

# Business on the Board

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## Leadership: Getting it Right at the Start

Business is a game and the better we know how to play it the more successful we can be. Winning the game of business requires having the right strategies and tactics available for the leader to use. The real key to success is using the

right form of leadership. The startup of a company is very different than growing or mature enterprise. Starting a business requires an entrepreneur be a thought leader with a vision that can be translated into a working model. In the beginning a company leader determines the best form of ownership, acquires the financial assets needed by the firm, and determines how to make a profit from ongoing operations from a product or service the market wants or needs. Leadership has different styles and not one style meets the needs of every situation.

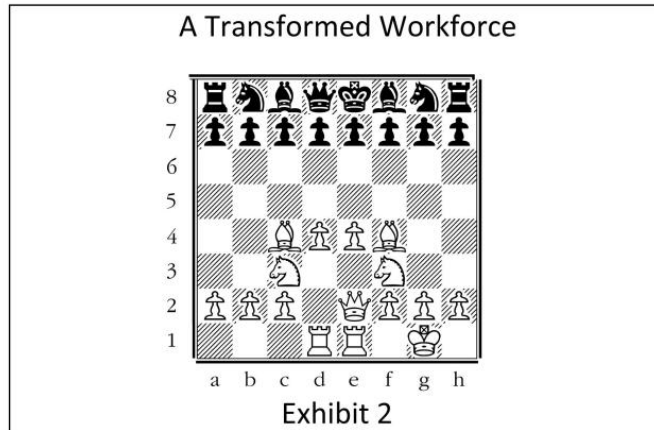
Transformational leadership takes a vision and translates it into a successful business. In the game of business that means knowing your market, developing your resources and managing your risk. In a game of chess that means play for the center of the chessboard, get your pieces actively involved and castle with the king. While business leaders typically practice one of the many leadership styles based on their own personalities and the training they have received, the great leaders learn how to shift styles when circumstances change. This shifting of leadership styles is one of the most difficult management disciplines to learn.

Fortunately, chess is the perfect training ground for three of the most powerful leadership styles: transformational, situational, and results-based.

## A Transformed Workforce

Transformational: The opening of a chess game, like a business startup, requires a leader who has a vision of how the enterprise will transform the market. When setting up FedEx, Fred Smith had the foresight to position his pieces like a chess player taking control of the center. He discovered that Memphis, Tennessee, provided a central location within the US, a willing airport administration partner, and the best chance to avoid the worst weather conditions from snowstorms to hurricanes. Once these critical opening decisions were made, it was possible to make FedEx what it is today.

Chess is a way to practice leadership, financial management, risk management, and employee development which can transfer directly to your work. In Exhibit 2, which player do you think has been a better transformational leader of their chess piece/employees?



I once asked this question to a person in my class who admitted other than how to spell chess she knew nothing about the game. Which side would you rather play? She considered for a few seconds and said “White.” When I asked her why, she said: “I don’t know for sure, but it looks like White is up to something.” Her insightful response demonstrated how intuitive and visually compelling leadership could be. Yes, White is up to something and although they have not won the game if Black is not careful their King is about to be run out of town in a hurry.

To be successful in your company startup use transformational leadership to build a strong foundation upon which to grow your enterprise.

Next Edition: Leadership: Managing the Situation at Hand.....use situational leadership because your business is in a unique position now that the opening is over. Analysis of threats, gaining an advantage known as making a profit, and staying on course uses situational leadership. The middlegame in chess and business requires deep understanding of strategies and tactics you need to know.



J.K. Egerton is the CEO and founder of Business on the Board™, a leading-edge talent development company that uses a game-based approach with business strategies and tactics. His book, Business on the Board, is a #1 management self-help bestseller that reveals how business and chess are related. It’s available on Amazon.