

CEO to CEO Newsletter
November, 2002
Lyndon Johnson and George W. Bush
Some Thoughts on Two Presidents at War

Dear Fellow CEO's:

As it appears we're just a few weeks away from expanding the war on terrorism to Iraq, I thought I'd share some thoughts with you about my speculation as to George W. Bush's Predictive Index profile, its similarity to that of Lyndon Johnson's, and the implication of those conclusions to the war on terrorism.

While both men claim Texas as their home state, they couldn't be more different in most other things. Johnson came from humble beginnings to rise into Congress and the Senate, eventually acceding to the presidency on Kennedy's assassination. Bush came to the presidency from a business career, the Texas governorship and the name recognition provided by the Presidential father who preceded him. Johnson, with his state teachers education, looked down on Ivy Leaguers as pampered sissies. Bush was exactly the kind of person Johnson eschewed – a pampered Ivy Leaguer whose place was paved by the connections of his family. Johnson was a liberal democrat, Bush a conservative republican.

In spite of these polar dissimilarities, I believe both share a common Predictive Index profile – that of the venturer – drives that are highest A, low B, lowest C and low D. They also share the reality of having a war they didn't want thrust upon them.

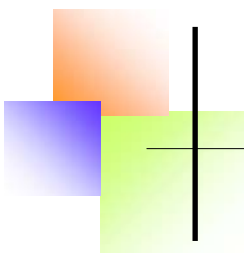
Their profiles, the circumstances of the wars they faced and their individual goals give us a lot of insight into past history and what kind of history we might expect to be made in the next few years.

First, a couple of notes on the behaviors of the profile. Venturers are goal-oriented people who can tune out everything around them in pursuit of whatever their goal is. Their focus is on winning, achieving their objective. Towards that end (and they are very results oriented) they can compromise comfortably on those things that aren't relevant to their ends, but they do not compromise on the specific end they want to achieve. Loyalty is paramount. Conversely, one who is disloyal becomes persona non grata. Once a venturer is focused on a goal that focus is laser-like and sustained. Their communication is direct, straightforward and no-nonsense.

When Johnson was thrust into the presidency, he had one goal in mind – legislation of "The Great Society". He wanted to build a legacy that would take the social changes of Roosevelt to the next level. His full intensity (and Johnson likely had a very wide-spread profile – he was an intense guy) was aimed at legislating his new era. But, Viet Nam kept creeping into the picture. He wasn't really interested in the war, but he didn't want to lose it. He just didn't have the conviction to win. (I'm not arguing Viet Nam could have been won – just that Johnson's goal wasn't winning in Viet Nam.) He wanted to win The Great Society. In retrospect, he didn't win either.

George W. Bush campaigned without a real goal beyond the presidency. "Compassionate Conservatism", from my perspective, was simply a slogan laying out a feeling for the campaign. He was a presidential candidate and later a president without an impassioned goal to get behind. He was often described as a dilettante, and I for one, think he was.

Certainly the style of Bush's white house was different than Clinton's. And it was more conservative. But, Bush didn't have a real passion. Then came 9/11.



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Where Johnson succumbed to a war that was creeping up on him, Bush had it aimed at his (our) borders. And on one morning more than a year ago he found his passion.

Yes, Bush wants a more conservative agenda legislated, but that's not where his focus was or is. 9/11 created his focus – ridding the world of terrorists. I believe, like the direction or not, he will do everything in his power to do just that. He may not be as eloquent as Winston Churchill (another likely venturer) but I believe he would agree with what Churchill said on the path to defeat Germany, “.... You ask, “What is our policy?”, I will say it is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us. To wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, “What is our aim?” I can answer with one word: victory. Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.” George W. may not have much of the world on his side, but I believe Bush, too, will not rest until the job is done. I think that is his nature, again, like it or not.

So, what do I think this portends? I think we will be at war with Iraq (as well as al Quida) before the end of winter. Saddam will test Bush once and that will be once too often. Bush will try to develop consensus abroad but if it's not there, “we'll go it alone”. We'll stay involved until the beginnings of regime change are in place (as in Afghanistan) and then we'll follow the same program with North Korea, Iran, Syria and any other regime viewed as terrorist until Bush is removed from office or terrorist nations are disarmed and / or vanquished and made free – whichever comes first.

Bush has told us what he's going to do and I think we'd better believe he's going to put all of his efforts into doing exactly what he said. Only time will tell if domestic politics, the course of the war(s), or something else will do for Bush's war on terrorism what Viet Nam did to the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson. I don't think Bush will quit until he must or until he defeats terrorism. In that way, he'll be just like Lyndon Johnson. Only time will tell if his efforts are successful and yield what is presently or historically viewed as a successful presidency.

I hope you have found this helpful and I appreciate your listening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Wilson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Wilson, President
Bob Wilson & Associates