

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

An up-close and personal interview with England's Virgin Queen

By: Janis Nett

## Oh, Lord! The Queen is a Woman!!



Queen Elizabeth I at the royal coronation on January 15, 1559 at Westminster Abbey, London.

Can a queen really govern this country? Elizabeth Tudor, the 25 year old bastard daughter of the late King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, was inaugurated on January 15, 1559 at Westminster Abbey. English

### A note from Alan

It is indeed the greatest honor and privilege to have been chosen by our Virgin Queen to conduct this unprecedented interview. This interview documents how she struggled to become the greatest monarch to rule England. From her humble childhood to a leader bequeathed to a golden

age of English achievement and culture—Elizabeth delivers the key leadership lessons of a long, challenging, and highly successful reign. You will understand that being a leader is being a leader, whether your enterprise is a renaissance Kingdom, a small business, or a major corporation.

citizens at the time were both skeptical and optimistic of England's future—skeptical because the island country will be governed by a woman, yet optimistic as Elizabeth, a staunch Protestant, had potential to rid England from religious civil wars and return England back to Protestant roots. It was no easy feat governing what was referred to as the "arse of the world." The following interview with Queen Elizabeth will chronicle the trials and tribulations of her leadership.

Elizabeth was born on September 7, 1533 at Greenwich Palace. Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn was convicted of treason and executed in 1536, when Elizabeth was only 3 years old. Elizabeth spent most of her childhood held prisoner in Hatfield and in the Tower of London. She was continually under suspicion for plotting against her half sister, Mary I or as she is more commonly known as "Bloody Mary". Elizabeth, the only living heir, ascended the throne after her sister died of ovarian cancer on November 17, 1558.

Elizabeth inherited a nation torn internally by religious dissention, runaway inflation, continual threats from Scotland, Ireland, France and Spain and no army or navy worth to speak of. Viewed as a business, it was a failing business. Could a 25 year old queen turn England around? Did she have what it takes?

Elizabeth I, CEO is a fascinating woman, a great monarch, and will be a figure of extraordinary historical significance.

**Alan Axelrod** is an author of history, business and management. He resides in Atlanta, Georgia. He received his doctorate in English from the University of Iowa, specializing in the literature and culture of colonial America and the early republic. He has taught at Lake Forest College and Furman University, worked as a publishing executive, and has been a consultant to historical museums, cultural institutions, television's "Civil War Journal", the WB Network, and the Discovery Channel.

### Lessons from the Leader who built an Empire

Survival

Creating a Leadership Image

Combining the common touch with the air of leadership

Creating common cause without tyranny

Building a Loyal staff

Growing the enterprise and crushing the competition

Turning crisis into triumph

Holding onto the power

Doing business without excuses

A great leader assess herself

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

“MY LITTLE POWER” A leader’s first lesson: Survival

Alan Axelrod

## “Much suspected by me, nothing proved can be” -1554

A leader’s first duty is survival. For most CEO’s this means nothing more than keeping your job. For Elizabeth, survival means keeping her neck off the chopping block—a tragic fate bestowed upon her mother. Physical survival, along with maintenance of strength, good health, and a calm clear mind are important issues for leaders.

A: *What are two fundamental elements of personal survival?*

E: First of all, I believe that leaders need to **cherish their core values**. Outward, superficial things are fragile, transitory, and subject to destruction. The inner truths, such as values, intellect, loyalty, courage and self-discipline far are much more important. Secondly, **survival is never about panic**. One must always keep calm. As a testament to character, one can refuse to be intimidated and choose not to panic. I recall the time when my half sister transported me to the Tower of London, and no doubt I was terrified to be following the same path as my mother. I was a prisoner, I was powerless yet I refused to panic. When you panic you relinquish what little power you have left. If you admit defeat, you are defeated. When others try to defeat you there is always hope that they will fail. Therefore there is no advantage to yielding to panic and trumpeting your own defeat. If your power is reduced, use what little power is left to you. Keep your potential alive.

A: *How do you deal with rumors, gossip, and propaganda?*

E: My response is to **control the message, not the messenger**. It will ultimately backfire when

you complain about others and get them into trouble for speaking harmful words. In fact, more often than not, the rumors become worse and could confirm its truth! You need to respond with positive action—solicit alliances on your behalf to ask that the rumors be stopped as they are false lies. By recruiting others in your defense you are sending the message that there is solidarity and the false words being spread are trivial.

A: *How important is honesty? Were there times when you withheld information?*

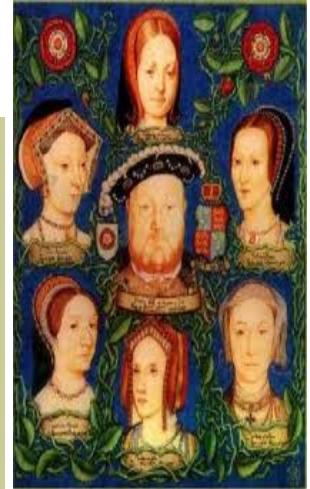
E: Yes. But there is a difference between ‘truth’ and ‘honesty’.

I put a great premium on my word and keeping my word but I am also a **master of creative deceit**. Some refer to this as **Machiavellian**. I do not deliberately lie but I do reveal only as much truth as necessary as do most people. For example in 1570 I vetoed a bill that required all citizens, Catholics included, to partake in Anglican communion once a year. I know many Catholics have maintained their Catholic faith but attend Anglican worship. This would be an example of creative deceit. But this mandatory bill would force Catholics to reveal their religious allegiance and as a result would

end up in a show down between true Catholics and Anglicans. Who would end up the winner or loser? Nobody. A little creative deceit fends off potential and unnecessary conflict. Once all secrets are out, you cannot call them back.

A: *Without the use of a crystal ball, how does a leader predict the future?*

E: You cannot predict the future but you can predict your actions. If leadership is a game, then the **leader must always play a move ahead**. A leader must play an active part in the game; not merely watch from the sidelines. By actively taking part and getting involved, a leader then has an opportunity to respond to new challenges. I know first hand how quickly the game can change through the misfortune of my mother. Today I am queen and tomorrow I could be adjudicated as a traitor, and a corpse soon after. A leader needs to know when to **weigh the risks**. When things get tough, perhaps even painful, a leader must push aside personal feelings when the greater, collective issues are at stake. My final thought is that **courage always communicates**. Both moral and physical courage must always be at hand.



Portrait of Henry VIII and his wives.



The beheading of Elizabeth’s mother, Anne Boleyn on May 19



Tower of London where the young Elizabeth spent most of her childhood as a prisoner

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

From Bastard Child to Virgin Queen: Creating a leadership image.

“Sitting regally in her gilded coach, resplendent in silk and brocade, jewels at her throat and in her hair, she appeared like a goddess such as painters are wont to depict”– Carolly Erickson

Leadership is a complex compound of action and image. Elizabeth began life as a bastard outcast barely able to hold life. Made queen, she worked quickly to transform the image of her identity from a daughter of sin to the Virgin Queen. In the process, she created one of history’s most effective images of leadership – Axelrod

A: You are described as the “virgin queen”. Can you tell us how that image came to be and why?

E: Image counts. **Successful leaders must create a self image—or others will create one for you.** A powerful image creates cohesiveness of the organization. For me, I chose not to marry for personal as well as political reasons. For this I am a virgin. My ‘virgin queen’ image is a holy calling. I am the Virgin Mary image for the Protestants of England. also, I represent a Renaissance image of a fair maiden. My image represents my mission which is to care for and protect this country. **Essentially I am already bound unto a husband which is the Kingdom of England.**

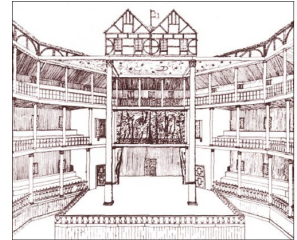
A: I cannot imagine the complexities of running a country—much less England where your mother was executed, your father abandoned you and you spent most of your childhood imprisoned. You must be physically and mentally exhausted. How do you maintain such a calm image?

E: A leader must live in the present. Let bygones be bygones. **A good leader is never crushed under the weight of a grudge nor plan too far in the future.** For example, when I took the throne some of my advisors suggested that I reincarnate the official status of my mother, Anne Boleyn. My father declared her as an adulterous traitor and had her executed. As a result, I was formally declared as a ‘bastard child’. But that is in the past. I see no advantages only disadvantages in proceeding with this. A good leader must know when to remove their personal feelings from their job. Secondly, one must have the ability to think on their feet, retain

one’s composure, and never let pressure cause you to make hasty decisions. Although we all become ill from time to time, a leader must project strength everyday. Nobody wants to see their leader as weak, ailing and vulnerable. This does not mean you should avoid asking for help or support. Knowing when you need the contribution and collaboration of others is hardly a sign of weakness. Lastly, take care of yourself. **Stay in shape.** Pay attention to your health and take part in vigorous exercise and healthy eating habits. I personally love to hunt, although this is not typical of a renaissance woman. I also enjoy dancing and the theatre. I absolutely love the work of young William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, in fact, I personally endorse them. Their use of imagery-filled language, playfulness, and imagination touches my soul! Good leaders need to be mindful of hard numbers, logic and reason but they also must take pleasure in imagination, language, and eloquent communication.



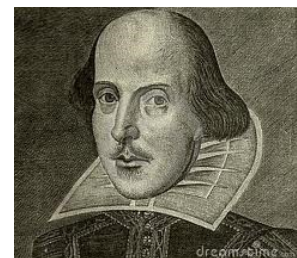
Elizabeth leading a hunt in 1560



The Globe Theatre often frequented by the Queen



The iconic Renaissance Virgin Queen



William Shakespeare– the young and talented playwright from Stratford Upon-Avon

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

Unto her people: Combining the common touch with the air of leadership.

“Be ye ensured that I will be as good unto you as ever Queen was unto her people. And persuade yourselves that for that safety and quietness of you all I will not spare if need be to spend my blood”- Elizabeth.

**Though a “Virgin Queen”, Elizabeth was neither airy nor aloof. She combined an image of august majesty with a warm, common touch that created an instant and unbreakable bond with courtier and commoner alike -Axelrod**

A: *The law and legal framework is what keeps order and civility in our nation. How involved are you with creating and upholding our nation’s laws?*

E: We certainly have many laws. What is most important, as I have learned and want to share with you, is the leader’s ability to recognize that **you’re in a people business. It’s about people, not policy.** We fail as leaders when we use policy and the law as a shield from people, questions, requests and needs.

A: *Indeed this makes sense. How does a leader communicate that this is a priority?*

E: This can be accomplished in three ways: **Bestow a smile, work the crowd, and stand up for those you lead.** Something as simple as a smile can communicate trust, confidence, warmth and approval rather than criticism and rebuke. A leader must overcome shyness as shyness is regarded as aloofness, haughtiness and at times may even appear as though the leader has disdain and disregard for the people. My sister Mary was naturally shy and avoided contact with the crowds. Mary was, of course, a disaster. A good leader must stand up for those they lead. Advocacy for those who you lead must be the foundation of your practice. A good leader is sympathetic to the feelings of others and is careful not to unduly upset or alienate their people. Travelling many miles to communicate directly with your people is a must. Every summer I would travel vast distances which were at times was extremely dangerous, as well as expensive and very

uncomfortable. We call these annual pilgrimages ‘progresses’. It is important to reaffirm my love and commitment to the English people for if I do not, I can **become easily blindsided** for it is a natural tendency for people to find fault in their leader and look forward to a future successor. There is always hope that the grass may be greener.

A: *So you made it clear that good leaders should be physically present, but this is not always attainable. How important is communication?*

E: **Effective leadership is largely about communication.** An effective leader thinks about what they say, carefully crafting each sentence so that it will be remembered and treasured. Fortunately for me, I am told that speech-writing comes naturally to me. But alongside speech writing is the **ability to speak fluent body language.** By this I mean conveying perpetual attentiveness with everyone whom I encounter; make eye contact; pay attention to people; and most importantly, talk to—not at—people.



The naturally shy Queen Mary leaving Westminster Abbey



The Virgin Queen on a Royal Progress to the South of England, 1565



The Virgin Queen mingling happily with English citizens.

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

Keeping the Faith: Creating common cause without tyranny.

“Some think [one] thing, some [an] other; whose judgement is best God knows”- Elizabeth.

**Much of a leaders task is to keep everyone on the same page—without forcing everyone to say the same words or sing the same notes. The organization must move in a single direction, but never in lockstep. Elizabeth guided her nation to uniformity of religious worship—and, thereby, uniformity of national identity—yet without coercing a single conscience or compromising the individual mind, heart, and imagination. – Axelrod**

A: *When you first took the throne, England was in a mess. Runaway inflation, religious tensions, defaced currency....There must have been many issues that needed to be dealt with immediately. How did you choose what must be on your agenda?*

E: Too often leaders are expected to do ‘something’ even if action is not necessary. When we make decisions based on minimal substance we in fact weaken the very foundation that our leadership is built upon. **Put first things first.** By taking the time to prioritize your agenda, you are essentially taking action—the right action. You only have a limited amount of resources and to be effective you must think about how these resources, whether it being people or wealth, can be built upon, maximized and multiplied. Timing is essential. Good policy implemented at the wrong time equals bad policy.

A: *What you might consider a low priority may be viewed as a crisis for another and vice versa. To what degree do you allow your decision-making to be challenged?*

E: Ultimately a leader wants to strive for conformity and unity but should never want to achieve this by force or coercion. This can be achieved by **creating a common cause.** By this I mean consensus building. Leaders must recognize areas of agreement rather than disagreement. When there is a problem, rather than yelling and exercising my authority, I identify the problem then clearly lay out the

consequences then ask for a course of action. The focus is on the problem and all action should be directed towards finding solutions. One must be realistic and avoid the danger of getting caught up in the minute details. Keep the big picture in mind is essential.

A: *With your authority you could ‘force’ people to conform. Have there been times when you exercised this authority?*

E: Policy and law leads to predictable behaviour and yes, I do have the power to pass laws that force people to behave in certain ways but I cannot not control the individual’s heart, soul, or personal will. The challenge here is to create compliance without killing conscience. The only way to truly achieve conformity and unity is by appealing to the inner person. You appeal to the inner person by speaking truth. Truth reflects one’s ultimate goals and principles. The rewards are far more enduring and substantial than the results that “force” brings. Force can only be benefit the short term; appealing to the inner person and speaking to truth brings about long term, sustainable alliances. I’ll never force anyone’s heart to conform.



The Anglican Church symbol – a sign of change, power, and great contention amongst English citizens. Religious civil war continually looms over the landscape of England



Religious battle in northern England. The Catholics were supported by the Scottish Queen Mary while the protestants were supported by England’s Queen Elizabeth

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

Good Counsel: Building a loyal staff—and a loyal opposition.

“Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisors they succeed” – Proverbs 15:22

**Mythology and Hollywood has often portrayed Elizabeth as contrary and headstrong, a difficult woman heedless of counsel. The fact is that Elizabeth devoted a great deal of time and effort to staffing her Privy Council and meeting with that body. She appreciated expertise and never hesitated to consult experts on matters of great moment. -Axelrod**

A: *When you took the throne, why did you keep some of your sister's council members? They were terrible to you and had you imprisoned for most of your childhood. Were you not the slightest bit eager to fire them? Seek revenge?*

E: Revenge only leads to more revenge. It destroys any hope of loyalty. A good leader must purge the misunderstandings, gossip, accusations but never the person. Essentially I had to learn to **forgive but not forget**. In order to clear the air and move forward, forgiveness is critical. I surprised my adversaries for they were expecting revenge and vengeance but instead all I asked of them was to apologize and admit their wrong-doing. I can honestly say that this action brought upon a bond of loyalty and gratitude in place of revenge and betrayal.

A: *How does a new monarch go about selecting a Privy Council?*

E: **I always favour evolution over revolution.** I realized early on that Mary's counsel members were very skilled and seasoned and I knew that they could add great value to my reign and to the people of England. I also had a handful of people that I personally chose to be part of the Privy Council. I knew I had to infuse new life into this existing organization but I also realize that this can be disastrous if not handled right. I had to slowly add new staff to ensure continuity and avoid stagnation and bad feelings. Fortunately for me, this delicate balance of keeping the old and bringing in the new

worked out very well for me. **When it comes to people, collect the best.**

A: *As a new monarch working with a much older-seasoned counsel, is your decision-making ever questioned, and if so, what is your reaction?*

E: Most managers only provide their subordinates with the *what* and *how* a task should be completed but rarely provides the *why*. I guess they feel this brings about uninvited debate but I think it is important to allow your subordinates the opportunity to ask *why*. It brings about a whole new level of intelligence, imagination, and initiative. If you treat your people like robots, they will work like robots. **Treat them as intelligent members of a team and they will take on ownership and pride in their work.** Also, by allowing my team to ask *why*, it forces reflection on my part. Sometimes we operate on mindless routines and bad habits. I need to have my ideas challenged from time to time.



Queen Elizabeth's coat of arms 1569



Queen Mary of Scots, otherwise referred to as Bloody Mary, succumbed to ovarian cancer on November 17, 1558



The Virgin Queen collaborating with her Privy Council in 1566

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

New Worlds, New Markets: Growing the enterprise and crushing the competition.

“Oh my America! My new-found land” – John Donne

**Elizabeth’s official encouragement and personal financial backing of such seafarers, buccaneers, explorers, and colonial entrepreneurs as Hon Hawkins, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and Sir Walter Raleigh began an economic and political expansion of England that would extend far into the 19th century to make it the greatest global empire in history. –Axelrod**

A: *Despite the dangers and warnings from your Privy Council, you personally encouraged and financially backed overseas explorations. As a result, England significantly expanded its economic and political presence in the new world. What gave you the courage to do this?*

E: I probably would have taken the advice from my Privy Council to terminate overseas expeditions if it wasn’t for seeing the potential in some of England’s greatest men—specifically I am talking about Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Humphrey Gilbert. I was criticized when I condoned Francis Drake’s piracy with Spain. Although we were at peace with Spain at the time, there were clear indications that Spain intended to make an alliance with France and invade England. We did not attack Spanish people, rather we intercepted Spanish wealth. By raiding the Spanish cargo ships, I let it be known that England is not a fragile country that will tolerate threats from Spain. Inevitably, sometimes unconventional action is called for and **a good leader must know when to bend—or break—the rules.**

A: *Francis Drake is a pirate and is known for his raids on Spanish cargo ships yet you reward Francis Drake by giving him treasures and proclaiming him as a Knight. How do you justify such actions?*

E: Drake, who was born into a poor farming family,

was an extremely hard worker who was fearless and eager for adventure. But most of all, he was extremely loyal to England. Through his actions I saw a great deal of potential and I promoted him on his ability, not on hereditary. More often than not, Knighthood is based on birth right but I have yet to see such courage and righteousness come from lines of hereditary lineage. Why do expect excellence through birthright? When you see talent you support it, encourage it, and defend it! **You promote without prejudice.** The ends justify the means.

A: *Drake is acclaimed to have “Elizabethan” ideals of bold expansion. Do you think Drake could have achieved greatness under a sovereign other than yourself?*

E: That is a hard question to answer. Drake has admirable vision and determination which is what I find most attractive. All I can say is that **a leader is never a solo act.** I empowered his achievements at its inception. I supported, defended, enabled and encouraged him. A good leader is an enabler and an even better leaders seeks to see and support the potential from others.



Defeated Spanish Armada in the English Channel 1588



Sir Francis Drake— England’s fearless sailor and renowned English pirate. Drake and his fleet are attributed to defeating the Spanish in the English Channel and conquering territory in the America’s.



The “map” of England’s future oversea voyages

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

The heart and stomach of a King: Turning crisis into the triumph

"I am your anointed Queen. I will never be by violence constrained to do anything"—Elizabeth

**Elizabeth was not a warlike leader; she greatly preferred the force of adept diplomacy to the force of arms. Threatened with invasion or other violent crisis, however, she rose to heights of eloquence, courage, and inspiration that would not be equalled in England until the World War II leadership of Winston Churchill. Elizabeth transformed threat into national strength, and crisis into collective opportunity. —Axelrod**

*A: The people of England do not peg you as a "war-like" leader, however, during your reign England has been involved in several battles. When does a leader know when war is necessary?*

E: I may not be known as a 'war-like' leader but I am known as a woman of action. I respect and reward people who are bold and have the willingness to get things done. However, a good leader must balance this action with good judgment, restraint, and selflessness. In my opinion, war is wasteful and I try to avoid it. Good leaders should look for creative ways to avoid costly conflict but at times it is necessary. I did not want to invade Scotland in 1560 but I could no longer tolerate the Spanish and French influence upon the Catholic citizens. **Duck and cover? No way.** The constant threat of a Catholic-Protestant war in Scotland had to be stopped once and for all. The signing of the Treaty of Edinburgh removed the Spanish threat and allowed the Scottish parliament to legislate Protestant state religion. I had **faith in the righteousness of this cause and hoped for the best.** Fortunately it worked out to be favorable for both English and Scottish citizens.

*A: If engaging in a war is necessary to protect national security, how do leaders fight their personal battles?*

E: Human beings are full of emotional responses and the challenge is **channeling powerful emotion into purposeful and articulate expressions.** Rage and eloquence rarely go together. At best,

when angered, most of us do manage enough self-control to sputter a few expletives. I remember the time when a young Polish ambassador came to England and I graciously allowed the young man to make his speech. Little did I know that his intention was to verbally attack my leadership! I was livid! Instead of losing my cool and lowering myself to the level of my adversary, I channeled my anger into a speech that emphasized my pity that such a young ambassador, through the coaching of an inept elected king, could be so ignorant and be so unaware of the true makings of a genuine, credible monarch. I let them know that they clearly crossed the line and I was not pleased, but not angry either. I expressed my pity for I was saddened that the people of Poland were under the tutelage of such undisciplined and ignorant rule. Conquering personal battles require the growth of 'thick-skin'—you come to a point in your career or life where you don't really care what others say about you 'personally'. Really, at the end of the day, does it really matter?



The young Polish Ambassador who publically shamed Queen Elizabeth's leadership for condoning pirate raids against Spain, sabotaging trade on the rest of the continent



English invasion on Scotland's Catholics in 1560. The battle eventually led to the Treaty of Edinburgh



Queen Elizabeth rallying troops in 1560



# ELIZABETH I, CEO

Rebellion: Holding onto power.

"I will make you shorter by the head"—Elizabeth

**Elizabeth always preferred leadership by consensus and accommodation but she did not hesitate to draw a clear and absolute line beyond which none could encroach. Those who did were dealt with swiftly and decisively. —Axelrod**

A: *As the monarch of a country gaining much economic and political influence, issues must constantly arise in which consensus is not possible. How do leaders make good decisions?*

E: Quick and hasty decision are not recommended. More often than not, **"quick-fixes" to problems are usually unfair and can quickly erode the authority of the decision maker over time.** Never put expedience above fairness. After all the trouble and strife Mary Queen of Scots has caused for the people of England and Scotland, when she was finally ousted from Scotland she came to England looking for refuge. My first thought, quick and hasty, would be to send her back! However, after taking the time to think through this, I came to realize the consequences of such a decision. By not helping Mary, I knew she would solicit help from France, quickly dismantling the purpose of the Treaty of Edinburgh. I resorted to the common law of my country and ordered Mary "lodged", in other words, held prisoner but treated fairly and safe.

A: *By 1584 it had become clear that numerous plots were being hatched against your life and Parliament assembled a Bond of Association to protect you. How did you deal with people who were plotting to take your life?*

E: I would be lying if I said I was not scared and deeply hurt, but as I mentioned earlier on in this interview, a leader must deal with the issues, and in this case the issue was treason. **I had to avoid**

**making this personal.** When Dr. William Parry, a trusted member of Parliament was proven to be an associate in a planned assassination attempt on my life in St. James's Park, I immediately knew that making an extraordinary punishment on Dr. Parry would be unjust and I would risk making a martyr out of him. Dr. Parry was dealt with according to existing English law. I dealt with the Earl of Essex slightly different. When Essex requested a private execution, I granted it. He was my friend at one time.

A: *Leaders are always being watched, followed and under the scrutiny of the public eye. How do you discriminate between private wants and needs with public wants and needs?*

E: We princes are set on stages, in the sight and view of all the world. I clearly understand that **I have no privacy** whether I like it or not. My decision to sign the death warrant for Mary Queen of Scots was such an example of private versus public wants and needs. Although she was apparently conspiring to take my life—which is personal and private, she was still a kinswoman and a monarch. I would have like to have dealt with her in 'my' way— on the other hand, this was clearly a criminal action against the state. I had no choice. Another example is the pressure for me to enter into marriage. It is clearly a private, personal decision but the allegiances I build today and the succession I leave for tomorrow is a public need. I am winning this battle! I will never marry.



The beautiful Mary Queen of Scots who was forced to flee from her country of Scotland and took refuge under Elizabeth I. Mary was eventually tried and convicted for the murder of her husband Earl Darnley, conspiring to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I and for having adulterous relationships.



Earl Darnley was discovered strangled in his home on the outskirts of Edinburgh



An English execution

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

Queen of the bottom line: Doing business without excuses.

"By nature a practical woman with a keen commercial sense considered unusual not to say unnatural in a woman"—Christopher Heibert

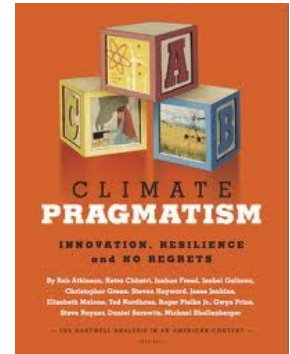
**Elizabeth, a leader of great spiritual force and personal magnetism, devoted a large portion of her genius to creating and maintaining her popular images as the Virgin Queen, an almost supernatural presence on earth. Yet she did not rule by spirit, personality, or image alone. She was eminently practical, a hard-nosed pragmatist with an eye on the bottom line and absolutely no tolerance for waste, for excuses, or for the airy and endless arguments of theoreticians. —Axelrod**

A: Robert Beale, one of your Privy Council members, commented that you were a princess with great "wisdom, learning, and experience." Other royal subjects have commented that the "Queen of England, I know not how, penetrates everything." What role does knowledge and intellect play in good leadership?

E: You can never have enough intellect and knowledge. Education is important. Great leaders must **know their business** and value information above all other commodities. Thorough information allows leaders to craft solutions to problems, and create and realize opportunities. A leader cannot be satisfied with second hand data. Whether you are a leader of a big or small enterprise, your eyes and ears must be everywhere so you can always base judgments on the nature of the sources. Leaders need a big picture vision but must always scrutinize little details. Failure to do this can be deadly. Let me give you a personal example. In 1566 the House of Commons was going to refuse to pass the subsidy bill – funds that I use to run the government unless I addressed the issue of matrimony or succession. I finally convinced parliament that my choice to marry or name a successor has nothing to do with funds necessary to govern this country. They finally agreed but on the evening before the signing of this bill, I was reading through the draft. Some lawyer snuck in a preamble that I would promise to marry if I were to collect the subsidy! Can you imagine that! My advice to future leaders is to **trust, but verify!**

A: You alluded to "big picture" vs. scrutinizing little details. How does a leader strike a balance between future goals and the present reality?

E: Great question. We should never encourage careless complacency about the future but arguing about the future puts the present in peril. Let me provide an example. I was constantly harassed and pressured to marry or name a successor. I understand that this would impact the future, true enough but if I were to name a successor today, in the present, this would create nothing more than power struggles between myself and my successor. It would create dissensions in the court and it would create great dissatisfaction among the partisans that I did not nominate. This would not benefit the present and the future remains uncertain. **Focus here and act now.** If there is a contest between present circumstances and future possibilities, the present must win. **Put the highest value on today.** The recalling of defaced currency is an example of acting here and now. My father created coins with alloy materials which became absolutely worthless to foreign countries. I had to act fast. I recalled the coins and had the mint produce coins with real silver. It was a risky thing to do and I wasn't sure it would work but I had to act in the present. Clearly, it was the right thing to do.



Queen Elizabeth's Motto



Queen Elizabeth presented with gifts in hopes of choosing a successor



Elizabeth's controversial and difficult task of recalling of debased coinage 1560. Her swift pragmatic actions saved the British from economic ruin

# ELIZABETH I, CEO

Winning: A great leader assesses herself.

“All of my possessions for a moment of time” – Elizabeth

**What really and finally counts in leadership? What is the calculus of winning? The sum total of success? Through a reign of forty-five years, Elizabeth kept her eye on the prize. – Axelrod**

A: *You have gained the reputation as placing a high value on truth, plain-dealing, and faithfulness yet it is known that you can also be magnificently devious, complex, and prevaricating. How can both of these approaches to leadership exist simultaneously?*

E: A few years back in 1513, Niccolo Machiavelli published book, *The Prince*. He justifies the compromise of morality at times in order to preserve the greater good of the state. Honesty is the best policy but it is not the only policy. The best course is the honest course but the best is not always possible. With an eye towards the common good and without destroying one’s credibility, it is sometimes necessary to behave with a certain sophistication rather than straightforwardness. But most importantly, **value your word as the “word of a prince.”**

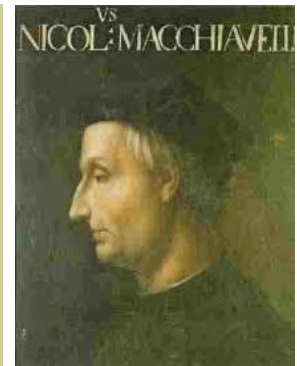
A: *It has been said that you have a very pragmatic philosophy and leadership style. Can you explain what this means and how this is attributed to your success?*

E: In being, not in seeming, we may wish the best. I am deeply concerned with facts and actual occurrences. I guess I am a realist. Yes, we all like to imagine and hope for a future that is better but it really is pointless when we focus on hypothetical situations. Wishing the best is ‘seeming’ rather than ‘being’. Attention must be directed, out of necessity, to the present. The present IS; the future only SEEMS to be. It has no existence. By speculating and

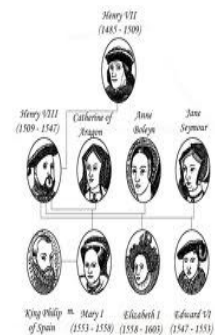
attempting to act in the future is a waste of precious effort.

A: *You have reigned for an amazing forty years—the longest an English monarch as ever reigned. What was the secret to your success? Could you share some advice for people interested in leadership?*

E: **To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it.** Anyone who aspires to leadership must realize that there are rewards, sure, but its burdens are heavy and perhaps they outweigh the rewards. It is best for a leader to understand and accept this from the beginning. Aside from that, a leader is just. A leader must call for all sides to present their views, and the matter is weighed on its merits and on its merits only. Finally, power is not an attribute of the leader, rather it is a force to be used judiciously, toward the ‘feeding’ of the people. Leading people to sustenance and prosperity, sustaining and advancing the enterprise is the sole role of a good leader. Any other motive for leadership will be destructive. Humility, humbleness, and maintaining a level head is foundational for good leaders.



Niccolo Machiavelli, an Italian public servant author of the controversial book *THE PRINCE*



Edward, the only living kin of Elizabeth I is rumored to be the successor to the throne.