

Managing in troubled times: Lincoln, Kennedy & Eisenhower leadership principles & IT

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What we will cover

- Historical Overview of Crises
 - Civil War, Cold War, Cuban Missile Crisis
- Leadership principles
- Ongoing thinking, discussion, and learning via blog

Changes from Last Year

- Previously focused on Lincoln's style of leadership during presidency
- This presentation focuses on specific crises
- Multiple presidents in different situations
- How various leadership principles emerged or were applied

Lincoln: The Civil War

- 10 days before Lincoln took office the Confederate States ceded from the Union
- No executive leadership experience
 - Was a one term Congressman
 - No military experience
- Dark horse candidate with many rivals in new Republican party

Leadership Principles

- Brought together and empowered his rivals as members of his cabinet
- Managed by walking about
 - Put himself in others' environment(s)
 - Sense of community and collaboration
 - Combination of casual and formal communications
 - Leading through paying attention and listening actively

Leadership Principles (cont.)

- Set high standards, expected results, and put himself forth as an example

Set a good example

- Willing to take public opinion baths
- Gave credit and accepted blame
- Suggestions and recommendations rather than micromanaging
- Human action can be modified to some extent - human nature cannot

Leadership Principles (cont.)

- Persuasion is preferred to coercion
 - Force is the last resort
- Understand Human nature and that everyone responds differently
- Let your generals make their own decisions
 - Though this can be a problem if you do not know when to step in
- Compromise does not mean cowardice
- Put things in writing
- Spend time preparing and communicating your messages

Case 1 - General McClellan

- General of the Army of the Potomac starting in 1861
- General in Chief at outbreak of war
- Consistently defied encouragement to attack confederate army
 - Even when directly urged by Lincoln, in person
- Made excuses and placed blame elsewhere
- Openly criticized almost everyone around him

Right Methods Gone Wrong

- Lincoln empowered McClellan with great control over military options
- Remained faithful to him
 - Did not "change horses"
- Visited him personally
 - Managed by walking, accessibility
- Urged and encouraged
 - Persuasion vs. coercion

Know when to say when

- Sometimes being accommodating is the wrong approach
- Must have buy in on the goals
- Beware of those who pile up information without accomplishing anything
- Hire the right individuals
- Ultimately, need to be results oriented
 - Especially in a crisis but also in general
- Find as many Ulysses Grants as you can get
 - Focused, clear vision, able to execute

Eisenhower: The Cold War Begins

- First President during full-fledged Cold War
 - Was still developing under Truman
- Military background, highly respected for his fortitude and character
- Korean War in full swing when sworn in
 - First "proxy war"
- Campaign pledge to end Korean War, yet could not seem weak to Soviet Union and China

MAD Foreign Policy

- Mutually Assured Destruction
 - "Both of us will have enough bombs to destroy each other, so no one will fire the first shot."
- Propagated, promoted, and used as a threat by Secretary of State Dulles
 - Eisenhower rarely made public appearances
 - Appearance was that Dulles was in charge

Leading from a Distance

- Historical record shows that Eisenhower was directly involved in all foreign policy
 - MAD was as much his idea as anyone else's
 - Bold statement against a rising but still unknown enemy
- Empowered Dulles to be the mouthpiece for administration
 - Clear role, and allowed Dulles to be as aggressive as the policy demanded
- Lead from a distance
 - Knew the facts, made decisions, and let others put policies into action

Kennedy: The Cold War Heats Up

- Enters office by slimmest popular vote margin in history
- Young and charismatic following resolute and firm Eisenhower
 - Questions about his leadership ability, his tendencies towards his inner circle of friends
- Inherited several parts of Eisenhower's foreign policy
 - Eight years of threat of mutual destruction has begun to wear both sides down

Bay of Pigs Disaster

- CIA operation developed under Eisenhower
- Involved training Cuban exiles to infiltrate Cuba and oust Castro
- Kennedy administration convinced/told that it would work based on "all the previous planning"
 - Administration accepted that due diligence had been done
- Complete disaster

Cuban Missile Crisis

- Nuclear missiles discovered being assembled in Cuba
- Range could hit everything but Seattle

Challenge

- Essentially the same team that agreed on the disaster of the Bay of Pigs
- Cuban Missile Crisis easily the closest the US has ever come to a nuclear exchange
- How do these same people make better decisions?

Groupthink

- Dangerous possibility with any team environment
- Teams tend to be either more or less risky than any one member of that team
- Groupthink involves
 - Making assumptions
 - Accepting opinions as absolute truths
 - Allowing certain voices to have unqualified power over others
 - Everyone should be allowed to speak freely
 - Not asking questions
- Not all bad decisions by teams involve groupthink. But groupthink makes decisions worse.

The ExComm

- Executive Committee to the President formed to formulate a plan to respond to Cuban Missile Crisis
- President purposely left out so that all could speak freely
 - Only brought in when certain decisions required Kennedy's opinion
- Robert Kennedy specifically asked to play role of Devil's Advocate
 - Always pushed back on any suggestion
- On day 1, all options involved an air strike
- By day 13 (end of crisis), no military actions taken, missiles removed, and new era of communication between governments begins

Blog Information

- Setup in Blogger
- Will add people to comment
- Open up to public
- Web Address

<http://lincoln-leadership-it.blogspot.com/>

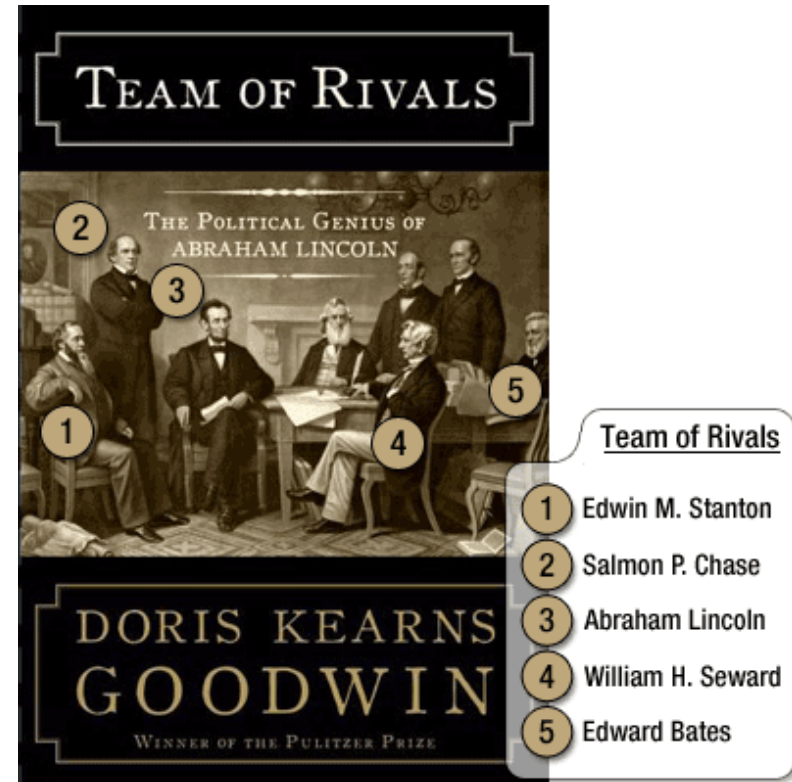
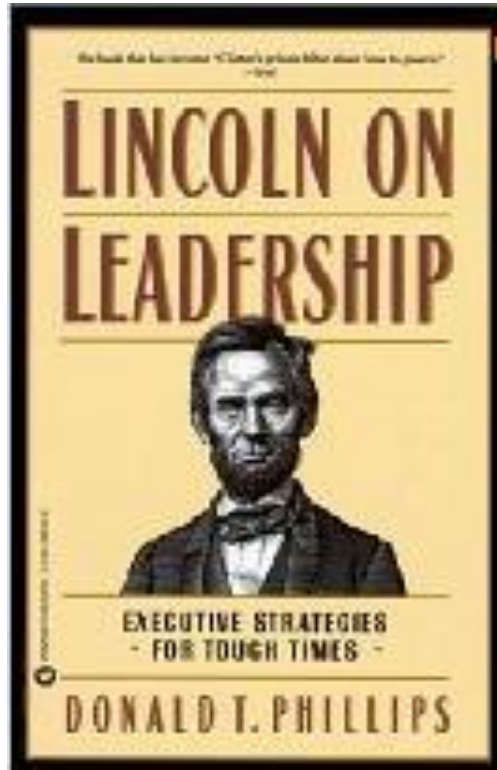
Thanks for your time

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Some books used as basis for the talk



The Past

- Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth ...a new nation ...conceived in liberty ...and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal

The Present

- Now we are engaged in a great civil war: testing whether that nation or any nation can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those that gave their lives so that that nation might live

The Renewal

- But in a larger sense, we can not dedicate – we can not consecrate – we can not hallow – this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here

The Renewal (cont)

- It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work ...to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us ..that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain....that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom --

The future

- That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from this earth

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