

## **Primary Leadership Lessons**

Over the last couple of weeks as the Republican primary race has unfolded, the dramatic rise and fall of prospective presidential candidates has fascinated much of the nation. But Duane Zobrist, a Fast Company expert blogger believes that business leaders have more to gain from the GOP primary process than entertainment. In fact, he suggests that a number of valuable leadership lessons have been on display. Below are three of the most important.

**1) Turn setbacks into strengths.** In the days leading up to the all-important South Carolina primary, Newt Gingrich was faced with a political nightmare: sordid allegations from an ex-wife had made their way into the media. But rather than accept the cruel twist of fate, Gingrich managed to turn the tables, painting the media as the villains for reporting the damaging claims. Most experts credit this strategy for resuscitating his campaign and thrusting him back into the position of the state's frontrunner. As a business executive or manager, you will definitely face setbacks and failure. The only question is how you will respond to them.

**2) Be prepared.** Rick Perry entered the primary race to great fanfare and was a prolific fundraiser. Unfortunately, he was unable to overcome several poor debate performances, including one infamous moment in which he was unable to recall the third of three government departments which he had pledged to cut. As the leader of your business, you can't garner the respect of your employees if you don't demonstrate consistent preparation.

**3) Articulate your message.** Despite an enormous, well-oiled, and well-funded political machine, Mitt Romney has failed to emerge as the consensus nominee. Instead, he has been defeated by candidates with far fewer resources in several primary states Why? Because to date, Romney has been unable to articulate a clear vision for the future that is compelling enough to unify his party base. As a business leader, it is your job to articulate a vision for your organization that keeps your employees working with a passion every day.

CEO's and business leaders must constantly look for ways to improve. On the surface, the GOP primary may be an unlikely source of leadership training, but Zobrist believes that if you are able to apply these lessons, you will be a more effective leader.