

From Uday Kotak to Virat Kohli, leaders on lessons from our freedom struggle

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Virat Kohli (left) and Uday Kotak (right)

What does it take to be a leader? Ahead of Republic Day, top bosses reveal the key strategies they picked up from inspiring faces from our freedom struggle:

Uday Kotak managing director, Kotak Mahindra Bank

Commitment and sustained action. Mahatma Gandhi didn't give up, just stuck to the cause. Perseverance, commitment and sustained action are the management strategies I would take away from the freedom struggle.

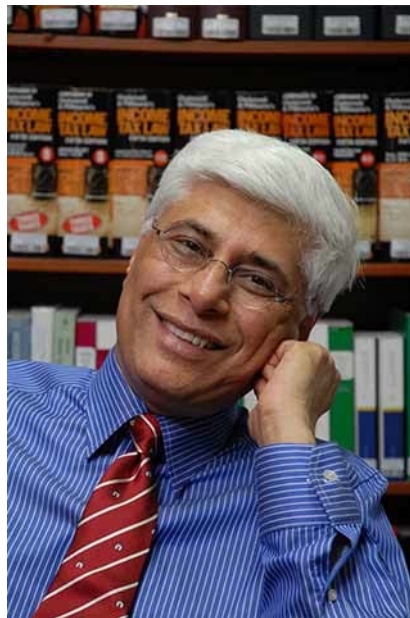
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Virat Kohli Indian cricket captain

Obviously, you get inspired. I believe that every leader in history has had their own way of doing things. Everyone has made a difference and that's why we stand here today as a nation. It is important to understand that you can have your own way of thinking and still make a difference to society and the world. You don't necessarily need to be in someone's mould to be a leader. Anyone who does the right thing inspires me, even if it is against the world. That takes a lot of courage and mental strength.

Nishith Desai founder, Nishith Desai Associates



Mahatma Gandhi was the ultimate innovator, visionary and thought leader. One contemporary management practice that he demonstrated was the power of innovation and contrarian thinking. That's the way to differentiate and create value for all our stakeholders. He conceptualised and shaped original ideas that were easy-to-comprehend, far-reaching and differentiated. For instance, during the civil disobedience movement, Gandhi used powerful symbolism to communicate a vision and roadmap.

[Saurabh Dhoot](#) executive chairman, Videocon D2H



Diplomacy is an important lesson to learn from Sardar Vallabhai Patel. He kept the dialogue on and never closed the doors of discussion. A leader can use shrewdness without ego to move towards one's goal even when things head on a different direction. I have also learnt from Gandhiji's salt satyagraha that natural resources are national assets. Social responsibility and long-term interest are the core of legitimacy and the reason for the existence of any business and organisation.

Dhanpal Jhaveri managing partner, Everstone Capital

Mahatma Gandhi was the architect of the freedom struggle, but he chose not to take any formal position in the new Indian government. He was humble enough to recognise that he was not best suited to run the government. Instead, he chose what he thought was the best team. In this age of social media, instant gratification and self congratulation, true leadership is not about position or power. It's about identifying the right cause, being passionate, persistent and, finally, being humble when you've achieved it.

Falguni Nayar founder, Nykaa.com



Our independence struggle showed us that no task is too big to achieve -if each individual contributes their bit, anything is possible. This could not be more evident than in our fight for independence where movements like NonCooperation and Quit India depended on the power of the people, all working towards the same goal to make a change.