

Human Events

Consider a Business Leader a Hero

By: [Mark Skousen](#) – April 25, 2013

Our society does not give nearly enough credit to business leaders who create jobs, behave ethically and provide products and services that enhance our lives.

To that end, I was given an opportunity to serve as the keynote speaker in Orlando recently at the annual conference of the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education, an accrediting organization. Afterwards, I received the group's "Business Leader of the Year" award (see photo below). In my address, I made the case that the real heroes in today's society are not presidents, popes or generals, but chief executive officers (CEOs).

As Shlomo Maital, an MIT managerial professor, has written, "The health and wealth of a large number of individual businesses — small, medium, and large — determine the economic health and wealth of a nation. It is business that creates wealth, not countries or governments. It is business that decides how well or poorly we are doing."

And it is business that generates the jobs, income and taxes that keep a country going. Lawmakers who interfere with commerce and the normal creation of jobs in an economy run the risk of doing harm rather than good. Unintended consequences from regulating or legislating to achieve a goal can occur and cause havoc in the markets or an economy. Look no further than runaway government deficits that are choking off economic growth in countries around the world as modern-day examples of the folly of ill-advised intervention.

The late, great management guru Peter Drucker contended that the large corporation — not the state, the church, an alma mater or any nonprofit organization — is the "ideal non-revolutionary social welfare institution" to provide retirement income, medical and life insurance, advanced education and training, paid vacations and other benefits.

A recent Gallup survey discovered that the number one determinant of happiness is "a good job." That finding makes sense, since many adults spend most of their waking hours working and develop their closest relationships at their jobs. And private business is the number one source for satisfying employment.

Drucker was quick to point out that government is a lousy business and is more likely to create problems than to solve them. In fact, corporate executives are often left to deal with problems created by government. ObamaCare is a good example. Congress, in its wisdom, created an additional financial and regulatory burden on business. But there is a silver lining to ObamaCare. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that major corporations are encouraging employees to eat more healthy foods and exercise, as well as penalizing workers who are overweight. Why? Companies want healthier employees, along with fewer medical bills and lower insurance premiums.

It is the invisible hand of capitalism at work. As Adam Smith wrote in “The Wealth of Nations” in 1776, “The constant effort of every man to better his condition... is frequently powerful enough to maintain the natural progress of things toward improvement in spite of the extravagance of government and the greatest errors of administration.”

We are capable of entering a new Golden Age of Capitalism. There are corporate visionaries among us — giants in the land — who are showing us the way. They include Charles Koch and his Market-Based Management, which has catapulted Koch Industries into the world’s second-largest private company... John Allison and his Objectivist/Randian Model that transformed BB&T into the fastest-growing regional bank in the country (he is now the president of the Cato Institute)... and John Mackey, co-founder and co-CEO of Whole Foods Market. Mackey developed the revolutionary “stakeholder” model in his new book “Conscious Capitalism.” I urge you to read and study that book.

This July in Las Vegas, the FreedomFest conference will offer a unique session, “The Libertarian CEO Panel,” that will compare and contrast these three incredibly successful companies by having representatives speak on Koch’s Market-Based Management, Allison’s Objectivist/Randian model and John Mackey’s Conscious Capitalism. Not to be missed!

To read my entire speech on “The Business Leader as Hero,” go to www.mskousen.com.

You Blew It! Liberty Requires Protecting Human Rights

The U.S. Constitution was meant to be universal, not just something that only America would observe. The principle of defending liberty for all people ideally should apply everywhere in the world.

Founding father Benjamin Franklin once said, “God grant, that not only the Love of Liberty, but a thorough Knowledge of the Rights of Man, may pervade all the Nations of the Earth, so that a Philosopher may set his Foot anywhere on its Surface, and say, “This is my Country.””

For that reason, I need to disagree with a couple of Republican lawmakers who are advocating taking away individual liberties by citing the case of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the accused Boston Marathon bomber. Even though all evidence so far seems to point to the accused’s guilt, he deserves to have his rights protected just as we would want for us.

The argument of the Republican lawmakers seems to be that U.S. government officials previously have investigated individuals potentially involved in terrorism and in five instances, including the latest one involving the accused’s deceased brother and alleged fellow bomber, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, concluded no threat existed before each of them carried out terrorist murders.

As much as I oppose terrorist acts, consider the numerous people who the government may persecute if our liberties are not protected. Republicans Sen. Lindsay Graham, of South Carolina, and Rep. Peter King, of New York, are advocating taking heightened precautions against terrorism but doing so by sacrificing individual liberties.

The Republicans are wrong on this issue. They narrowly define civil rights and human rights. Despite the temptation to overreach to protect the public from terrorism, individual liberties need to be defended, too.

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