

10.3: Putting It Together- Leadership



In what ways has Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon, demonstrated that he's a transformational leader?

Now that you've completed this module, let's return to our question of what makes Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos a great leader. One contemporary approach to the study of leadership that you learned about was the difference between transformational and transactional leadership. Let's consider Bezos in light of what you now know about transformational leaders.

Transformational leaders are those who are able to shape individuals, and even society, to align their goals with those of the leader. There are several attributes of transformational leaders that have been identified, so let's see if these are consistent with what we know about Bezos.

Charisma is one of the key elements we find in leaders who transform industry and society. Charismatic leaders are able to inspire confidence and secure the commitment of others to their vision. From the beginning of Amazon's history, Bezos has been able to lure talent and investors to move his vision forward. The Economist magazine once published an article on the company that featured an astronaut on the moon delivering a package from Amazon. The caption read, "How far will Amazon go?" Beyond a doubt, Bezos has inspired many with his vision of what Amazon can become.

Amazon quickly expanded from being a book retailer to offering more than fifteen million product options today. Additionally, the company has expanded into offering cloud services, the Prime membership program, Kindle reading devices, and many other areas. One would be hard-pressed to come up with any organization in modern history that has transformed the face of business more than Amazon. But behind Amazon's success, we find the vision of one man, Bezos.

Transformational leaders also challenge the status quo and help people expand the way they think. Amazon started as a disruptive force in retail book sales by selling online, but Bezos inspired his team to think much broader. A few years after launching, Amazon began to expand the ways product was delivered to consumers. Two-day delivery quickly became a standard for online delivery. Today Amazon continues to push the boundaries and delivers in some markets within hours of an order being placed. In the near future, you might see Amazon drones overhead rapidly delivering packages.

In this module, you have learned about leadership and its importance in business. With these skills, you can begin to evaluate the leaders that you work with during your career. But more importantly, you should consider your own leadership style and how best to grow and develop it.

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