Great Transformational Leaders - Gandhi, Napoleon and Lincoln-What Business Managers Can Learn From them

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ABSTRACT
It is said that some of the greatest lessons for humanity lie in history. This paper is a tribute to three great leaders of outstanding abilities, charisma and achievements, i.e. Mahatma Gandhi, Napoleon Bonaparte and Abraham Lincoln. History is witness to their unbelievable greatness and enormous success. These leaders fit the meaning and definitions of transformational leaders in a very apt way. Business management and managers must appreciate and learn from the lives and accomplishments of these great men. This paper starts with outlining the meaning of transformational leadership and then proceeds to give a brief outline of the lives of these leaders. Finally, it attempts to find out what ideals, lessons, qualities and wisdom business managers can learn, gain and imbibe from these personalities.

INTRODUCTION
Ever since the human beings have organized themselves and started living in societies, authority and leadership was always needed. The great leaders not only maintain the existing social and political structures and functions, but also realize their shortcomings and need for change. There have always been resistance against steps towards transformation by sections that believe in status quo. History has not produced many transformational leaders. Transformational leaders, although few, have contributed significantly to human evolution. A transforming leader with imagination and tenacity puts the goals with clarity and convinces the people for the need to develop and change. Often they become so charismatic that people revere them and follow them for generations. In certain cases the contribution of these greats becomes a model for other societies to follow. Example of Shri Krishna, Mahatma Buddha, Jesus Christ, Confucius and Muhammad for humanity; Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mao Tse Tung, Vladimir Lenin and others in the field of politics; Newton, Darwin, Einstein and others in the field of science; Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal and Napoleon as kings and generals have been great transformational leaders. A lot can be learnt from these great men.

Business management and its methods, procedures and systems are not static. Similarly, expectations of consumers also change. They continue to change with the changing climates of societies and economies. Transformational business leaders have been able to understand, adapt to and take advantage of these changes.

In the field of business and management there have been various types of leaders who broadly can be categorized as routine/average management leaders and transformational leaders. In the latter category there have been some who have made important and in certain cases lasting contributions which do not get diminished and eroded with time. Many great business leaders from John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford to Richard Branson and Steve Jobs have transformed the way we do and manage business and accomplish extraordinary achievements. These great transformational leaders took steps to innovate and change the way we plan, organize, motivate and control in businesses.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
The views of experts in the field of management and how they have defined transformation leaders or transformational leadership may be stated.

“Transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate followers’ interests and stir followers to look beyond their own interests to the good of others.”

“Transformational leadership refers to the set of abilities that allow the leader to recognize the need for change, to create a vision to guide that change and to execute the change effectively.”
“A transformational leader motivates followers to work for goals instead of short term self-interest and for achievement and self-actualization instead of security; is able to express a clear vision and inspire others to strive to accomplish the vision.”

“Transformational leaders are leaders who inspire followers to transcend their own self-interests and who are capable of having a profound and extraordinary effect on followers.”

According to Fred Luthans transformational leaders exhibit the following qualities.

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<th>Quality</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>Charisma</strong></td>
<td>Provides vision and sense of mission, instils pride, gains respect and trust.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inspiration</strong></td>
<td>Communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple ways.</td>
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<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation</strong></td>
<td>Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Consideration</strong></td>
<td>Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, advises.</td>
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Thus, one can see and understand that transformational leaders are innovative and inspiring individuals who can carry the burden of their followers on their shoulders make lasting contributions and achieve outstanding results.

In this paper an attempt has been made to look at three of history’s greatest and well known transformational leaders and try to understand and analyse their impact and what business managers of the present age can learn from them. These three greats are Mahatma Gandhi, Napoleon Bonaparte and Abraham Lincoln. The contribution of these leaders was on a much larger scale and even universal. A lot can be learned from their outstanding qualities and contributions.

**MAHATMA GANDHI**

Mahatma Gandhi is known as the Father of the nation in India. He played a very important role as a leader of India’s national movement.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Gujarat in a well to do family and later went to England to study law. He then went to South Africa Gandhi as an advocate. His first experience with the atrocities, discrimination and exploitation perpetrated by the British imperial power was in South Africa. Gandhi started his struggle against the British in South Africa through Satyagraha (insistence upon the truth) and Ahimsa i.e. non-violent protest. He played an important role in championing the cause of the Indians in South Africa. He also became an inspiration for the Africans.

In 1916 Gandhi came back to India. The national movement in India was at a nascent stage when The Mahatma emerged as an important leader. At that time Indian National Congress leaders were highly divided and the movement had little mass support. Most of the leaders of the Congress were imbued with British democratic ideas and never aimed at complete independence from the British. Gandhi assessed the situation correctly and realized that the Indian National movement has to identify itself with the ground reality and the common man. He also understood that India can only fight its battle for independence by non-violent means such as non-cooperation, civil disobedience, strikes, fasting, peaceful protests and breaking the law for truth and justice through Satyagraha (insistence upon the truth). He also used the language and idiom of the common man.

His first success at Champaran impressed the national leadership and he soon acquired an important role in the Indian National Congress. Gandhi having realized that the national Movement suffered from lack of mass support took many steps by his style and demeanour to make the Congress a greater representative of the Indian masses. Gandhi inspired a generation of great Congress leaders and common men and women alike. He raised his voice against Rowlett Act and the various tortures and injustices perpetrated by the British such as the JalianwalaBagh massacre. His famous DandiMarch to break the Salt Law is so well known. The Quit India Movement inspired by Gandhi was perhaps the greatest protest movement against the British and it played an important role in India’s final
independence. Gandhi’s insistence on Hindu-Muslim unity was another characteristic feature of his philosophy and leadership.

Mahatma Gandhi strode the Indian National movement like a colossus and India gained its independence under his unquestioned leadership. It will be no exaggeration and in fact the truth to say that Gandhi was a great transformational leader. He impressed his countrymen as well as the international community through his path-breaking thought and action. His other contribution as a transformational leader may be summed up as follows:

1. He completely identified himself with the common man, - poor, marginalized downtrodden and backward. For example, he uplifted and inspired the Harijans and Dalits, lived in their colonies, did their scavenging work and sweeping and gave them respect, sympathy and love by calling them Harijan and considering untouchability as a crime against humanity.

2. In spite of his identification with the Harijans, he opposed reservation based on caste because he was a nationalist leader and believed in unity of India.

3. Intellectually, he changed the definition of politics. His politics was not centred around power politics but on truth and non-violence appealing to the heart of the rival and this he did by personal example.

4. During the national movement the British repeatedly gave him insults, sent him to jail frequently and even gave beatings to his followers. But he did not budge from his path of truth and non-violence.

5. He closely empathized and sympathized with his followers. He fully identified himself with the problems and sufferings of his followers. Quite a large number of his followers were women and he always considered them as equal and free.

6. He believed in the philosophy of simple living (Apirigrah). His simple living was reflected in wearing just a Dhoti made of Khadi and a Chappal as a footwear. He always travelled in a third/lowest class railway compartment.

7. In the economic field he spelt out his revolutionary idea of trusteeship. He believed in the philosophy of Sarvodayai.e. upliftment of all sections of the society. He was not in favour of capitalism and consumerism. At the same time he firmly rejected centralization of politics and power. He insisted on Khadi and Swadeshi. He believed in Panchayat system or village administration. His economic ideas are well known as the Gandhian Model of economics.

8. He was a firm believer in Hindu Muslim unity condemned the dead wood of religion but was always highly religious.

9. His charisma was not confined to time when he played an active role but is everlasting. So many world leaders from Albert Einstein to Nelson Mandela to Martin Luther King to Barak Obama have been inspired by the Mahatma.

10. As an intellectual he wrote copiously. His writings are available in 30 volumes. After independence he refused to reap the comforts that some of his follower took by taking political posts.

11. He is considered a Mahatma, or a great spiritual personality.

Einstein said of Gandhi -

“Mahatma Gandhi’s life achievement stands unique in political history. He has invented a completely new and humane means for the liberation war of an oppressed country, and practised it with greatest energy and devotion. The moral influence he had on the consciously thinking human being of the entire civilized world will probably be much more lasting than it seems in our time with its overestimation of brutal violent forces. Because lasting will only be the work of such statesmen who wake up and strengthen the moral power of their people through their example and educational works. We may all be happy and grateful that destiny gifted us with such an enlightened contemporary, a role model for the generations to come. Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this walked the earth in flesh and blood.”

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The great Martin Luther King said the following of the Mahatma-
"Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction
between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale. Love for Gandhi was a
potent instrument for social and collective transformation. It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love
and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for do many
months."7

"Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon...a weapon unique in history, which cuts without
wounding and ennobles the man who wields it...It was used in a magnificent way by Mohandas K.
Gandhi to challenge the might of the British empire and free his people from the political domination
of economic exploitation inflicted upon them for centuries. He struggled only with the weapons of
truth soul-force, non-injury and courage."8

Nelson Mandela paid the following tribute to Mahatma Gandhi-
India is Gandhi's country of birth; South Africa his country of adoption. He was both an Indian and a
South African citizen. Both countries contributed to his intellectual and moral genius, and he shaped
the liberatory movements in both colonial theatres. His philosophy of Satyagraha is both a personal
and a social struggle to realize the Truth, which he identifies as God, the Absolute Morality. He seeks
this Truth, not in isolation, self-centredly, but with the people. Gandhi rejects the Adam Smith notion
of human nature as motivated by self-interest and brute needs and returns us to our spiritual dimension
with its impulses for nonviolence, justice and equality. He believes in the human capacity to change
and wages Satyagraha against the oppressor, not to destroy him but to transform him, that he ceases his
oppression and join the oppressed in the pursuit of Truth.9

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Napoleon had all those qualities that go to make a transformational leader. History had accorded him
the status of a great transformer, innovator, highly charismatic and a leader who not only led his
countrymen but also identified himself with them and people with him. His greatness was
multifaceted. He was a law giver, social reformer and administrator and is acknowledged as one of the
greatest military genius of all time. Within a span of 15 years he gave the French society a new
direction. He is also acknowledged as one of the few leaders about whom a lot has been written and
even today he is widely read.

Napoleon – a great military tactician and strategist.

Napoleon was perhaps Frances’s greatest son. He was born in a well-known family in Corsica.
Napoleon’s enemy Wellington, who defeated him in his last battle Waterloo, when asked, who was the
greatest general of that age replied, "In this age, in past ages, in any age, Napoleon".10

Not only Wellington, even the great scholar Carl Von Clausecwitz regarded him as an influential
theorist a genius in the operational act of war and historians of all shades rank him as a great military
commander.11

General Foy writes, “Napoleon is …………. the greatest warrior of modern times. He carried into
battle a stoic courage, a profoundly calculated tenacity, a mind fertile in sudden inspirations, which by
unhoped for resources disconcerted the plan of the enemy. ………….He carried with him into battle
a cool and impassable courage; never was a mind so deeply meditative, more fertile in rapid and
sudden illuminations.”12

His method of warfare finds an eminent place in the text books which are widely used all over the
world and studied by all students of military colleges and schools. He used artillery as his main
weapon to scatter infantry and cavalry.

His contemporary generals could not understand his tactics for a long time and he defeated all his
enemies till his invasion of Russia. Napoleon also introduced the practice of conscription. In warfare as
a leader he was always in front. He hardly consulted Alexander or Hannibal and depended on his own
observation. His knowledge of Geography was second to none. He was a master of positional warfare
and used little opportunities and slight weaknesses of the enemy to his advantages.
His famous battles were battle for Toulon, Battle of Marengo, Battle of Lodi and Battle of Arcole. But his most famous were the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena and Freidland.

As a leader
As a leader Napoleon led the French people in a revolutionary situation in which hardly any leader could control and manage the public unrest. He identified himself with the revolutionary fervour but in a responsible way. He realised the limitations of extremism but also understood that the age of feudalism and monarchy is over. He symbolized the aspirations of the people as well as the necessary restrain for building the French society by various reforms and military victories. Napoleon's charisma was so great that people almost blindly followed him. They believed that he was leading the nation in high direction. In military campaigns the soldiers were ready to lay their lives for him. His mere presence both in victory and defeat inspired the people. His returns from the failed Egyptian campaign and from captivity in Alba were enthusiastically welcomed by the people as well as the army. At Lodi while inspiring the soldiers to cross the bridge he fell down in the river and was saved by a soldier who said that who will lead them if hewere no more. His system of creating and maintaining supply lines during battle campaigns is another noteworthy contribution.

Napoleon instituted reforms in various aspects of the French society - higher education, taxescivil and criminal law, road system, central bank, peace and conciliation with the Catholic Church and public ownership. His instituted Legion of Honour in place of old decorations to encourage civilian and military achievements (It is still the highest decoration of France). One of the lasting contributions of Napoleon was “Code Napoleon” which was a collection of civil, criminal and commercial laws. The development of the code was a fundamental change in the legal system with the stress on clarity and accessibility. A code of criminal institution was published with rules of due procedures. His code has also inspired liberal reforms in other European countries. The code has been described as a revolutionary project which spurred the development of the bourgeoisiesociety in Europe. Napoleon’s code was also introduced in territories that he won such as Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Poland and even outside Europe i.e. Dominican republic Canadian province of Quebec and some American states. These laws are still effective. Napoleon emancipated Jews as well as Protestants in catholic countries and expanded their right to property ownership and career. The great man is also credited to have established in France the metric system of measurement. He also inspired other countries to introduce this scientific and simple method of calculation. Napoleon contribution was not confined to France or as a military leader. He frequently declared that his aim was European unity, of course, under French leadership. Even today his ideas and examples inspire people world over. Thousands of books have been written on him and his campaigns. Despite some of the failures, over-ambition and attachment towards his family members, he remains an all-time great personality. One of Napoleon great contribution besides a network of roads and canals was the famous French museum called Louvre. He contributed to making Paris the cultural centre of Europe. Napoleon was a very perceptive leader and understood the psychology and mood of the people. The famous German poet Goethe praised Napoleon as “So divine an illumination is always linked with youth and productivity; and, in very truth Napoleon was one of the most productive men that ever lived.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
President Lincoln’s great contributions will always be recognized by democrats not only in USA but all over the world. He initiated the process of emancipation of slaves by his proclamation known as "Emancipation proclamation" which ultimately led to the 13th amendment of the American Constitution passed in the year 1865. It is well known that slavery was widespread in the United States and was legalized in the year 1857. Lincoln opposed slavery tooth and nail and even challenged Senator Douglas (who was in favour
of slavery) for debates. Many of his colleagues, and Southern States particularly, opposed Lincoln and feared division of the country.

In his famous speech, "House divided" which he delivered on 16th June 1858, while he was a Senator he warned the nation that, "A house divided against itself......... I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free........ It will become all one thing or all the other." Preparing for the presidency Lincoln told the nation that "I am not ashamed to confess that 25 years ago I was a hired laborer mauling rails at work on a flat dashboard just what might happen to any poor man's son." Since times immemorial slavery has been prevalent all over the world, with few exceptions, in some form or the other. It was because of the fact that inequality is inherent in human beings; some are strong some are weak, and also because temptation to exploit the surplus labour of others is a human weakness.

It is surprising that in a democratic country like the US where the principles of liberty and equality were enshrined such a practice was prevalent. American businessmen and industrialists brought people of African origin for manual labour. They were exploited on large scale and their living conditions were despicable. The schisms between the Southern and Northern states of the US were simmering for quite some time. With the accession of Lincoln as a republican President the Southern states feared that their liberty and property will be endangered. The practice of slavery which was mostly prevalent in the Southern states was another cause of the differences between the two. These factors led to The Civil War in the US between the Northern and the Southern states. Lincoln faced a grim situation of disintegration of the United States of America. Initially Lincoln did not realize the fast deteriorating situation and did not even prepare the army adequately. In comparison to the south the Unionists (the Northern states) were weak and in the beginning Lincoln tried to avoid the crisis.

That is why in the initial phase the Unionists were not so successful. It was only after the battle of fort Sumter that Lincoln took over the command of the army. He assumed emergency powers, suspended the fundamental right of Habeas Corpus, arrested thousands of Confederates (supporters of the southern states) and mobilized the army seriously. Throughout the progress of the war there were setbacks and differences, but Lincoln remained firm and encouraged the army by going to the front on many occasions. Interestingly, his talents even in military affairs were recognized. As the Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Unionists he led the Northern states to a decisive victory over the southern states. It is important to note that it was during the war that he issued the proclamation of emancipation of slaves, which the Congress passed on 19th June, 1862.

Lincoln's major contributions were not confirmed to civil war and abolition of slavery. He was pro-poor and allowed poor people from the east to acquire or purchase land in the west. He established a national currency and created a network of national banks through the National Banking Act. In order to protect industry he signed tariff legislation. He also built the trans-continental rail road. Even in his foreign policy he successfully resisted external powers from interfering in the civil war.

**Qualities as a person and leader**

As a leader Lincoln's qualities also included the following:

He was a great orator and had qualities to impress not only his followers but also persuade his opponents. His famous speeches included *House Divided Speech, Cooper Union Address, The First Inaugural Address, The Second Inaugural Address* and *Gettysburg Address*. He could judge the situation not only of the nation and the public but also the military situation and chart out ways to go ahead.

His assessment as the greatest president and leader USA has ever produced has been recognized by many surveys and experts. His benevolent leadership style and participatory methods could virtually
disarm his enemies. He was kind and compassionate combined with wisdom. The extraordinary strength of his character and will have been widely recognized. He rose to the highest position from a very humble and poor background.

Robert Ingersoll has said the following about Abraham Lincoln. “Here sleeps the only man in the history of the world, who, having been clothed with almost absolute power, never abused it, except upon the side of mercy.”

Lincoln’s ambassador to Austria John Lothrop Motley wrote in 1865, “He impressed me as a man of most extraordinary conscientiousness. ??????? There was something in his absence of guile and affection of any kind.??????? I was struck by his simple wisdom, his straightforward unsophisticated common sense. What our Republic, what the whole world has to be grateful for, is that God has endowed our Chief Magistrate at such a momentous period of history with so lofty a moral nature and with so loving and forgiving a disposition. His mental abilities ??????? and his faculty of divining the right amid a conflict of dogmas, theories, and of weighing other man’s opinions while retaining his own judgement, almost ?????? ?????????(amount) to a political genius.”

In the year of his death alone (1865) more than 450 pamphlets, speeches and sermons about him erupted into print, many of them comparing Lincoln to Christ. His biographers state the outpouring of words of this great and remarkable leader after his assassination. “The son of a saintly mother and an illiterate carpenter Lincoln had been sent by God to save his people”, they said.

It should be clearly understood that the three leaders that we have just discussed are not business leaders. Therefore, all their contributions do not apply to business and management. But, from their leadership ability, ideas and personal qualities a lot can be learnt by modern business managers.

WHAT BUSINESS MANAGERS CAN LEARN FROM ALL THESE THREE LEADERS

• Understanding of ground reality and people and societies.
• Understanding maladies drawbacks and problems.
• Realizing potential solutions and needs of the time.
• Understanding the logic, flow and direction of history.
• Understanding fundamentals of human nature and how to lead and manage and control human beings.
• Strategic vision and tactical means to achieve the objectives.
• Ability to lead, manage and organize.
• Keeping eye of high objectives like emancipation, equality, glory, rights, unity, and nationalism etc.
• Outstanding personal qualities like strong will, courage, determination, ability to concentrate, intelligence, innovativeness, original thinking, balance, perseverance, greatness etc.
• Capacity to impress, inspire and motivate followers; great charisma.
• Extraordinary abilities and achievements.

WHAT BUSINESS MANAGERS CAN LEARN FROM MAHATMA GANDHI

• Understanding the people and their problems; empathy and sympathy.
• Understanding the socio-cultural ethos of a society and its strengths and weaknesses.
• Developing labour intensive economic systems and his insistence on promoting village, small scale and handicrafts industries.
• Tenacity, self-control and perseverance for achievement of objectives.
• Putting the interests of the followers before one’s self-interest.
• Following lofty ideals in life.
• Long term perspective.
• Hard work and sincerity.
• Achieving results through simple means control on extravagant spending, cost control.
• Concentration on poor, marginalized, backward, lower castes; great love and benevolence for such sections.
• Unity of all religions castes, religions regional and linguistic groups.
• Strong belief in ethics - truth, non-violence, honesty, simplicity, identification with the weak and downtrodden and that practice is better than preaching.
• Understanding complex situations and managing them.
• Mobilization of the rich businessmen for social and political purposes.
• A human face of management realizing the problems of market economy.
• Time-management, punctuality, productivity, spontaneity, decision making ability, and intuition.

WHAT BUSINESS MANAGERS CAN LEARN FROM NAPOLEON
• Courage, bravery and all the qualities of the greatest military leader.
• Strategy and tactics.
• Extremely strong ambition and a will to achieve, succeed and win.
• A very keen judge of human nature, character, situations and circumstances.
• Innovative ideas and newer and innovative solutions to problems.
• Tremendous tenacity of purpose and a never say die attitude.
• Great foresight and ability to calculate.
• Superhuman intelligence of all types in in so many fields.
• Quick decision making capacity.
• Outstanding motivational power and capacity to motivate
• Great ability to plan, organize, control and make systems.i.e., the abilities of a fantastic administrator.
• Epoch making contribution towards law and legal systems and supply line management in battles.
• Achieving so much in such little time.

WHAT BUSINESS MANAGERS CAN LEARN FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN
• Empathy and sympathy.
• Great believer in democratic values – justice, equality freedom.
• Ability to choose the right person for the right job.
• Zeal to liberate the people of African origin from slavery i.e. love for all humanity.
• Great judge of history.
• Great will power, doggedness and assertion for the right purpose.
• Ability to manage, organize and lead in most difficult circumstances.
• Calmness and balance in difficult situations.
• Ability to work hard and sincerity of thought and practice.
• Sticking to high ideals and ethical values in most difficult times.
• Simplicity, honesty and mercy.

CONCLUSION
In the conclusion it may be stated that the personalities of these great leaders were so comprehensive and path breaking that management cannot remain unaffected by them. Management being a social activity and academic discipline has to learn not only from the personalities of great leaders but also from their contribution to nations and society. The leaders are in fact role models from whom even common man learns. They are the path finders and contributors to human evolution and have set up great ideals that continue inspire not only their societies but also humanity as a whole. Managers,
management systems and organizations can learn and improve themselves with sense of service to humanity.

REFERENCES