

A woman with long dark hair, seen from behind, is drawing a vibrant, hand-drawn mural on a wall. The mural is filled with various business and financial symbols, including a city skyline at the bottom, a bar chart, a pie chart, a lightbulb, a magnifying glass, a key, a dollar sign, a Euro symbol, a stack of money, a trophy, and the words 'WIN', 'money', 'FINANCE', 'I can!', 'Brainstorm', 'idea', 'Business', 'credit', and '50%'. The woman is wearing a dark long-sleeved top and is actively drawing on the wall with a red marker. The background is a solid purple color.

Hired and Fired! The leadership style of HP's former CEO, Carleton "Carly" Fiorina

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Present businesses are operating in a dynamic and turbulent business environment. The factors that exist in the uncertain and unpredictable environment can decide the entire future of the company. Management provides tremendous support in surviving within this ever-changing environment. It provides insights into how to plan, organize, lead, and control the limited resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the goal and objectives in the dynamic environment. Leading is a critical element in the management process that helps to mould the behaviours of the organization members. The success of an organization depends on its leaders. Leadership is the ability to influence people toward the attainment of goals (Daft, 2012).

Since there are many members in an organization, leading is an important task to subordinate and influence the behaviour of its members towards achieving goals and objectives as it is. Influential leaders can predict the future, capitalize on opportunities, and motivate the members to exert a high level of performance. Therefore motivation is another essential role of successful leaders.

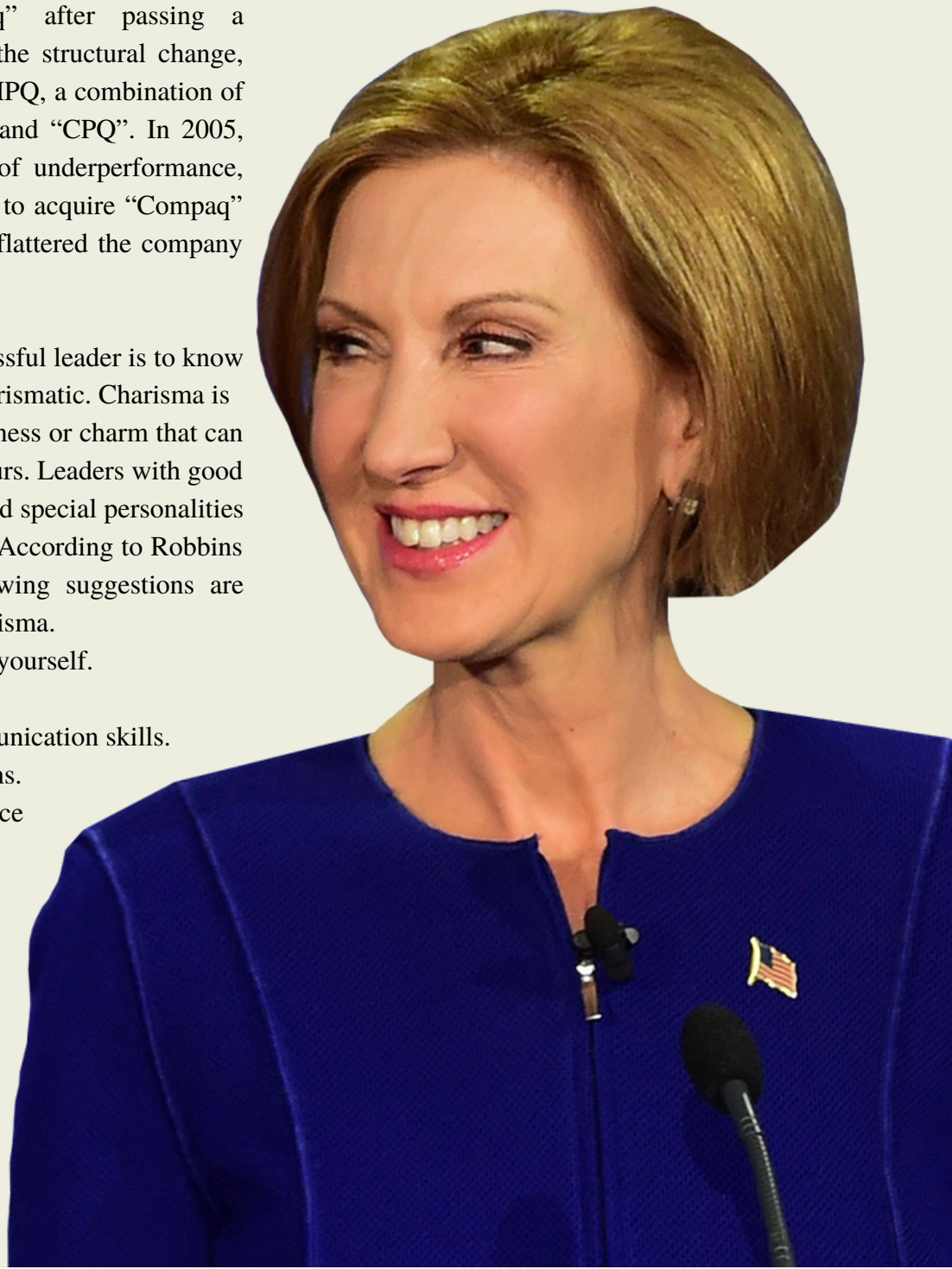
Hewlett-Packard Company (HP) was founded in 1939 by Bill Hewlett and David Packard, and initially, it produced electronic test and measurement equipment. From 1999 HP concentrated on making its later products, computers and printers. As a result of this strategic decision, HP became the world's leading computer manufacture in 2007. Now HP is a pioneer manufacturer of technology products and services to both individual and corporate consumers.

HP's popular products include personal computers, printers, and printer accessories like inkjet refill cartridges. HP's CEO, Carleton "Carly" Fiorina, and the company's other top executives decided that HP should pay \$19 billion to acquire Compaq, another personal computer manufacturer. According to Fiorina, acquiring Compaq would help HP to sell more products while reducing the company's cost structure. Regardless of these benefits, the decision to acquire Compaq provided Carly Fiorina, HP's CEO, with an enormous leadership challenge. On 3rd September 2001, HP announced an agreement of acquiring "Compaq" after passing a shareholder vote. After the structural change, the HP symbol became HPQ, a combination of two characters, "HPW" and "CPQ". In 2005, after consecutive years of underperformance, HP realized the decision to acquire "Compaq" was a wrong move that flattered the company earnings.

A key to become a successful leader is to know how to become more charismatic. Charisma is the compelling attractiveness or charm that can influence others behaviours. Leaders with good charisma show unique and special personalities over the other members. According to Robbins & Coulter (2017) following suggestions are proposed to develop charisma.

- Focus on others, not yourself.
- Be more extroverted.
- Work on your communication skills.
- Control your emotions.
- Exhibit self-confidence

According to HP's former CEO, Carleton "Carly" Fiorina's leadership style, she has mastered her communication skills. Therefore, she was able to communicate and convince the management regarding the acquisition of Compaq. So, it can be highlighted as a good sign of a charismatic leader. Since Fiorina was able to finalize the acquisition and integrate two companies' operations by developing a team of thirty executives, it proves that she has exhibited self-confidence by catering the final criteria as mentioned by Robbins and Coulter in 2017.





As a successful leader, you should be able to control your emotions. But after the failure of Compaq acquisition, Fiorina has told/stated executives in a conference that “You’ve let HP down”, you’ve let the board down and you’ve let me down. So, Thus, this statement depicts that Fiorina could not control her emotions in front of her failures. Moreover, successful leaders should be responsible for their decisions and should not point at others in losses. Based on that, we can decide that Fiorina’s leadership style is not that proactive. Successful leaders should focus on others than themselves. Therefore to become an influential leader, you should listen to others voices. According to the case, HP’s external advisors has warned about the difficulties associated with acquiring a large company such as Compaq. Thus, this event evidences that Fiorina has followed a more autocratic leadership style; otherwise, she would have think twice before making the big decision. According to the Harward Business Review (2016), she has never took time to develop a rapport with individual employees, and therefore never got a buy-in or support for her initiatives. This statement further affirms that Fiorina is not capable of working with followers due to her autocratic style. According to the level five leadership style, leadership characterized by an almost complete lack of ego (humanity) coupled with a fierce resolve

will do what is best for the organization (Collins, 2021). As Harward Business Review (2016) shows/indicates, many of the interviewed mid-level managers and executives reported that Fiorina pushed them to deliver on metrics that were not grounded in reality or data and were not really achievable. Many also felt that she needed to check her ego. Further proving Fiorina’s ego, during her tenure, she has used to hung a huge portrait of herself next to HP founders Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard (Carly Fiorina’s Legacy as CEO of Hewlett Packard, 2016). To become a level five executive leader, you should be passionate in providing leadership without pride and ego.

Successful leaders anticipate change, exploit opportunities, motivate their followers to reach high level of productivity, correct poor performance and lead the organization towards its objectives. Therefore, leaders should be capable enough to do environmental scanning and identify profitable opportunities. As a corporate entrepreneur, Fiorina would have done a better environmental scanning before leading to the acquisition of Compaq. In the dynamic environment, the autocratic leadership style is not further fixing to the changes. If Fiorina had given a second thought to her decision by considering the key stakeholder's predictions that the merger would not be profitable, It would not be initiated. Therefore, the autocratic style followed by Fiorina caused more than \$ 19 billion cash outflows from the company and lost many talents due to high turnover. So, Thus, she must change her leadership style into a democratic style which is called a participative style to be more successful. A democratic leader always values the differences and inputs of the followers before making big decisions. Democracy will lead to higher satisfaction, lower grievances and lower turnover rates.

She should focus on gathering information from both bottom to top-level management and external sources before making big decisions. If she had done it before making the decision, she would have realised that the merger would not be as fruitful as expected. Role of Motivation is a crucial role to be played by modern managers. Modern managers should be more concerned about the humanistic approach in motivating the employees to exert a high level of performance directed at achieving goals and objectives. Therefore, Fiorina has to be more concerned with motivating employees, guiding them and encouraging them. The change agent role is another critical success factor in becoming an effective leader. In implementing a change, the change elements need to be closely observed and studied. Therefore, Fiorina should have given more priority to identify what should be changed. Before the big decision, the firm's culture, structure, people, technology and physical settings should have been altered or studied in order to make it a profitable one.

Reference

Carly Fiorina's Legacy as CEO of Hewlett Packard. (2016, March 9). Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2015/09/carly-fiorinas-legacy-as-ceo-of-hewlett-packard>
Collins, J. (2021). Good to Great (Spanish Edition) (1st ed.). Reverte Management.

Leadership style and qualities matter a lot in achieving goals and objectives. Leadership is not just a role placed on a big, comfortable seat on a top floor of a building. It is how to work with people and get work done by people by delighting the workers. Ultimately, this will lead the firm to cater the purpose and the objectives. With the changing nature of the environment, traditional and typical boss centred autocratic leadership style is no more applicable. The modern workforce is diverse and competent. To grab the optimum use of the crew/team, the leaders should adjust their selves accordingly. As the social learning approach suggests, leadership is an interaction between the traits of the leaders, their behaviours and the environment. Therefore to change the world, the leaders should change. There is no universally accepted one leadership style, but the success of the leadership depends on the ability to fit into the situation.