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# Leadership assessment: A tool for developing future hospitality leaders

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Leadership Assessment: A Tool for Developing Future Hospitality Leaders

by

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Master of Science

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**Abstract**

**Leadership Assessment: A Tool for Developing Future Hospitality Leaders**

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The purpose of this paper is to identify and confirm important key leadership behaviors and characteristics of successful hotel and hospitality leaders with the intentions of validating key leadership theories and making suggestions for future hotel and hospitality leaders. Two very relevant theories of leadership are explored- Transactional and Transformational. The traits and behaviors contained within the theories are identified and subsequently mapped against past and present hospitality industry leaders. As a result, the paper identifies the critical few traits and behaviors necessary for future leaders to be successful. Finally, a tool has been developed to be used to identify leadership development opportunities in these future leaders. The tool can be part of an integrated performance management plan.

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## **Introduction**

This paper is going to address the issues and concepts surrounding the transactional and transformational leadership theories and characteristics and behaviors that can be directly tied to a business environment. The transactional and transformational leadership theories and their related characteristics and behaviors are going to be explored to insure we have positive and successful data to guide future leaders in the hospitality industry. This paper will research some key figures from the hotel industry and analyze their leadership styles as well as the characteristics and behaviors they possess. The paper will consist of a two-part literature review section. The first section will include a literature review on transactional and transformational leadership theories and its associated key leadership characteristics and behaviors for each theory. The second section will identify and analyze several key figures in the hotel industry and their leadership styles associated with their characteristics and behaviors. The final portion of this paper will discuss a few applications for the findings in the literature review. Following the application of findings a questionnaire will be presented to help identify some key characteristics and behaviors.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to identify and confirm important key leadership behaviors and characteristics of successful hotel and hospitality leaders with the intention of validating key leadership theories and making suggestions for future hotel and hospitality leaders.

## **Justification**

With the ever-increasing demands on hospitality organizations to produce more properties, increase their performance, and anticipate change; effective leadership is needed to produce higher effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability (Pittaway, Carmouche, and Chell, 1998, p. 408). Understanding the transactional and transformational leadership theories and their characteristics and behaviors will make it possible to identify the essential needs of a future hotel and hospitality industry leader. Future hotel and hospitality industry leaders who understand the changing situational needs and the different leadership theories and styles associated with those needs will have a far greater advantage over their competitors in leading their hotel/organization to the top of the industry.

## **Constraints**

The first constraint is that the information used in this paper must rely on the written words of others to assess the key traits and characteristics of key leaders. The second constraint is that this paper is restricted to hospitality leaders and narrow focus to their behavior traits and skills

## **Key Terms**

- 1) Transactional Leadership- Leadership through the rewards and punishment  
(changingminds.org, 2002)
- 2) Transformational Leadership- Leadership through inspiration, passion, and vision.  
(changingminds.org, 2002)
- 3) Trait- “A distinguishing characteristic or quality.” (Dictionary.com, 2009)

- 4) Characteristic- “A distinguishing feature or quality.” (Dictionary.com, 2009)
- 5) Behavior- “Observable activity in a human or animal.” (Dictionary.com, 2009)
- 6) Leader- “A person or thing that leads; a guiding or directing head.” (Dictionary.com, 2009)
- 7) Leadership- “1) The position or function of a leader, 2) ability to lead, and 3) an act or instance of leading; guidance; direction.” (Dictionary.com, 2009)
- 8) Emotional Intelligence- “the ability to recognize the meanings related to the specific emotions, and to reason and problem solve on the basis of them” (Wang & Huang, 2009, p. 382).

### **Literature Review**

An important component needed to become a great leader is to build and adopt the capability for leadership through traits and behaviors. This paper will explore the two opposite ends of leadership theories, which are transactional leadership and transformational leadership, and then explore the traits and behaviors that are synonymous with each. Once the theories have been discussed, a few of the key figures in the hospitality industry will be identified and evaluated. The data from the analysis will allow us to view the leadership styles, traits, and behaviors that have been proven to work best in best in the hospitality industry.

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership is goal oriented. This style of leadership focuses on rewards and punishments in order to reach the goal. Scott-Halsell, Shumate, and Blum (2008) point out that a transactional leader will appeal to the lower levels of Maslow’s hierarchy that consist of food, shelter, safety, and the need for affiliation (p. 101). Eeden, Cilliers, and Deventer (2008) define transactional leadership as “a social exchange process where the leader clarifies what the



followers need to do as their part of a transaction (successfully complete the task) to receive a reward or avoidance of punishment (satisfaction of the followers' needs) that is contingent on the fulfillment of the transaction (satisfying the leaders' needs) (p. 255).”

The transactional leadership theory is broken down into two categories, active management by exception and passive management by exception. Active management by exception tries to find and fix the problem before or when it happens. Eeden, Cilliers, and Deventer (2008) point out that some of the indicators that active management by exception look for is “mistakes, irregularities, exceptions, deviations from standards, complaints, infractions of rules and regulations, and failure” (p. 255). Passive management by exception waits until the problem arises then tries to correct it. Sarros and Santora (2001) summarize management by exception (active and passive) by pointing out key characteristics of this style in a leader; “trust in workers, maintenance of status quo, poor communication, and lack of confidence (p. 389)”

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is quite the opposite of the transactional leadership. Transformational leadership touches on the higher levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which are esteem, self-fulfillment, and self-actualization (Scott-Halsell, Shumate, & Blum, 2008 p. 100; Maslow, 1943). Wang and Huang (2009) use the definition for transformational leaders “as leaders who provide individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, and who possess charisma (p. 381).” According to Sarros and Santora (2001) the four components to the transformational leader are individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence (p. 385).

Individualized consideration is a behavior where a leader recognizes individuals as important components to meet success (Sarros & Santora, 2001, p. 305). Scott-Halsell, Shumate, and Blum (2008) comment on individualized consideration by saying leaders “will also take a personal and special interests in each follower; give individualized attention, mentor and coach followers; use open, two-way communication and tolerate individual differences; and delegate authority on an individualized basis” (p. 102). In summary, this behavior takes into the decision process the situation and the individual person they are dealing with.

Inspirational motivation is achieved by motivating and inspiring followers to achieve common goals through a shared vision (Scott-Halsell, Shumate, & Blum, 2008, p. 102). Inspirational motivation focuses more on the company than the leader (Sarros & Santora, 2001, p. 386). The key to inspirational motivation is making the followers achieve more than they would have on their own and doing this by giving them a sense of belonging and ownership of the vision and goals.

Intellectual stimulation encourages creativity and rationality within its followers. Sarros and Santora (2001) describe intellectual stimulation as leaders doing the same thing as they expect from their followers (p. 386). They are creative, accept challenges, and are cool headed when handling and solving problems (Sarros & Santora, 2001, p. 386). Scott-Halsell, Shumate, and Blum (2008) cite Bass (1990) when breaking down intellectual stimulation into four different mannerisms. Bass (1990) identifies the four different mannerisms as rational, existential, empirical, and ideological. Bass (1990) then defines each as follows:

“Rational leaders are those who expect subordinates to use their own ability and independence, expecting them to be rational and logical

decision makers. Existential leaders provide subordinates with alternatives and expect decisions to be made by evaluation of the alternatives and then choosing the most appropriate plan of action. Empirical leaders manage their subordinates by expecting them to use raw data available to make informed choices, while ideological leaders expect their subordinates to use intuition to make fast decisions (Scott-Halsell, Shumate, & Blum, 2008, p. 102).”

Idealized influence is also known as charismatic leadership and is often mistakenly exchanged for transformational leadership, when in fact it is just one of the components of transformational leadership (Scott-Halsell, Shumate, & Blum, 2008, p. 102). Sarros and Santora (2001) identify idealized influence as a behavior where followers view their leader as a role model (p. 387). Scott-Halsell, Shumate, and Blum (2008) point out that the other traits such as admiration, determination, persistence, and high moral standards are what inspire subordinates to conform to in order to relate with their leader (p. 102).

In the transformational leadership style there is also the relatively new characteristic of emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional Intelligence can be described as “the ability to recognize the meanings related to the specific emotions, and to reason and problem solve on the basis of them” (Wang & Huang, 2009, p. 382). “Scott-Halsell, Shumante, and Blum (2008) simplify emotional intelligence by saying “more succinctly, it is how one relates and reacts to the world around them (p. 103)”.

Emotional Intelligence has been broken down into four different domains. The domains are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Scott-

Halsell, Blum, & Huffman, 2008, p. 138). Self awareness is defined by Scott-Halsell, Blum, and Huffman as “recognizing and understanding one’s own emotions; using them to guide behavior; accepting one’s strengths, weaknesses, and competencies; and possessing the self confidence to succeed. Self-management is being able to properly handle one’s emotions during a situation (Scott-Halsell, Blum, & Huffman, 2008, p. 138). Social Awareness is being able to understand how others feel, the organizational environment one is in, and being able to meet the service needs of their subordinates and clients/guests (Scott-Halsell, Blum, & Huffman, 2008, p. 139). Relationship management means that a leader is inspirational, persuasive, while ensuring their subordinates are making positive progress (Scott-Halsell, Blum, & Huffman, 2008, p. 140)

Wang and Huang (2009) quote Mayer and Salovey when explaining that emotional intelligence consists of four skill dimensions:

“(1) self-emotional appraisal (SEA; i.e., the ability to understand one’s own deep emotions and the ability to express these emotions naturally); (2) others’ emotional appraisal (OEA; i.e., the ability to perceive and understand the emotions of people who surround one); (3) regulation of emotion (ROE; i.e., the ability to regulate one’s emotions, which enables a more rapid recovery from psychological distress); and (4) use of emotion (UOE; i.e., the ability to make use of one’s emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance) (p. 382-383).”

Emotional intelligence although new is very important. An important factor about emotional intelligence is that it can be “enhanced through instruction, counseling, positive thinking, and practicing of new behaviors (Scott-Halsell, Shumate, & Blum, 2008, p. 103). A

concise awareness of emotional intelligence for future hospitality leaders is a must since “all segments of hospitality are service related and emotional intelligence has been found to be significant in the success of managers in service industries” (Scott-Halsell, Blum, & Huffman, 2008, p. 149)

### **Summary Findings of Key Leadership Traits and Behaviors**

The study of leadership traits is a very controversial. Some people think that certain traits are associated with leaders and their success and some people think that traits play little or no role at all in identifying leaders and their success. Zaccaro defines leader traits “as coherent and integrated patterns of personal characteristics, reflecting a range of individual differences, that foster consistent leadership effectiveness across a variety of group and organizational situations (p. 7)” Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) are adamant that traits do matter and say “while research shows that the possession of certain traits alone does not guarantee leadership success, there is evidence that effective leaders are different from other people in certain key respects (p.48).” Below is a list of traits and behaviors that have been drawn from the leadership theories discussed in the literature review.

### **Transformational Leadership Traits and Behaviors**

1. Caring- being concerned or having special preference
2. Charismatic- The ability to have influence over large groups
3. Vision- a vivid imaginative conception
4. Individualized Consideration- take personal and special interests in followers
5. Intellectual Stimulation- being creative in solving problems to motivate followers
6. Inspirational Motivation- motivate and inspire by creating teamwork and shared goals
7. Idealized Influence- being admired and respected; also known as charismatic leadership

8. Persistence-lasting or enduring, never giving up
9. Motivation- the will to keep going and to do more
10. Creativity- taking old processes and making newer and better ones
11. Ambition- the desire for achievement
12. Empowerment- to give out power and/or authority to others
13. Emotional Intelligence (EI)-Cognitive way of dealing with emotions and people
14. Adaptable-being able to adjust to different conditions
15. Persuasive- convince someone to do what you desire
16. High Energy-constantly moving, active, and ready
17. Collaborative, Team Work- collective minds and thoughts used to achieve a goal
18. Conscientious- attention to detail; meticulous
19. Decisive- being able to make a decision, easy or hard, in a timely manner
20. Determination- never giving up or stopping until goal is reached
21. Innovative- being able to introduce something new or make changes to something

### **Transactional Leadership Traits and Behaviors**

1. Structured- a set or organized way of doing things
2. Goal Oriented- fixed on the goal, determination of success relies on meeting the goal
3. Vision- a vivid imaginative conception
4. Dedicated- being committed to an organization or goal
5. Hard Working/Commitment- dedicate one's self to performing effectively and efficiently
6. Innovative- being able to introduce something new or make changes to something existing
7. Ambition- the desire for achievement

8. Motivated- having a reason to work for or towards something
9. Tenacity/Resilient- never giving up, always going back for more
10. Strategic Thinker- using a well thought out and planned thought process

Understanding the difference between the transactional and transformational theories and their traits is not enough. One needs to understand how they are put into the “real world”. To get a solid familiarity with how these approaches can benefit a hospitality organization this paper will do a summary of a few key influential people who have made profound achievements in the hospitality industry and then point out their major traits and behaviors. The key influential people being examined are Frank Fertitta Jr. (Founder of the Station Casinos), Steve Wynn (Las Vegas developer and Resort Owner), Sheldon Adelson (Major Shareholder of Sands Inc.), Conrad Hilton (Founder of Hilton Hotels and Hilton International), and J.W. Marriott (Founder of Marriott Hotel and Resorts). These great individuals have set the standards and raised the standards to which it has molded the hospitality industry today.

### **Biographical Analysis of Key Hospitality Leaders**

#### **Frank Fertitta Jr.**

Frank Fertitta Jr. moved to Las Vegas in 1960 from Texas with his wife Victoria. Frank Fertitta Jr. started his path to success from the bottom up. “From 1960-1976 he was a dealer, pit boss, baccarat manager, and general manager at properties including the Stardust, Tropicana, Circus Circus, Sahara, and the Fremont in downtown Las Vegas” (Manning, 2009). Hugget (2009) reports that in 1976 he opened his first property called “The Casino”. It was a mere 5,000 square foot gaming hall attached to the Mini-Price Motor Inn. The name of the property changed over time to the Bingo Palace and then ultimately The Palace Station in 1983 (Manning, 2009).

The reason “The Casino” was built was because Frank Fertitta Jr. had a vision of opening a locals’ casino. He saw that there was no place for Las Vegas locals to play outside of the strip. His dream and passion was to provide a total gaming experience for the locals of Las Vegas. Today Stations Casinos has grown to 19 properties, including managing one in California and not to mention has been repeatedly voted among the “top best companies to work for”. The traits that stand out the most are vision, hard work, commitment, dedication, high energy, knowledge, conscientiousness, risk taking, motivation, caring, and passion.

### **Steve Wynn**

Stephen Alan Wynn was born in 1942 in New Haven, Connecticut (investingvalue.com). Wynn got his start in the gaming sector by taking over the family bingo parlor business when his father passed away (investingvalue.com). From there, Wynn saved up enough money and then bought into the Frontier Casino in 1967 (investingvalue.com). This was a short-lived deal when the government came after his business associates for allegedly having mob ties (Hopkins). In 1971, Wynn and a partner made a land swap with Howard Hughes for a small piece of land adjacent to Caesars Palace and suggested that they might build a small casino on that land (Hopkins). This forced Caesar’s Palace to buy the land from them for more than double the amount they had put into the project (Hopkins). This is how and when Wynn started his illustrious career in Las Vegas. He used the money he made from the real estate transaction to buy into the Golden Nugget Casino (investingvalue.com). At the end of his first year of running the Golden Nugget, he took the before tax profit from \$1.1 million to \$4.2 million (Hopkins). His other accomplishments are the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Mirage and founding Mirage Resorts INC., Treasure Island, Bellagio, and the new Wynn Resort and Encore with another Wynn located in Macao, China. Steve Wynn has brought luxury to Las Vegas.



Steve Wynn has defined Las Vegas luxury. No one does it bigger or better than Steve Wynn. He has a keen sense for business and an extraordinary eye for details. Some key traits of Steve Wynn would be dedication, hard work, perfectionist, risk taker, detail oriented, a problem solver, innovative, creative, visionary, commitment, ambitious, determination, energetic, and decisive.

### **Sheldon Adelson**

Sheldon Adelson was born in 1933, to a cab driver in Boston, Massachusetts (Burbank, 2009). Adelson attended City College in New York where he majored in finance and real estate, but never finished (Burbank, 2009). Adelson made his first millions in the early 1960's after serving in army, teaching companies how to sell their stocks on the stock market (Burbank, 2009). By the late 1960's, the stock market decreased and Adelson lost the bulk of his fortune (Burbank, 2009) Adelson then bought into magazine publication and used one of the magazines as inspiration to create the, now great, COMDEX (Computer Dealer Expo) convention show (Burbank, 2009). Adelson then used the money generated from COMDEX and other side ventures to purchase The Sands in Las Vegas in 1988 (Burbank, 2009). After a few expansions to the Sands, he imploded it to make way for the Venetian (Burbank, 2009). The Venetian was opened in May 1999. Adelson has also planned globally. He has built casinos in Macau, China, and has plans to open at least seven more, including one in Singapore (Burbank, 2009). In 2006, Adelson was named in Forbes Magazine as the third richest man in the world with holdings of \$20.5 billion (Burbank, 2009). Although, it is known that he lost 95% of his wealth in 2008 due to the stock market crash; you can be certain that Sheldon Adelson with his business sense and drive will soon be back at the of the top of that list. Key traits are vision, innovation, risk taking, detail oriented, strategic thinking, hard work, dedication, commitment, passionate, ambitious, goal oriented, adaptable, and resilient.

### **Conrad Hilton**

Conrad Nicholas Hilton was born on December 25, 1887 in New Mexico (atouchofbusiness.com). Hilton began his hospitality career in 1919 when he moved to Texas and bought the Mobley Hotel (atouchofbusiness.com). After a good round of successful ventures in buying and building hotels, he finally established the Hilton Hotel Corporation in 1946 (atouchofbusiness.com). Using his great business sense and intuition he also entered into the car rental, travel services, and credit card industry. He was successful in every financial venture he took (atouchofbusiness.com). Hilton had a great vision of what he wanted to accomplish and he always kept moving. He was quoted as saying “Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit” (Maxwell, 1999). This shows the great tenacity, dedication, and energy that Hilton had. By the year 2000, there were nearly 500 Hilton Hotels worldwide. Key traits and behaviors of Conrad Hilton are determination, risk taker, vision, caring, high energy, tenaciousness, dedication, conscientiousness, persistent, motivation, and ambition.

### **John Willard Marriott**

John Willard Marriott (a.k.a. J.W. Marriott or Bill Marriott) was born September 17, 1900 in Utah. From the tender age of 13 Bill started his first venture, growing lettuce (Marriott.com). That summer he made \$2,000 with the help of siblings and he immediately gave the profits to his father (Marriott.com). Bill worked his way through college and at the end of his college career began negotiations with A&W Root Beer to purchase franchise rights for Washington D.C. Bill opened the A&W Root Beer stand in 1927 (Marriott.com). The first Marriott Hotel was opened in 1957 (Answers.com). “At the time of his death, the Marriott Corporation had 140,000

employees in 26 countries and total annual sales of \$3.5 billion” (Answers.com). Bill was known for his customer service ethics as well as the way he treated his employees. He was quoted as saying the company’s secret was its employees and to “take care of your employee’s and they will take care of your customers” (Marriott.com). This demonstrates that Bill Marriott was a caring, honest, and genuine man. He was one of the best there have ever been in providing customer service and dedication to his employees’. Key traits for Bill Marriott are honesty, integrity, ambition, motivation, commitment, conscientiousness, dedication, driven, vision, caring, innovative, and charismatic.

In exploring the transformational and transactional leadership theories there were definitely some key traits and behaviors. Being able to identify the traits and behaviors makes it easier to understand why leaders are successful. After evaluating key influential people in the hospitality industry it is clear that there are some common key traits and behaviors that are needed in the hospitality industry. It would be advantageous for future and rising hospitality leaders to be able to identify and understand these traits and behaviors, so they can begin to build and adapt and nurture them as to become successful leaders.

The final section of this paper will examine some direct applications of information. A questionnaire will be presented, designed from the literature review. An explanation for the application of the questionnaire will be included. The conclusion of this paper will focus on summarizing the key points and the importance of the information as it pertains to the hospitality industry and its future leaders.

### **The Assessment of Key Leadership Traits and Behaviors**

Identifying key characteristics and behaviors is one thing, but using that information is quite another. How will the hospitality industry be able to apply the information? The big question is why should the hospitality industry be interested in this information?

The hospitality industry is always expanding and is very competitive. Being able to accurately identify the needed characteristics and behaviors of a position as well as the corporation itself will help to ensure they identify, hire, promote, and develop the best candidate (Haid & Stroud, 2009, pg. 1&4). Corporations could use these findings to identify strengths and weaknesses of candidates they are hiring as well as create questions for pre-employment assessments and post-employment development. With the increase in size and competition of the hospitality industry it is important that a corporation “build their talent to address future capabilities and demands” (Haid & Stroud, 2009, pg. 2). With these findings, a corporation will be able to identify the best candidate more quickly and more efficiently. Haid and Stroud state top candidates are typically removed from the market the fastest (pg. 3). If a corporation cannot identify the best candidates fast enough the competition may be able to move-in and steal the candidate. These findings can also improve top-talent development. Once hired, the top-talent evaluations could be personalized based on their strength and weaknesses. This would allow corporations to focus on the weaknesses and exercise the strengths of their top-talent. Being able to identify, hire, promote, and develop top-talent will allow corporations to strategically mold leaders and position themselves in the top of the competitive playing field.

The information and findings could be valuable to aspiring leaders in the hospitality industry. The corporations could post the necessary traits and behaviors needed to perform at a

high level. Individuals could then evaluate the necessary requirements and determine if they feel they are suited for the industry, company, or position desired. It is important to understand what is needed to perform a certain position or even in an industry so one can be properly prepared. Having this information readily available will allow aspiring leaders to hone their characteristics and traits early. Knowing what is expected and demanded will also help to ensure a proper culture fit. It is very costly to identify, hire, and develop top-talent. It would be time consuming and costly to have to do it again because the original top-talent candidate did not fit into the company culture.

### Questionnaire

Below in Figure 1 is the Leadership Development Assessment questionnaire.

Leadership Development Assessment

	Always Demonstrates this Skill	Usually Demonstrates this Skill	Sometimes Demonstrates this Skill	Seldom Demonstrates this Skill	Never Demonstrates this Skill
<b>Visionary</b>					
Talks about what could be vs. status quo					
Describes a future to his/her co-workers					
Challenging existing policy and procedures with a view to make them					
Identifies trend and pattern changes					
<b>Flexibility</b>					
Willingness to work outside of comfort zone					
Handles schedule changes efficiently					
Adapts to trend and pattern changes					
Handles each situation differently					
<b>Resiliency</b>					
Learns from mistakes					
Handles constructive criticism effectively					
Ability to overcome adversity					
Does not allow past performances to affect future performances					
<b>Commitment</b>					
Works until problem is solved					
Believes in his/her objective					
Accepts extra work in order to complete task					
Punctual, prepared, and energetic about tasks at hand regardless of degree of difficult					
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>					
Expresses appropriate emotions when handling situations					
Can comfortably express feelings at appropriate times					
Correctly identifies other employees/customers emotional state					
Inquires about his/her co-workers personal life and responds appropriately					

Figure 1: Leadership Development Assessment

In the evaluation there are five key characteristics and behaviors. Obviously these are not the only traits and behaviors needed to make a successful leader in the hospitality industry, but these five were found to be the most predominant in the findings of the analysis of the key figures above. Vision was chosen because it is the desired destination or outcome of the leader. A leader needs to know where he/she wants to go before they can lead others to that destination. Scott-Halsell, Shumate, and Blum (2008) mentioned the need of vision in order to fill the inspirational motivation component of transformational leadership. Inspirational motivation is achieved by motivating and inspiring followers to achieve common goals through a shared vision (Scott-Halsell, Shumate, & Blum, 2008, p. 102). Resiliency is the key to reaching that destination. The path to greatness or success is rarely, if at all, easy to achieve. There will be challenges and issues to keep a leader from reaching his/her destination. Resiliency is needed to reach that destination or goal. Steve Wynn, Sheldon Adelson, and Conrad Hilton have displayed the importance of resiliency. Steve Wynn bought in to the Frontier Casino and was soon ousted by the legal system, as well as, devised a plan to force Caesar's Palace to buy land of him and his partners so he could resume his position in the hospitality industry at the Golden Nugget (Hopkins). Sheldon Adelson has made fortunes and lost fortunes (Burbank, 2009). Sheldon Adelson has created successful companies and been a part of failing companies, but Sheldon Adelson is always attempting to make the best of his opportunities (Burbank, 2009). Conrad Hilton was quoted by Maxwell (2009) as saying "success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit". A leader needs to be able handle difficult situations and overcome adversity. With the fast paced environment and ever-changing nature of the hospitality industry, flexibility is very important. A leader needs to be available at all times and be able to work outside of their comfort zone. It is important to be

able to react to market demands. A great example of the ability of flexibility is in the description of Emotional Intelligence by Wang and Huang (2009), “the ability to recognize the meanings related to the specific emotions, and to reason and problem solve on the basis of them” ( p. 382). Not just related to the Emotional Intelligence aspect; a leader needs to be able to identify the nature of the situation and react to the situation appropriately. Emotional Intelligence although a newly coined term, is a very effective concept with resulting behaviors. It is important when handling a situation to understand or acknowledge the emotional state of the party first. It is very important that a leader holds their composure during tough and challenging times and is sincere and genuine with their colleagues and guests. Being able to react and express appropriate emotional feelings is a necessity in creating a comfortable and productive environment. Scott-Halsell, Blum, and Huffman (2008) acknowledge the correlation of successful managers and Emotional Intelligence by stating “all segments of hospitality are service related and emotional intelligence has been found to be significant in the success of managers in service industries” ( p. 149). Commitment is the foundation on which a destination is met. Commitment is about doing what is necessary and being enthusiastic about the mission or goal. Every one of the key figures analyzed has shown commitment. Frank Fertitta Jr. was committed to providing a great place for locals to play and gamble; Steve Wynn was committed to building the most lavish and elegant properties; Sheldon Adelson and Conrad Hilton were both committed to be the best in each business endeavor they pursued; and J.W. Marriott was committed to providing great customer service and placing extreme importance on taking care of his employees.

The evaluation and subsequent discussion of key leadership trait and behaviors is a great foundation. It is meant as a starting point for an evaluation of a prospective top-talent candidate. The evaluation should be individualized for each candidate as well as for the corporation

administering the evaluation. It is just as important to build an evaluation for a top-talent employee as it is to make sure the evaluation fits the culture of the company. The evaluation would be given one-on-one. Each one of the points would be analyzed and discussed with the employee by the direct superior. This will allow for questions, concerns, and explanations to be made at the time of the assessment. The direct superior would create an action plan for the employee to ensure that corrective measures are made and positive behaviors reinforced. Action plan suggestions would include mentoring, coaching, and/or shadowing an executive. There could also be assignments that would include doing research on up to date trends and topics in the hospitality industry. Personal projects could include completing research analysis of various components of leadership. This would provide insight to proper techniques and importance of the trait and/or behavior. Completing these action plans would enhance the top-talent prospect's weaknesses and build on their strengths.

### **Result and Conclusion**

The role of leadership is very demanding. This may be why there are as many definitions as there are people who wish to define it. The definition that this paper is based on is the fundamental belief about what leaders are and what leaders do:

“An organizational role which involves establishing a clear vision, sharing (communicating) that vision with others so they will follow willingly, providing information, knowledge, and methods to realize that vision, and coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stake holders. A leader comes to the forefront in case of crisis and is able to think and act in creative



ways in difficult situations. Leadership flows from the core of a personality and may be enhanced through coaching or mentoring” (BusinessDictionary.com).

Leadership is a role and not a position. Anyone can be a leader at various positions. The findings of this paper have identified and verified key characteristics and behaviors for effective leadership. Through the findings, this paper has subjectively verified traits and behaviors in the hotel and hospitality industry through the literature review, which has explained the success of key figures in the hospitality industry. As a result of this analysis, the questionnaire can be used to form leadership assessments for emerging industry leaders. The evaluation is used to identify and groom in-house top-talent. A strong leadership bench is essential to meet the demands of rapid expansion and senior management attrition. The questionnaire is clearly a subjective analysis of key traits and behaviors. Although the questionnaire should be accurate according to the findings in the literature review, the questionnaire should be tested to validate this assumption/hypothesis. Having a strong leadership bench will play a major role in being in the top of the competitive playing field. This paper has verified key traits and behaviors relevant to the hospitality industry. Using the findings will help to identify, develop, and retain top-talent. Having strong leadership will increase a corporation's competitive edge, increase company morale, and last but not least, increase the company's bottom line.

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