**TOP TEN CEO's - 2012**

**Company CEO Rating**

Apple Tim Cook 97%

Ernst & Young Jim Turley 95%

QUALCOMM Paul Jacobs 95%

American Express Ken Chenault 94%

Google Larry Page 94%

Intel Corporation Paul Otenllini 93%

Accenture Pierre Nanterme 91%

VMware Paul Maritz 90%

Starubucks Howard Schultz 89%

Nordstom Blake Nordstrom 89%

Leaders must possess this highly unusual set of traits that often run counter to natural human behavior. These attributes are catalysts for the mastery displayed by the world's best CEOs - and, together, they add up to a new definition of leadership:

Realistic optimism: Leaders with this trait possess confidence without self-delusion or irrationality. They pursue audacious goals, which others would typically view as impossible pipedreams, while at the same time remaining aware of the magnitude of the challenges confronting them and the difficulties that lie ahead.

Subservience to purpose: Leaders with this ability see their professional goal as so profound in importance that their lives become measured in value by how much they contribute to furthering that goal. What is more, they must be pursuing a professional goal in order to feel a purpose for living. In essence, that goal is their master and their reason for being. They do not ruminate about their purpose, because their mind finds satisfaction in its occupation with their goal. Their level of dedication to their work is a direct result of the extraordinary, remarkable importance they place on their goal.

Finding order in chaos: Leaders with this trait find taking on multidimensional problems invigorating, and their ability to bring clarity to quandaries that baffle others makes their contributions invaluable.

**Vision:** Nothing is more important to a company than a CEO who understands both the market today and where it will be tomorrow. There is a famous quote from Walter Gretzky, father of hockey legend Wayne Gretzky, that goes "skate where the puck is going, not where it's been," and CEOs would do well to take this to heart. Bill Gates understood the potential of the PC before many others, just as Steve Jobs understood the potential of mobile computing, and those visions helped build their respective companies. Consequently, this is a key CEO trait and a key component of long-term success. For companies to stay strong, it is vital to understand what the customer is going to want in future, maybe even before the customer knows it.

**Adding value to Organization**

Right Markets, Right Times: A good CEO should be able to build value in any industry, but long-term value creation is preconditioned on a healthy underlying market. IBM saw the future of mainframe computing (and then PC computing) and made sure that it was ready to enter more promising markets like storage and IT services. Likewise, DuPont has a long tradition of developing new markets and then leaving them behind (or deprioritizing them) as they transition from growth to cyclical growth.

Driving Hard Bargains, but Not Too Hard: Here again there is a delicate balance - a balance that the best CEOs seem to intuitively understand. It is important to be efficient and to be a hard negotiator. At the same time, long-term corporate success is predicated upon hiring good people and keeping them motivated to continue working hard.

Managing for the Future, Not the Mirror: Quality CEOs generate above-average returns on capital, something that comes about largely from strong margins (an efficient operating structure and strong brands) and efficient use of capital. Often this means running a lean, efficient structure that is no bigger than it has to be and having a CEO who is willing to jettison businesses that do not (and cannot) earn a satisfactory return on capital. That seems obvious, but it is difficult in practice. Most CEOs have big egos, but you have to have a healthy ego to want the responsibility of that job and withstand the challenges. In lesser CEOs, that ego can manifest as a drive to run as big of a company as possible - with bigger taking the place of "better." Many CEOs regard their employer as "their company" and run it like a medieval lord would run a fief, and not as an employee running a business on behalf of shareholders. Likewise, a CEO who cares more about being named to industry "roundtables" or showing up regularly on CNBC is likely managing for the mirror and not for the shareholders.

**Other few qualities would be:** Strategy: Strong strategic thinking defines the effective CEO. These leaders understand how to match a strong strategy with the tactics and talent to see it through. CEOS who constantly react to events, instead of planning for the future, remain followers and not leaders.

Decisions: When CEOs consistently make good decisions, little else matters; when they make bad decisions, nothing else matters. Even though decisiveness distinguishes leaders from everyone else, effective decision-making stands at the center of executive leadership. A decisive CEO who can't hit the target is the same as an indecisive CEO who doesn't even know where to find it. The results are the same.

Hiring: Successful CEOs know how to tie talent to their strategies so they ensures the company hires the best and the brightest and compensates them fairly. Moreover, they give these people a chance to thrive.