

# CAN YOU PASS THE “HARVARD” CEO TEST?



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## **Becoming an effective leader is a challenging task.**

As a first-time manager when do you let go versus step in?

As a more seasoned leader, how do you lead effectively through others?

And as a CEO how do you do it all with the weight of the whole company on your back?





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The Harvard Business Review book, "The CEO Test", details **7 questions that will help you become a more effective leader**... whether you're a CEO or a first-time manager.

Based on over 600 in-depth interviews, including **well-known CEOs like Satya Nadella of Microsoft and CEOs of small start-ups**.

**Let's dive in...**



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# Test #1

## Can You Develop a Simple Plan for Your Strategy?

Simplifying complexity is a leader's superpower.



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**Focus on outcomes, rather than priorities.** Instead of asking “What are we going to work on?” ask yourself, “What do we need to accomplish?”

**CEO = Chief Editing Officer, so edit ruthlessly.** What are we doing versus NOT doing to achieve the outcome?

**Does everyone get it?** Does everyone understand what they're doing, why it's important, and how their contribution fits into the plan?





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# **Test #2**

## **Can You Make the Culture Real - and Matter?**

**It's about walking the talk.**





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**There is no “right” company culture,** in the same way that there is no “right” culture among all the countries in the world. That said...

**The CEO and senior leaders must define, model, enforce and assess the culture.** They must role model the way and celebrate others who do the same.

**Unrepentant “culture felons” must be ushered out,** regardless of their business performance.





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# **Test #3**

## **Can You Build Teams That Are True Teams?**

They are the key to driving the strategy.





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**Create psychological safety**, so that people are comfortable being open and candid.

**Set clear agendas and rules of debate**, so that meetings and decision-making are effective.

**Put the right people in the right seats and coach them along the way**, to amplify their strengths and unlock their full potential.





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# Test #4

## Can You Lead Transformation?

The status quo is enormously powerful, and it is the enemy of change.





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**Adapt to change** capitalizing on new trends and opportunities, while discarding plans, routines, or approaches that no longer work.

**Enlist allies to build the case for change** and ensure the top leaders are committed to the plan.

**Be transparent and communicate relentlessly** during the change process.





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# Test #5

## Can You Really Listen?

Danger signals can be faint, and  
bad news travels slowly.





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**First seek to understand, then to be understood.**

**Get out there and listen to people in the trenches, rather than from the ivory tower.**

**Demonstrate willingness and desire to hear the bad news as much as the good news.**



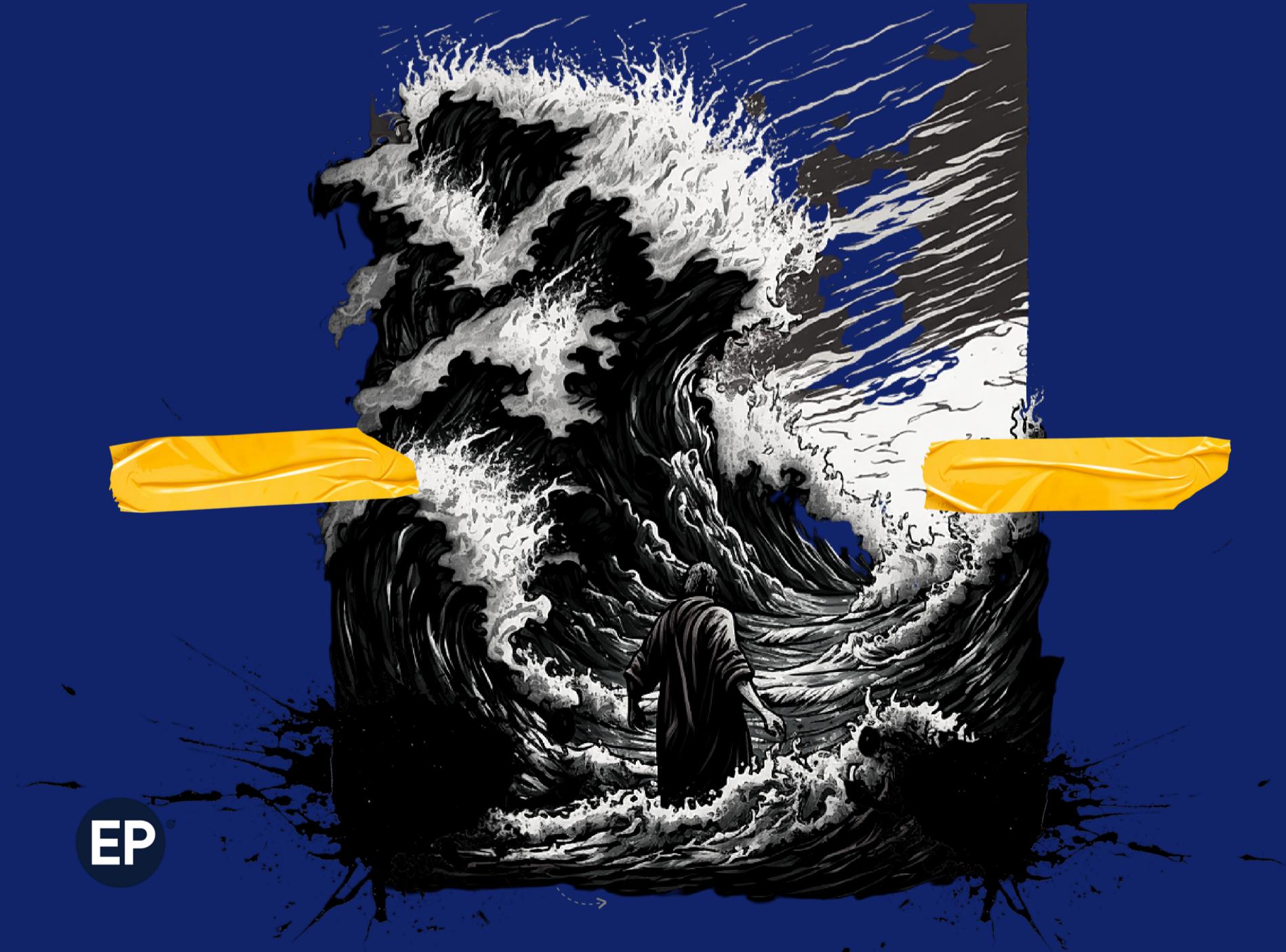


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# **Test #6**

## **Can You Handle a Crisis?**

Avoid the predictable mistakes  
that trip up so many leaders.





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**Understand the facts and act fast during a crisis**, talking to those closest to the action, not just their managers.

**Communicate widely** reaching out to key stakeholders, including shareholders, regulators, and customers.

**Stay calm and project confidence**, moving forward with confidence and humility.





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# Test #7

## Can You Master the Inner Game of Leadership?

The conflicting demands and challenges must be managed.





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**To master leadership** you must straddle several **paradoxes**.

For example, as a leader you must:

Be **Confident and Humble.**

Be **Urgent and Patient.**

Be **Compassionate and Demanding.**

Be **Optimistic and Realistic.**

Create **Freedom and Structure.**



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So in summary, to become a better leader ask yourself the following...

**Can you:**

- 1. Develop a Simple Plan for Your Strategy?**
- 2. Make the Culture Real and Matter?**
- 3. Build Teams That Are True Teams?**
- 4. Lead Transformation?**
- 5. Really Listen?**
- 6. Handle a Crisis?**
- 7. Master the Inner Game of Leadership?**



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How do you typically start your work day?

Most people start it in their inbox, or perhaps on social media.

Little do they realize they're taking a sledge hammer to their ability to focus, instantly scattering their thoughts and concentration across a myriad of things.

It's as if they've dropped themselves into a pinball machine at the start of their day, so they can be bounced from one person's agenda to the next.

Soon that morning email session turns into some phone calls, and then some meetings, followed by a few urgent requests that come knocking on the door. Suddenly we reach the end of the day, wondering where it went and feeling frustrated that we didn't get to what mattered most.

And that doesn't feel very good, does it?

So, I challenge you to break away from the pack. To do and think differently.

For just the next 7 days, start your day being creative before reactive. For just the first 60 minutes of your work day refuse to go into your inbox. In fact, I highly recommend that you don't even check your inbox while getting ready for work at home (and I bet that sounds absolutely terrifying, right?).