

## Where have all the leaders gone?

This book was a fascinating read a few years back, written by Lee Iacocca, around the time of George Bush's presidency. His rallying call at the time was that there was a general lack of leadership in the U.S. and that his country would falter as a result. Published in early 2008, his book was timed perfectly with the economic meltdown that soon followed.

Fast forward to today where Trump is president of the United States. Before the last election, I had reached out to an American friend (a southern Republican) and asked them what the President of the United States should be like. Their response:

"I feel like the President of the United States is in the most powerful position in the world and should be a leader that inspires us, and the world, to strive for excellence and be that world power. S/he should be untouchable and exude a strength that leads the country to greatness. S/he should have a class that rivals royalty".

Doesn't sound at all like Trump.

So if true, how does someone like Trump become President? We outsiders are left wondering how someone so bombastic and in your face can be so inspirational for so many people? No matter where you sit on the political divide, his behaviours do not align with the definition offered by my friend. In the modern work world, his behaviour would be classified as bullying and harassment – surely this is not the stuff of "good" leadership?

Here is my thesis.

Nature abhors a vacuum. And going back several years, as mentioned at the outset, the U.S. (and let's not be smug here, the rest of the world as well) lacks truly great "leaders". When leadership is absent, people will follow anyone or anything that resembles it.

What comes to mind is the age-old question of what a "leader" truly is (and isn't). Sadly, there are as many different thoughts on leadership as there are people who have tried to define it. Being a sucker for alliteration and easy to remember taglines, I like Iacocca's **9 Cs of leadership**. A leader must have:

- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Communication Skills
- Character
- Courage
- Conviction
- Charisma
- Competence
- Common Sense

When the folks, including Trump, fail to register on many of these dimensions, there is a huge void. My fear is that without true leadership being displayed, the person who is screaming the loudest and making

the most noise gets the attention. Perhaps, as so eloquently stated some eight years ago by Iacocca, it is time to get back to the basics of leadership.

I know the rest of the world would welcome it. I suspect many of my American friends would too!