

## ***Three Traits Every CEO Needs***

In researching his recent book, *Better Under Pressure*, author Justin Menkes, an expert in the field of C-suite talent evaluation, sought to identify the qualities that define leaders who excel in navigating companies through the kind of stressful global economic environment that has become the new norm.

He gathered performance data for approximately 200 candidates being assessed for the CEO role at major U.S. corporations and found that certain attributes — three in particular — were highly consistent within the top performers, regardless of industry or job type.

1. **Realistic optimism.** Leaders with this trait possess confidence without self-delusion or irrationality. They pursue audacious goals, which others would typically view as impossible pipedreams, while at the same time remaining aware of the magnitude of the challenges confronting them and the difficulties that lie ahead.
2. **Subservience to purpose.** Leaders with this ability see their professional goal as so profound in importance that their lives become measured in value by how much they contribute to furthering that goal. They must be pursuing a professional goal to feel a purpose for living. In essence, that goal is their master and their reason for being. Their level of dedication to their work is a direct result of the extraordinary, remarkable importance they place on their goal.
3. **Finding order in chaos.** Leaders with this trait find taking on multidimensional problems invigorating, and their ability to bring clarity to quandaries that baffle others makes their contributions invaluable.

Menkes suggests that no organization should hire or promote someone into a leadership position who doesn't possess all three attributes. The good news is that they can be learned. Real leadership is a continuous process that starts with a leader and is reflected in that leader's people. His research has further shown that the best leaders work with the people they lead to seek their mutual maximum potential together. They co-create their success.

The most critical responsibility leaders have is to help their people realize their potential. When leaders create a framework for people to realize their potential, they create a virtuous cycle that elicits people's best selves — the selves that induce the gratification we all feel when we overcome significant challenges.

Menkes concludes that utilizing these traits is how a leader creates an organization that produces the utmost effort from all employees. In today's business environment of constantly increasing competition, this type of organization is the only kind that is built for the long-term.