Leadership Case Study: Leadership Style Of Sir Richard Branson

The leadership example I have selected are seeing leadership and storytelling. The leader I have chosen is Sir Richard Branson, I like his leadership style, he is flamboyant, vibrant and a colourful entrepreneur. RB uses transitional leadership to lead his companies. I will look at the way he uses leadership to enhance his empire and how he commands publicity to his companies advantage by using showmanship and the media to enhance his fame and boost the Virgin brand.

He thinks of himself as ‘David’ slaying the Goliath’s eg Himself against the big companies. His approach to business is he likes to right a wrong, he sees big businesses as not giving a good service and over pricing, he likes nothing more than setting up in competition to force them to reduce their prices and step up to the mark. He is well known for doing outlandish stunts to promote the brand and by his Tom foolery he gains the presses backing and it becomes front page news, boosting the company for example, when he is on a flight he will dress up as a flight attendant even wearing lipstick and serve the customers their drinks. He will ask for their feedback, and listen to the customers. This makes front page news and is free advertising.

The concept of seeing leadership is something Richard Branson has a good handle on. He focuses a great deal on seeing and sensing others feelings and experiences. For example whilst on a virgin flight he will try to talk to most of the customers to gain feedback and he is genuinely seen in the public eye, this concept is not often seen with other CEO’s from his main competitors. People like this approach and the knowing that they are talking to the man himself and that he is listening to them. He has an open dialogue with all his employees and they can email him direct and he will listen to their concerns and deal with any problems, by doing this he has a loyal workforce who feel they are being listened too.

Richard Branson has the look of an old hippy something he claims to be. With his long hair and goaty beard, he certainly has the happy go lucky attitude, that brings life and fun into the workplace. He is seen by customers and employees as open, vibrant and approachable, fun, an adventurer and anti-establishment. His body image is part of his brand also and he has not felt the need to change it. Interestingly although he sees himself and others do as a ‘Hippy’ he used the ‘Punk’ era to enhance his business with Virgin records in the early days. He had the vision to see that in the mid 1970’s when ‘punk’ first came on the scene that this was an alternative for people and people were looking for a change. He majorly backed the alternative music scene with bands including the Sex Pistols and this definitely did not hurt his business, in fact he had the foresight to see that people were looking for something new and exciting and against the status quo of mainstream music, this showed he was in tune with his customers. This added to his story of being different and listening to the people that bought his goods.