

Leadership Legacy?¹

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A leader can certainly be judged by his legacy. I usually ask people in my seminars to describe how they would prefer to be remembered as leaders. I do that as part of something broader that I call 'The Pub Test' (living in England, I simply must refer to this pillar of social intercourse.) Ten years from now there is a reunion of this leadership team. Most of them left the organisation a while ago. What would be the language, the theme of conversation and the description of what was left behind? Here is a typical output example of this exercise:

The 2016 Reunion – Pub Test

The company itself

There were
'opportunities'...
Learning experience
Innovation, chance to
influence
Progressive environment

Our divisions, our own teams

Winning attitudes
High expectations, high
rewards
Opportunities for people's
development
Influencing corporate
Risk taking
Source of knowledge to
our
customers
Cross-functionality as way
of life

¹ Initially posted on www.theleaderwith7faces.com, March 2008

We as management team	Me/You
Action and decisions	Energetic
Influencing beyond our own R&D function	Stimulating
Flexible, driving on change	Committed
Diversity paid off	Challenging
Acknowledged stretch	Trying
Great opportunities for personal and professional development	Achiever
	Flexible
	'changed something'
	Created a work environment

It doesn't have to be a very sophisticated output, but when you start asking people about legacy and questions about 'ten years from now', what starts as a light exercise usually ends up giving a solid view of the current values and beliefs. It definitely says a lot about (the visions of leadership in) a particular group. Indeed, the 'proof' of the values is the legacy. The legacy becomes *the* inexcusable window to what leadership was about.

You can lead an organisation and leave behind an increase in market share of 4.5% and a P/E ratio the joy of stock analysts. You can lead an organisation and leave behind a great behavioural fabric that attracts talent. You can lead an organisation and leave behind significant collective eldership capabilities. You can also lead an organisation and leave behind the shade of your ego as big as a cathedral. You can leave nothing. You can lead misery. You can lead joy. Or combinations thereof!

You can read more about this dimension (Legacy) in the article [Legacy traps](#).

You can also read more about the other two dimensions by choosing from this list:

1. [Time and Space](#)
2. [Homes](#)

If you want to read more about leadership or want to continue reading from the above, you can read it all in my book [The Leader with Seven Faces: finding your own ways to practice leadership in today's organization](#).