

# April 2007, Leadership Lessons From The Firing Line

Anne Mulcahy, the chairwoman and CEO of Xerox Corporation, is the second most powerful woman in American business, according to a 2006 survey by Fortune magazine. She was largely responsible for orchestrating what Money magazine called "the great turnaround story of the post-crash era."

She is also a big fan of the book Good to Great by Jim Collins. Not a surprise as her personality is similar to that of the Level 5 leader, a term the author coined. Such people are humble and modest and show workmanlike diligence - "more plough horse than show horse". They give credit to others for their success and take full responsibility for poor results.

In a recent speech Mulcahy delivered at the MIT Sloan School of Management on "Leadership Lessons Learned on the Firing Line" she made numerous points that are worth considering for anyone who aspires to be an effective business leader.

Focus on customers. When you are in trouble it is not always intuitive that you should be spending the vast majority of your time talking to your customers.

- Lead your people as though their lives depended on your success.
- Practice the art of listening.
- Rather than waste time putting out fires, focus on the source of the fuel leak.
- Go with your Instincts. Too often, organizations focus intently on data and process which can sometimes be a barrier to timely decision making.
- Create clear accountability and align goals with strategy.
- Have a vision. Even while Rome was burning people wanted to know what the city of the future would look like.
- Communicate, communicate, and communicate.