

Marketers Make the Best Business Leaders

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In a poll of 1,000 chief executives, company directors and senior managers from around Britain — designed to elicit their opinions on the subject of leadership — marketers came out on top.

Asked which profession produces the best leaders, 38% of the senior British business professionals polled cited those people with marketing backgrounds. Sales followed, showing that commercial acumen is highly regarded in British business.

The survey, conducted by The Forum Corp. for the International Leadership Summit Leaders in London, asked: "In your opinion, which profession makes the best business leaders?" The results were as follows:

- Marketers — 38%
- Sales — 21%
- Engineers — 18%
- Human Resources — 13%
- Accountants — 10%

"The marketing function was once seen as the Cinderella of the boardroom but is now increasingly recognized as vital. Marketing demands high levels of drive, dedication, adaptability and diligence, all key ingredients in a modern business leader," said Tina Schneidermann, President of Leaders in London.

The survey also looked at the downside of leadership. One-half the business leaders said the worst thing about life at the top is dealing with office politics, and 43% of the executives said back-biting and bitchiness were the worst things about their job.

Despite jammed schedules full of meetings, networking events and working meals, 31% said loneliness was the worst thing about being a leader.

In other results, 8% of respondents said responsibility was the worst part of their job and 6% said they disliked being criticized as part of the role.

In an interesting sidebar, the survey respondents voted Sir Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Airlines, the British business leader they most admired. Next most esteemed were Sir Terry Leahy, chief executive of Tesco, and Dame Anita Roddick, the founder of the Body Shop.

Almost one-half of the executives said the ability to inspire others was the skill that differentiated great leaders from good ones, and vision and communication skills were also rated as important attributes.