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Trump does it his way

From the moment Donald J. Trump threw his hat into the ring to be nominated as the Republican candidate for the race to be President of the United States of America, he had already broken all the traditional rules of engagement. Nearly everything that one should not do, he had done and felt proud to do.

Many thought that having an outsider enter the race who was a successful businessman would provide a new and exciting proposition, however unlikely it appeared at the time that he could possibly win. The truth was that he was behaving just like the entrepreneur he has always been. He has never been a corporate businessman with a well-structured and highly-disciplined decision-making process behind him. He's a New York property tycoon who is used to calling all the shots and never deferring to or consulting with anyone at all.

The experienced media pundits, the usual political analysts and just about every one of his opponents, have been predicting his downfall for the past three years. He continues to annoy, irritate and outfox all of them—but for how long?

He's definitely authentic but is he sincere?

It would appear that the only thing he is consistent at is dividing opinions. Trump has made a mockery of both the rulebook and best practice.

Very early on, he spotted that enough of the electorate had become tired and disillusioned with the usual 'out of touch' politicians and their same old divisions and 'dusted-off' policies. He labelled them the Washington 'swamp' and soon had the effective and rabble-rousing sound bite, "drain the swamp". Again, he had caught the mood, produced the catchy phrase and capitalised upon the moment whilst galvanising his movement.

Many were appalled but enough swooned at his brilliance.



Trump has singlehandedly made a winning virtue of cruelly rubbishing all of his opponents without any fear of being deeply personal and insulting any or all of them.

There is no level that he will not gladly sink to but he knows full well what will have his sizable base in raptures and, therefore, what will give him their continued, full and undivided support.

Incredibly, he rarely delivers any inspiring visions of the future, he focuses his anger on all the things that have gone wrong in the past, with a special place for anything that had been agreed or legislated by his predecessor, former President, Barack Obama.

This is the ultra-competitive property tycoon at his best (and worst). His sole objective, which has worked for him so well in the past, is to identify a gap in the market or a weakness in a

He has become the master of doomsday scenarios. He is an expert at pointing out what has gone wrong and what will continue to go wrong if you were to support and vote for anyone but him.

Trump is not alone with this spreading of FUD or being an older man screaming isolationist and nativist policies. Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong-un, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Xi Jinping and Viktor Orbán are all cut from the same autocratic cloth.

New politics

Many things around the world are undergoing a fundamental change but it would appear none more so than politics.

There is still an old school but there is also a new school. There was a time, not that long ago, when, if you wanted to succeed in politics,

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competitor and start pushing with everything he has. He has a 'sole trader' mentality and loathes any gatherings, clubs or associations where he cannot call all the shots without having to take others with him.

Therefore, all of the bodies and partnerships that the USA once proudly sat at the front of and in many cases led, he has pulled out of after rubbishing their purpose or performance; the Paris climate accord, NAFTA, NATO, trade and tariff agreements with allies and rivals are all being torn up, as he operates best without constraints or having to consider others.

He needs to have enemies as this gives him something to attack on a regular basis.

He is rarely inspiring and hardly tries to be positive, he has built a rock-solid reputation on trading in barbs and nastiness. He peddles fear, uncertainty and doubt (FUD) better than anyone who has come before him.

He has shown many populist European leaders how to win high office by scaring the hell out of their base, with immigrants and foreigners as the softest of targets.

"Make America great again" has become the mantra of his inward- and backward-looking strategic intent.

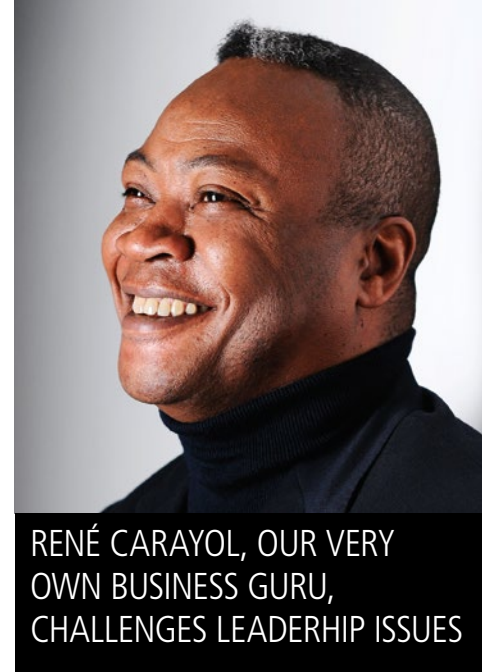
you had to do the 'hard yards' and serve your time. You would probably have studied political science at university and ended up somewhere very near the top of the class. You would then have learnt your profession, probably through an unpaid internship, leading to becoming a 'bag carrier' for a second-tier politician.

This could lead to five/six years' experience in a political office as a private secretary or an advisor and only after this arduous journey, would you be ready and able to stand at some sort of election.

Then the real power journey begins and after maybe another five to six years, you would now be in touching distance of Congress or Parliament.

However, this is where it becomes extremely competitive and where many fall by the wayside. Very few ever get the chance to even smell high office and when they do, they are well into their mid- to late-50s, if not 60s.

The political rules of engagement have been literally thrown out of the window on both sides of the Atlantic and even further afield. We are seeing new and successful candidates with either completely unorthodox backgrounds or with no political experience whatsoever.



The mercurial rise of Emmanuel Macron was both unpredicted and unprecedented, even Justin Trudeau in Canada was a bit of a surprise package, but nothing could have prepared any of the seasoned political analysts for the bombshell that's was President Donald J. Trump.

He not only came from left field and he didn't just break all the rules, but he always seemed to do precisely the opposite of what is seen as best practice. He was thin-skinned, aggressive and rude, yet this behaviour simply electrified his sizable base.

All these political newcomers have worked out that you can just about buck any trend, as long as you are absolutely clear on who your base is and how to keep them loudly fired up and always in your corner.

It needs a businessman

Trump filled his initial top team with a mixture of high-flying successful business executives and four-star military generals. This looked like an exciting and instructive mix: those with a track record of understanding the vagaries of the market and getting things done alongside those with a highly-disciplined code and natural team players.

So far, so good. However, both the business executives and the men from the militia were used to structured and well-coordinated chains of command. They didn't have a traditional Chief Executive or Commander-in-Chief at the helm, they had a tycoon and to be more explicit, a New York property entrepreneur.

He sees himself as the ultimate dealmaker, some of the titles of his many books give us a clue as to how he sees himself; *The Art of the Deal*, *How to get Rich*, *Think Like a*

Billionaire—you get the picture! He is brash, bold and never misses the opportunity to talk himself up. This is not a bad thing when trying to raise confidence and firing up your base but what's it like to work for a property entrepreneur who is obsessed with winning?

Well, many big names have been called and most have not lasted—they were either fired or they resigned. This is not normal for a

As with many entrepreneurs, he sees that even beloved traditions can anchor the organisation to its past, making it tough to respond to the pull of the future. He feels the Republican party is protecting what 'is' and that often sabotages what 'could be.'

It may sound strange to the traditionalists but he sees destruction as one of today's conditions for survival. Just as a snake sheds a skin it has

survived one of the most competitive property markets in the world.

Sitting up early in the morning, frantically typing his next tweets, he has made some stand up and take notice of what can be achieved with such a narrow focus.

What positives can we take from Trump?

- Always back yourself
- Take the big calls early
- Go towards seemingly insolvable problems
- No one is indispensable
- Always engage your people

He has also continued to ignore all alliances and collective decision-making, which has outraged long-time friends of the USA. If only he could moderate his impulses, but that has never worked for him in the past.

What might he have learnt to do differently?

- Nothing is best done alone anymore
- Strong structures have their useful place
- Team loyalty is a two-way street
- Splendid isolation has never worked
- It can't just be about you

He will probably not even contemplate changing what has worked so well for him in the past, especially as controversy seems to fuel him to try his hand and back himself even more.

The recent summit in Singapore with another high-octane gambler, Kim Jong-un, has Trump at his solo best but the stakes are incredibly high and he is forcing things through with little concern about strategy or risk management.

Trump has made the past week an extremely momentous and unforgettable one in global affairs: his brutally hostile performance at the G7 Summit in Montreal, the Singapore bromance and then to round off the week, his decision to impose US\$50 billion in tariffs on China.

He appears not to care about institutions like the G7 or perhaps igniting the long-dead nuclear arms race or even the liberal trade that has worked well for so long.

President Trump sums up his approach in a way only he could, saying, "My whole life is about winning. I don't lose often. I almost never lose." ▲

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President's cabinet but it is not unusual at all for a fiery property entrepreneur who is not used to any form of oversight or compliance.

The only real meaningful measure for him and his like is winning, and that is usually defined by the magnate in question, forever changing the rules to ensure that they are always winning—by nearly any means necessary.

This has been an electrifying shock to the system for many of the traditional media but has set his base, who admire the straight- and tough-talking, and just like on his infamous reality TV show, *The Apprentice*, he's more than happy to administer the very public firings.

Trump is a firm believer that playing too safe benefits no one. He appears to never underestimate what can be achieved when you back yourself and believe in the future.

Once he hears "it can't be done", he becomes emboldened and he chases the glory of conquering his very own Mount Everest.

Change, by its very nature, is destructive. It gets messy. It causes confusion. That bothers a lot of people. They warn against change or argue for taking it slow and easy, so nothing gets broken. But that's not Trump. He will get his way, whilst those who want to survive will have to tiptoe around, try to be neat and not hurt anybody or upset people. Eventually, such a culture gets the organisation into big trouble.

He believes that a culture that's unwilling to break things can't move fast. If it tries to salvage everything, it ends up carrying a lot of old baggage. Bureaucratic practices and all kinds of bad habits build up over time.

outgrown, the culture he presides over needs to rid itself of habits that have outlived their usefulness.

This usually demands constantly changing sets of leaders at the helm in order to drive the necessary transformation, but they are all expendable. He is the only constant, no one else needs to hang around for too long.

He despises structure and has no patience for what he deems are bureaucratic practices that get in the way. He easily breaks from tradition when it becomes an obstacle. He's so not afraid to butcher the sacred cows. Instead of blindly protecting old beliefs, he throws them against the rocks of reality to see if they bounce or shatter. He is maybe far too willing to smash some glass but he continues doing what comes naturally.

Sure, all this gets messy and it makes a lot of noise. Some people will get upset. However, his towering self-belief system informs him that the USA and, therefore, his people, must always make certain sacrifices if they want to stay strong.

He has created a culture where people are rewarded for disturbing the peace.

However, as we have witnessed recently, if powerful leaders have too much leeway, they can blur the lines between the personal and the professional and foster a poor culture that lacks trust and encourages feisty in-fighting, and which drifts dangerously into imperious behaviour.

He is only doing what has served him so well as an entrepreneur and more specifically, as a