



CONFEDERACIÓN
ESPAÑOLA DE
**DIRECTIVOS
Y EJECUTIVOS**

Con la colaboración de:

Deloitte.



Leading in positive

Interview with Marian Muro

January 2018

“A leader must know where the company is headed, be consistent with decisions and above all be very transparent”



Marian Muro | Julià Group's General Manager in Spain

Marian Muro, Julià Group's General Manager in Spain is clear: “a leader must have charisma, organisational skills and be transparent”, a key aspect of every good leader. Undoubtedly though, she is convinced that in the main, leaders are born, “although there are qualities that can be learnt.” This executive has had an extensive professional career, has held positions of responsibility in the public sector and is currently responsible for one of the main transport companies in Spain. In her extensive career, there has always been a common thread: “enjoying what I do and ensuring that those who work with me also enjoy it.” That is her best life philosophy and, at the moment, she can vouch for it as a successful style.

How does someone prepare to be the leader of a company?

Leadership can be learnt but I am one of those who think that the true leader should already have some innate qualities. It is true that some techniques can be learnt and developed, such as communication, humility or recognition of mistakes, but there are some characteristics or qualities like empathy or knowing how to communicate that I believe true leaders are born with.

What are your leadership principles and which do you consider are fundamental to positive leadership?

I have always tried to work hard, with a great capacity for effort and a deep sense of duty. In the teams that I have worked in, sometimes in environments with a certain degree of hostility, my priority was always to include team members, not to impose myself, but to make the whole team participants in the project so that they feel that it is their own from the beginning. Its basic and necessary.

First of all, you have to **believe in the project and have enthusiasm** and then be able to communicate it. That capacity to stimulate and communicate enthusiasm, I think is a basic principle of leadership.

Secondly, **humility** is also very important. Everyone makes mistakes and those who don't, it is because they do not make decisions. When you make a mistake, you have to humble enough to recognise it, because, it also places you on the same level as your colleagues.

Lastly, the **human dimension** is fundamental, I am unable to separate professional work from the human dimension. When you are working with people, the work is very important but so is being concerned about them and how they are because people are more important than employees.

Within the sphere of activity of a leader, how do you maintain the team's trust in the organisation?

A leader has to have be very clear about things and be able to transmit clearly the direction the company is heading in, what its strategy is, where we want to be and how to get there. Also, leaders must communicate confidence to their teams, that they know where they are, what they want and where they are taking us to.

In short, leaders must know where they are headed, be consistent with decisions and, above all they must be very transparent. Transparency is essential as then employees are on your side and you can explain things to them as they are, without frills, and they also feel that you are engaging with them on an equal basis.

How must a leader assume their company's good governance and corporate responsibility?

Good leaders must imbue a series of social commitments, values and principles that create value not only for them but also for all those connected to the company.

In a company, we must distinguish purely economic and objective results from what that company does for others and how it contributes to its surroundings and connects to its principles. A leader must be clear. I always say that it is better to have three clear, basic ideas, and know how to communicate them, than to have a whole book of intentions that cannot be communicated and are not persevered with.

A leader must clearly transmit where does the company go, what is its strategy, where do we want to be and how to reach it

Innovation has become one of the biggest drivers of growth, but how can you innovate in the field of leadership and people management?

In recent years there has been a lot of innovation in employee management. For example, it was published a few days ago that an important multinational was beginning to apply artificial intelligence in order to hire new executives. The candidates' capacities and potential are evaluated through a series of games and it determines whether or not they fit with the company. A clear practical example of the innovation that is going on in people management.

What you want is that human resources adapt to the aims and objectives of your company. There are already a multitude of tools, not only in selection processes but also internal company apps so that employees have all the internal information possible. We are making progress even in the fields of the work/ life balance, work spaces and work attire.

Are we on the right track?

I am not very hierarchical as the main aim is that people around me enjoy what they do. That way, you guarantee 50% of the results. All decisions that lead to a better outcome for people are welcome. All progress made towards improving how workers feel in their workspace and their working environment is welcome.

Moving on now to training, what are a leader's main training needs? Which technical and emotional aspects must executive training emphasise nowadays?

Communication is very important. In fact, I think that one of the main problems that many companies still have is internal communication. We have the best marketing departments to explain externally all the innovations and new tools but we often forget of our own employees. We must be mindful to tell things to our employees, leaders must be able to communicate constantly with their people: explaining where they are, congratulating them on achievements, telling them what has not turned out well and explaining why and where we have to focus our efforts. Communication, therefore, is basic and essential because it is the way to engage your organisation's professionals.

Transparency is also fundamental, i.e. the ability to explain how the company is performing to your own employees, for better or worse.

Lastly, **empathy and emotional intelligence**. You can work on these, but it is difficult. Authenticity is seen, it's innate, it's part of your DNA.

Also, of course, example; a leader must **set an example**, what it means to strive, to have a sense of duty, to recognise mistakes, or to try to encourage and value those who do well.

How is enthusiasm conveyed?

The most important thing is to believe in yourself, if you do not, it is going to be difficult for you to convey that. I've lived and believed in all the jobs that I've been in, and therefore I've had certain ability to pass it on.

You must have the ability to be critical with yourself and with those around you. A leader must be brave, I myself have confronted entrenched situations because I believed that they had to be changed, even though the confrontation was attritional. Those around you and your colleagues see it. Why do we have to keep things the way they are "because they have always been done that way?" It doesn't have to be so. Possibly if we change them and are not resistant to change, things will get better for everyone. When your peers see that involvement, and you don't mind challenging something, they value it too.

Is there a leader you especially admire? Could you explain why?

From a business point of view, companies like Google, for example. I think they have been able to conceptualise a type of company which you see and think, "these people have a great time", and they work very hard, and they achieved a working style and conditions for executives that make them very attractive.

From a personal point of view, and as a person, a leader I admire is Pope Francis because he has all the attributes that I believe a good leader should have. He knows how to communicate, he has not resisted change, he is confronting pre-established situations to try to improve the management of the Church and I like him as a leader.

If you could draw up a profile of the ideal leader and executive, which three qualities would you choose?

Charisma, organisational ability and transparency.

In today's ever-changing environment, what message would you give to a young person who had just finished their academic career and was about to enter the labour market?

The most important thing is that you do whatever you are given, what you want to do and what you like, doing this you're 30% there. They must also be enthusiastic, prepared for failure, appreciative that it is an everyday thing and that you can be wrong and it doesn't matter. Also, the human dimension: be a good person, respectful, honest, interact well with those around you and see how with your work you can improve your social surroundings.

You have to be critic with yourself and your surroundings. A leader must be brave, I myself have confronted previously established situations because I believed they had to be changed

Contact

CONFEDERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE DIRECTIVOS Y EJECUTIVOS - CEDE

World Trade Center
Moll de Barcelona, s/n Edificio Sur 3ª planta
08039 Barcelona (Spain)
Tel. +34 93 508 83 20
Fax. +34 93 508 83 21
Correo electrónico: info@directivoscede.com