

Gaining Wisdom in Christian Leadership Through Business Analytics

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Abstract

Christian leaders must have a firm grasp and understanding of the presented data to make the most coherent, ethical decision for the good of their company. A search of the scholarly and biblical literature provides examples and insight on how leaders can use the information they are given to make wise accountings for their stakeholders. Drawing on a strategic management perspective, business data analytics capabilities can create significant value in business processes if supported by a good level of data quality, which will lead to a better competitive advantage. At present, data analysis is the silent driver for success big and small today. Every owner knows that their work impacts their bottom line. Still, they often misunderstand what is making the most impact and why this can provide a critical advantage for one business over its competitors. The challenge comes for the business owner to instill a value system or culture of the organization that will impart traditional functional roles of leadership while incorporating the ethical and moral decisions suggested by conventional data, scholarly literature, and Scripture. A Christian leader can develop appropriate business practices that will balance the stakeholder's values and provide an organizational culture that characterizes the servant heart of everyone involved in the business.

Keywords: Christian leadership, business analytics, leadership

Christian Leadership

In today's fast-paced world, where a business owner is faced with decisions almost constantly, a Christian leader must have a firm grasp and understanding of the presented data to make the most coherent, ethical decision for the good of their company. Data can come in many forms from spreadsheets, dashboards, advice from trusted advisors, and client testimonials. For the Christian leader, we turn to Scripture as another bastion of advice and insight. The guiding force of Christian leaders is to know God and to become more like Jesus. God provided Christians with a great gift, presence of the Holy Spirit, who can take up permanent residence in the hearts of believers. (*New International Version*, 1978, Romans 8:9; Corinthians 6:19-20, 12:13). The Holy Spirit guides and helps a Christian leader with wise discernment and transforms our thinking. This transformation can be seen throughout Scripture and emphasized through humility, integrity, kindness, forgiveness, peace, and love (*New International Version*, 1978, Mathew 5:6). This is direct opposition to living only for self both in and the sense of decision making and materialism (Mabey et al. 2017). The Merida (2015) text is replete with the importance of wisdom for Christian leaders. Wise leaders are seekers of truth. The story of Solomon and his rise as a king and a leader in 1 Kings is just one example of leadership lessons that a Christian leader can use with the benefit of history, which is a dataset of activities, on how to look for God for guidance. Merida (2015) posits that if you have received Christ as a savior king, seek His gracious wisdom (p. 34). Ephesians 1:17 says, "keep asking that the God of our Lord, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit, of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better (*New International Version*, 1978, Ephesians 1:17). Using 1 Corinthians 2:6 for advice, a Christian leader is occupied by the Spirit of God with a mind to follow Christ. This guidance can be used to provide wisdom in our everyday business decisions.

Business Analytics

The Greeks of antiquity demonstrated that thought and reason are fundamental physical processes (Ahmed and Pathan, 2019). The use of analytics in business can be traced as far back as the 19th century when Fredrich Winslow Taylor instituted a time management system for his company and when Henry Ford measured the speed of assembly lines. By the 1960s, analytics received more attention as computers came online. This is the era that Ahmed and Pathan (2019) describe as the artificial intelligence revolution with Alan Turing of IBM hoped that machine learning would allow computers to demonstrate thought and reason. Later the Internet and cloud computing became ubiquitous, with every business owner having a powerful data-gathering machine in their pocket. At present, data analysis is the silent driver for success big and small today. Every owner knows that their work impacts their bottom line. Still, they often misunderstand what is making the most impact and why this can provide a critical advantage for one business over its competitors. Côte-Real et al. (2020) argues that drawing on a strategic management perspective, business data analytics capabilities can create significant value in business processes if supported by a good level of data quality, which will lead to a better competitive advantage. Bartlett (2013) took this a step further and described the use of business analytics from small and large companies as a growing awareness of information, increasingly sophisticated decision-makers, and a higher reliance on technology to make sound decisions. The Ahmed and Pathan (2013) text describes a Venn diagram that shows the complex relationships between numerous sources, including data science, supervised learning, artificial intelligence, and computer science. Sincorá's (2018) research that a business with intelligent organizational analytics and a mature business management process can improve corporate reliance. In short, with this proliferation of data at our fingertips, it should make every business owner nimbler and

have a better understanding of risk, leverage, and knowledge development. But many small business owners miss the mark. There is just too much data to analyze. Most business owners do not have graduate-level business development acumen and fail to meet the expectations, goals, and objectives that these pervasive and omnipresent data sources provide.

What is interesting is the missing human component of today's rapidly expanding and reliance on machines to make sound decisions. Leadership is more than just a set of facts and theories; it is a lived process that sterile, computer-driven data cannot compete with. A Christian leader can lead in ways that can positively impact the organization. The challenge comes for the business owner to instill a value system or culture of the organization that will impart traditional functional rules of leadership while incorporating the ethical and moral decisions suggested by conventional data, scholarly literature, and Scripture. By following appropriate business practices and being a Christian leader, who embraces servant-first mantras, the Christian leaders can run a successful organization that meets the needs of the stakeholders. As Proverbs 4:7 suggests, "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding" (*New International Version*, 1978, Proverbs 4:7). As scholars and business owners, a business analytics future is upon us. How we use this revolution will guide us toward success.

Conclusion and Practical Implications

Bound by faith, albeit a rather juvenile understanding of Scripture, this author attempts to be the best leader he can be in his small, family-operated firm. He strives to incorporate the advice he has learned from Scripture and other data sources to make sound decisions for his business, but one thought he comes back to again and again is the vital need for teamwork and unity. A quote by physicist and author John Hagelin has said that the deepest level of truth

uncovered by science and philosophy is the fundamental truth of unity. At the deepest level of our reality, you and I are one. A Christian leader can use this to assume that he is one with the Holy Spirit to make ethical decisions for his business. On a secular level, servant leadership and putting employees and other stakeholders first data can be shared to embody a vision and the potential of everyone on the team.

Whether or not a Christian leader is successful depends on myriad factors relating to data in the organization. Research by Mikalef et al. (2021) clearly shows that different inertial forces during big data analytics deployments hinder dynamic capabilities' emergence. As much as data mining, unstructured data, supervised learning is necessary to component business management, time, place, circumstance, and leadership are requisite components of a strategic management profile. There is no rulebook to follow in the uncertain and unstable environment in which small businesses operate. As Christian leaders, we need to rely on the teachings offered in Scripture and the wisdom to know the difference in our decision-making when data is presented. The Christian leader will recognize more than the data-driven bottom line. They will balance the stakeholder's values and needs for the long term and provide an organizational culture that characterizes the servant heart of everyone involved in the business.

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