Example**	**Famous Examp (with Results)**
Underestimate Trust (Justice)	Lack of Recognition	Failing to acknowledge contributions lowers motivation and morale.	When I became CEO, I set up a complex year-end process but neglected to organize townhalls or recognize people. Leadership became stale, and initiatives dried up.	Jack Welch at was renowned his focus on rec nition, regula praising and warding emplo contributions. T approach led increased emplo engagement a innovation, he ing GE become global leader.
Underestimate Trust (Justice)	Ignoring Employee Ideas	Not listening to employees stifles innovation and lowers engagement.	At KBC TFI, I bulldozed my own ideas for portfolios and processes, making the company apathetic. It took time for people to feel safe to speak up.	Thomas Watson at IBM encourag employees to sh ideas and expe ment. This c ture of openn led to IBM's do inance in the te nology industry decades.
Go for the Easy solution (courage)	Overloading Top Employees	Excessive workload on best performers causes burnout and turnover.	In several roles, a small group carried most of the work, often as volunteers.	Steve Jobs at Pi overloaded creatives, lead to burnout a turnover amo top talent. T contributed to decline in creat output and inno tion at Pixar.

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Table 1: The Ten Cardinal Sins of Leadership (continued)

Theme	**Sin**	**Explanation**	**Personal Example**	**Famous Example (with Results)**
Go for the Easy solution (courage)	Inconsistency and Favoritism	Promoting based on favoritism or inconsistent policies demotivates and disrupts culture.	Linked to previous	Google under Sundar Pichai is known for its transparent and merit-based promotion system. Employees are evaluated based on clear performance metrics and peer feedback, ensuring fairness. This approach has fostered a culture of trust and high performance, contributing to Google's reputation as a leading employer and its continued innovation.
Go for the Easy solution (courage)	Not taking feedback	Leaders who don't listen to feedback miss opportunities for growth and improvement.	Feedback from my board saved me when my risk appetite for CDOs was not aligned with theirs.	Satya Nadella at Microsoft transformed the company by prioritizing feedback and fostering a culture of continuous learning. This led to a resurgence in innovation and Microsoft's return to market leadership.

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Table 1: The Ten Cardinal Sins of Leadership (continued)

Theme	Sin	Explanation	Personal Example	Famous Examp (with Results)
Forgetting to think long term (temperance)	Treating Everything as Urgent	Mismanagement of priorities exhausts the team and reduces productivity.	At HSBC, I focused on hiring juniors because it was easy, then shifted to bringing in senior leaders for better long-term results.	Warren Buff is famous for disciplined prio tization, treat only a few thi as truly urge This approach led to Berksh Hathaway's lo term success a stability.
Forgetting to think long term (temperance)	Taking Shortcuts to Growth	Pursuing rapid growth without proper planning causes strategic failure.	At HSBC, too much transactional management and lack of coaching led to missed opportunities for transformational growth.	Theranos, un Elizabeth Holm pursued ra growth with sho cuts, leading a spectacular c lapse and le consequences for leadership.

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