The Advisory Alliance

TAA 60-Second E-mail – February 9, 2005

Carly and the Other

In our last e-mail, we included a "timely" piece from Carly Fiorina on effective leadership. This is the same Carly Fiorina who was pushed out of HP today, who oversaw a 50+% decline in HP stock price and a less than stellar merger with Compaq. Several of you challenged the wisdom of including a piece from someone with such a track record. What's interesting, but not unusual, is that someone like Fiorina can articulate relevant aspects of leadership, can rise to lead a global corporation, and still fall so dramatically. So was Fiorina wrong? Here are some of her words and those of another visible leader:

- “You have to be self-confident enough to know that you can make a difference and to rely on your judgment, your instincts, your information when it's necessary to do so, as it frequently is." – Fiorina
- "Self-confidence is the indispensable leadership characteristic." - Other Leader

- “[G]reat leaders empower people, inspire people, lead people to accomplish more than they thought was possible and to be more capable and more confident at the end of that journey than when they began it." – Fiorina
- "Leadership: It’s about....the ability to excite, to galvanize the organization and inspire it to action." - Other Leader

- "It's the inventive, creative, passionate capability of individuals that really represents the greatest asset that a company -- or leader -- has at their disposal." – Fiorina
- "We strive every day to always have everyone in the organization see change as a thrilling, energizing phenomenon, relished by all, because it is the oxygen of our growth." - Other Leader

- "[T]he most important thing for a leader to have is an internal compass." – Fiorina
- "Integrity: It’s the first and most important of our values" - Other Leader

The "Other Leader" in this case is the former Chairman and CEO of GE, Jack Welch. The difference between Welch and Fiorina? The ability to execute. In their now famous article in the June 1999 edition of Fortune titled "Why CEOs Fail?", Charan and Colvin answer simply: "It's bad execution. As simple as that: not getting things done, being indecisive, not delivering on commitments." It's something we'll return to in our next e-mail at the end of this month.

Best regards,

David

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