

**Reflective Essay- Businessmen as leaders**

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Businessmen as leaders are not separate from the influences of the socio-political and religious beliefs of the society in which they operate. The ethical, moral, and religious values that the company holds derive from the behavior of its leaders. Lacking any clear religious morals or principles to follow, leaders usually tend to follow the Machiavellian approach with decisions and actions that work towards ensuring the security and prosperity of their own business. The 'soul' of the organization that defines its purpose heavily centers around the religious beliefs which the company holds that derive and shape the behaviors of its political leaders. Two such examples can be seen by the CEO of Medtronic, Bill George, and J. Frank Harrison, the CEO of Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated practice an integrative religious company environment with religious and moral ethics of diverse ethnicities of their employers when deciding the moral positioning of a company.

Leadership is the key area where religion exerts its maximum influence in shaping the attitude, leadership style, and work environment of the company. Religion infused with leadership paves the road for encouraging, inspiring, enabling, and challenging leadership styles. For example, an individual holding Christian beliefs tend to follow an autocratic leadership "exercised by various leaders in the Bible, including King Solomon and King David" (Hicks, 2002). In autocratic leadership, the leader holds the central position, but its decisions and behaviors are encouraged in consideration of the ethical and moral code of the religious doctrine to avoid any injustices or immoral company values. Bill George, the CEO of Medtronic, is also an advocate of autocratic and authentic leadership. He is clear and concise in narrating the value of its company, where he has reinforced the original mission statement by the founder of the company Earl Bakken in the 1960s. The company mission narrates that "Medtronic is not in business to maximize shareholder value. We are in business to maximize value to the patients we serve" (Bolman & Deal, 1984). His reinforcement of humanitarian

approach for his company is also visible in his leadership attitude where he closely interacts, encourages, and rewards the employees who show excellent examples of following the company's mission statement. Having his leadership sketched by Christian beliefs, George was able to extend the financial worth and value of the Medtronic company.

Integration of the democratic values in the leadership style is also greatly attributed to religious values. The democratic styles allow leaders to make “final decision-makers with the input of followers” (Gaitho, 2019). Consequently, this form of leadership allows for greater creative expression, productivity, and satisfaction on the part of the employee since they see their opinion is valued and considered in the company's decision making. The CEO of Cola-Cola Bottling Co, J. Frank Harrison, has clearly sketched the role of their employee in a company where he has stated that “People are at the center of everything we do, from our employees to those who touch our business to the communities we call home” *The Coca-Cola Company*, n.d.). Valuing diversity and inclusion is primary to the company where not only people are granted equal respect, representation, and value, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, or gender. Many of the business leaders around the world are adopting democratic leadership style since they have started to understand that “ “When you give love, you receive love [...] there is a spiritual dimension to business just as there is to the lives of individuals” (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Successful leaders understand the importance of diversity and take effective steps timely to ensure the maximum growth of the business. Treating employees as equal humans with a sense of judgment and understanding of business dynamics not only helps in promotion of boss-employee relationship but cultivates a sense of importance and confidence among employees as well.

To conclude, religious values deeply contribute to the behaviors, values, and leadership styles of the company while giving maximum place to diversity, equality, and fair treatment. Religious influences not only keep the morals of the company defined but also refrain them

from indulging in Machiavellian tendencies. Among multiple leadership styles, Autocratic and Democratic leadership practiced by various leaders across the globe are some of the most practiced styles that ensure maximum value, encouragement, fair-treatment, and an ethical work environment by the company's leaders.

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