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The following questions were posed to us recently in an interview with our colleagues at Convergence Coaching.

Whose leadership style do I admire the most?

The common thread to the three leaders below is this: Many people love the phrase, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” These leaders would say, “If it doesn’t need fixing, break it.” This means that great organizations continuously reinvent themselves by challenging existing ways. What seems to be working today will likely fail miserably in the next 5 years or so. What may work for other firms may not work for you.

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was a strong believer in experimentation. The partner retreats I planned and facilitated for T&B under his leadership were convened in ways that had a high impact while thinking outside the box.

Outside our field, I greatly admire the legacy of these two legendary business leaders:

ROBERTO GOIZUETA –Late CEO of Coca Cola for 20 years, widely considered one the best-ever CEOs of a Fortune 500 company. He said, “Challenging the status quo when you have been successful is difficult. If you think you will be successful running your business in the next 10 years the way you did the last 10 years, you’re out of your mind. To succeed, we have to disturb the present.” He certainly did with the “New Coke.”

STEVE JOBS – He has to be on anyone’s short list for the CEO of a major company who made the greatest impact on the lives of the most people in the world. He didn’t achieve this just by being innovative. He was a fastidious believer in high quality and design, teamwork, strategic planning and the need to pursue your dreams, however outlandish they may seem to others. He put no one on a pedestal. Ever.

What is the single most important leadership attribute and why?

There is no #1. There are several, not in any order: Focus people on the most important tasks and challenges. Goal orientation- have a plan. Persistence. High quality –never compromise on this. Keep things simple. Delegate liberally but remember: you can delegate the work but never the responsibility. Give people the flexibility to do work their way as long as they get the job done and do quality work. Keep in mind that “perfection is the enemy of good enough” and good enough accomplishes the mission. Be organized; instead of trusting your memory to meet deadlines and expectations, become systems-centric, not individual person-centric. Be proactive.

What do I look for in up-and-coming leaders?

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What advice do I have for those looking to step into leadership?

Be ambitious, but master your present job before pushing for advancement. Ask for more work. Seek mentors and listen to what they have to say. Find something you are passionate about, become “famous” for being an expert in this area and exploit opportunities. Be assertive and vocal with management. NEVER let them intimidate you, but be respectful. Be proactive; become known as someone who make the partners look good and can be relied upon.

Marc Rosenberg is a nationally known consultant, author and speaker on CPA firm management, strategy and partner issues. President of his own Chicago-based consulting firm, [The Rosenberg Associates](#), he is founder of the most authoritative annual survey of mid-sized CPA firm performance statistics in the country, The Rosenberg Survey. He has consulted with hundreds of firms throughout his 20+ year consulting career. He shares his expertise regularly on The Marc Rosenberg Blog.

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