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**Effective Business Leadership:
Past, Present and Future**

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“The study of leadership isn’t nearly as exact as, say, the study of chemistry. For one thing, the social world isn’t nearly as orderly as the physical world, nor is it as susceptible to rules. For another, people, unlike solids, fluids, and gases, are anything but uniform and anything but predictable” (W. Bennis)

Why is understanding leadership important in the world of today? Without clarity on the meaning of leadership, people fail to develop the right skills. Besides, more change demands more leadership, which is difficult to supply if one cannot clearly specify what is the missing element. Consequently, the rapid changes in our modern time necessitate better leadership. In order to provide the best leadership possible, we have to understand what leadership is and what one needs to become a leader in the 21st century.

This study is organized chronologically introducing the reader to a historic approach to effective business leadership. After defining the concepts of leadership and management, the next step will be to analyze three of the most popular treatises about military and political leadership of the last two thousand years (Sun Tzu: The art of war, Machiavelli: The prince, Von Clausewitz: On war). The historic section contributes to a better understanding of leadership by broadening the focus and showing the differences that developed over time.

After linking the ideas and concepts of the historic authors to our modern business world, an overview of the research about effective business leadership during the 20th century will follow. The research aspect provides interesting insights, further clarifies the concept of leadership, and finally makes it possible to look into the future of leadership.

Accordingly, in the final chapter the attempt will be made to develop a picture of an effective business leader for the 21st century taking into account numerous economic, political, and social changes and challenges of the now emerging new century. In this section the influence of globalization, changing technology, diversity, fragmentation of society, information overload, and the emergence of so-called knowledge workers on leadership will be examined.

The focus of the whole study lies on the future of leadership. Therefore, this study ends with 13 recommendations for becoming an effective business leader in the 21st century.