

## **Leadership Lessons**

Germán Bernate

The celebrated Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia (336-323 BC) became the richest and most powerful man in the world. In addition he was living as a god: his mother, Olympia, had sex with Zeus the night before her marriage to Philip II, King of Macedonia. He conquered the Persians and learns the proskynesis. This is the rite to greet and acknowledge him as sovereign deity is to bow to the honoree and touching the ground with his chin.

Alexander had an exceptional teacher, Aristotle. For three years he illustrated in geography, political science and philosophy. He stressed the importance of leadership. But the best lesson was guide to understand that self-control is the foundation of success. His management style was the culture of arrogance and ego. He was a strong man and went into combat without any advantage, so the soldiers respected and admired.

History teaches us another management style: Hannibal, the Carthaginian (247-183 BC). Ever he entered directly into battle. He knew it and so informed his colleagues that his duty was to direct and responsibility was based on formulating and implementing strategies and tactics that would lead his troops to victory. He was a leader with a clear mission to be served. To cross the Pyrenees and then the Alps in winter addressed the troops and said: 'We came to conquer Rome, therefore, arm ourselves and ascend value'.

His adventure was huge: in winter advanced with an army of thirty-seven elephants, six thousand horses and nearly a hundred thousand men. Logistic problems were immense. The troops demanded that they were fed, dressed, will provide adequate weapons, vehicles, and, of course, receive a salary; they were mercenaries. At the Battle of Cannae Hannibal he showed his mastery in the war. The Roman army outnumbered warrior's ratio of three to one. Hannibal knew well the human nature: the initial successes, in general, the winners tend to stop thinking sensibly and then the emotion makes its appearance. The euphoria takes hold of the situation.

Hannibal placed his weakest troops on the front line and reserved the best of infantry and cavalry to the continuation of the battle. The Romans Coming through the middle, something completely predictable and inexperienced warriors annihilated. But they neglected the flanks: Hannibal sent his best warriors to these sites simultaneously executed a load in the rear. About fifty thousand Romans were killed in this battle.

Stanford University, located in California, is recognized by the contributions made by its graduates. The first outstanding student was US President Herbert Hoover (1929-1934). In recent decades it has been the inspiration for companies like Hewlett-Packard, Cisco Systems, VMware, Yahoo, Google and Sun Microsystems. Its

graduates have been awarded in twenty opportunities with the Nobel Prize. They have succeeded in areas of economics, chemistry and medicine. The question is: what is common teaching in all faculties? Simple: the history of the Greeks and Romans are studied.

The founders of Google, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, met in the doctoral program at Stanford Computer. They left the Academy and moved into a garage. They founded Google (name based on googol which means a number one followed by a hundred zeros). They entered the world of Internet search: Microsoft and its competitors were Yahoo. Competitors using large computer equipment (mainframe): these are costly. Google's approach is to use cheap and interconnect thousands of servers. In this way they have more computing power than its competitors.

**Suggestion:**

For training in Business Administration and Project Management, add the study of Greek and Roman. XXI Century leaders seek to fulfill the same goals as ancestors: wealth, success, prestige, recognition. The reasons are identical: glory, ambition and power. They have the same adversities and setbacks. Therefore it becomes important to learn from our predecessors.

## About the Author



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**Germán Bernate** is an Electronic Engineer (Universidad Distrital – 1962) and Master in Project Management (UCI University of Costa Rica 2009). He worked 31 years for IBM in Colombia in managerial and technical positions. He was work with NCR Colombia and served as Program Manager and Project Manager. Founder and CEO of Almagesto (2004), a company dedicated to consulting and training in the areas of strategic planning and project management. In 1992 he won the first prize in the fourth edition of Doctor Zumel Literary Contest in Madrid Spain. President of the Board of Teatro Colón for five years (2007-2011). Led the Project Management program at Universidad Piloto August 2008 to December 2009. Parquesoft Director during the period from August 2010 to March 2011. Professor at universities Distrital Francisco Jose de Caldas, Nacional, Javeriana, Pamplona, Tecnológica de Bolívar, Andes, Externado, America and Piloto. Co-founder Colombia Chapter PMI (Project Management Institute) and its president for three terms. Co-founder of the Colombian Association ACGePro Project Management IPMA Member Association (International Project Management Association). He has published several books, including 'El año 2000 al acecho. La crisis del Y2K afectará a su computador, aprenda a controlarla' on the issue of the change of the millennium. In February 2013, published as the book 'Gerencia de Proyectos: aplicaciones en salud'. *Computerworld* Editorial Board Member since 1996 and international correspondent for *PM World Today* eJournal and PMForum.org from 2007-2011. Contact email: [gbernate@cable.net.co](mailto:gbernate@cable.net.co)