

A Study into the impact Dame Carolyn McCall's managerial skills had within EasyJet

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The purpose of this essay is to analyse and discuss the different managerial skills Carolyn McCall utilized during her career as CEO of EasyJet. Using Mintzberg's classification of the ten essential management skills, this essay will attempt to breakdown the skills individually. Highlighting how McCall showcased each competency, this essay will demonstrate how utilising such skills directly impacted EasyJet.

Mintzberg (2018) believes that as a Manager, one will have social, legal and ceremonial responsibilities; As a person of authority, and a figurehead within a company, a manager is expected to be an inspiration to their respective employees (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's management roles). According to Mintzberg's ten essential managerial roles (2018), Carolyn McCall is a prime example of The Figurehead. McCall was one of only seven female FTSE 100 CEO's in 2010 (Management Today, 2017). McCall's first year as CEO was hugely successful. By the end of the last quarter, McCall had delivered a staggering 6% revenue

increase per seat, and 8% increase in flyers overall. This totaled to a profit increase of 11.5%, which equates to £2.97 billion! (Management Today, 2017). McCall was instantly catapulted to Figurehead and role model status following her successful first year. By 2016, McCall had been named one of Britain's 100 most powerful women by Radio Four. She was also given the honorary title "Dame" in 2016 for her services to the aviation industry (Management Today, 2017).

Bristoll (2015) believes that becoming a Figurehead is an important factor to becoming successful. McCall ensured she utilized her success and took advantage of her platform when she gave a talk about the development of EasyJet at the "Youtube Annual Conference, 2014". Another prime example of McCall assuming a Figurehead role was in 2010. Following a volcano erupted in Iceland, McCall called her planes to action and sent aviation support to help holidaymakers and locals flee the area and get to safety (ECHO 2010).

Arguably, one cannot be a successful Figurehead without being visible. A great way to achieve visibility and to inspire motivation within their employees is to become a Spokesperson for your company. A Spokesperson is responsible for transmitting information about an organization and its goals to the people outside it. Managers are usually the best people to represent and speak for their organization. (Mindtool 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles). Although these roles can differ, with some Figureheads preferring to be somewhat out of the spotlight, McCall is somewhat uniquely qualified for the interlinking role. Prior to her appointment in EasyJet, McCall was Chief Executive of the Guardian Media Group (This is Money, 2017). A Great example to showcase McCall's capacity to assume both the Figurehead and Spokesperson role would be the 'World Travel Market interview' (2012) where she discussed the changes that were happening within the company.

Another of Mintzberg's managerial roles is Monitoring. Within this role, it is the responsibilities of the Monitor to regularly seek out information related to their organisation and industry, focusing on relevant changes in the environment. A Monitor can also observe the team in terms of their productivity and their well-being (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles). McCall has given her own example of where she as monitored variables that have the power to affect EasyJet during her interview with 'World Travel market' (2012). Within the interview, McCall stated she would be watching EasyJet's competitors in London Gatwick to ensure that EasyJet still dominates.

McCall humanised herself in an interview with Dina Medland (2017). During the interview, McCall reminisces about a couple that personally thanked her for the impact she had on the company. They thanked her for changing the company and told her that they "loved it now". Here, McCall also showcased how important customer feedback is to her, and how she monitors feedback to ensure customer satisfaction

Another example would be when Carolyn said 'it's that couple who come up and say: 'thank you for changing easyJet - we love it now' in the interview with Dina Medland. This shows that Carolyn cares about her customers opinions and monitors them to ensure they are happy with their service.

Again by going onto the planes and interactive with the customers give a more personal approach where Carolyn can monitor the overall experience of being on an easyJet flight (Case Study)

Communication with both internal and external contacts is a fundamental skill expected of any manager, so it comes as no surprise that Mintzberg's next managerial skill would be "Liaison"

(Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's management roles). McCall showcased her liaison and negotiation skills when she dealt with terrorists threats back in 2017 (Independent). Whilst handling such threats, McCall would've have had to have contacted all necessary emergency and protective services in order to form an action plan to prevent an attack. Such action would also include hiring the security needed, and liaising with all teams involved to catch them up to speed on all revised security and protection protocols. Additionally, McCall is also responsible for liaising with the UK government and Aviation governing bodies with the help of her legal team to ensure safe practises. McCall's ability to liaise and negotiate would have also been paramount in securing new business deals such as partnerships with TUI.

As a CEO, with the help of a carefully handpicked team, there's a huge responsibility for resource allocation. According to Mintzberg (2018), a successful manager is able to determine where organisational resources would be better utilized (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles).

An example of how CEO Carolyn McCall would demonstrate a skill set in resource allocation, would be when the volcano erupted in Iceland 2010. McCall disregarded the cost it would have on the company and she ordered planes to evacuate passengers (World Travel Market, 2012). This, in particular, was a smart business decisions when one takes into consideration the positive international press coverage the company was exposed to following the incident.

As a manager within a company, the role demands creativity and the ability to control change within the organisation. In order to do so, a manager would need to demonstrate considerable skills in problem solving, the ability to construct new procedures and to implement them within the company. These abilities, along with determination, are also skills needed to become a

successful Entrepreneur. (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles).

McCall uses her considerable Entrepreneur skills when she decided to get in front of the growing environment movement. In an attempt to decrease EasyJet's carbon footprint, McCall wanted to be the first airline to develop and utilize aircrafts that run on electric. By building the first plane to run on electric, EasyJet would be the first company to lower their carbon footprint as well as noise pollution. McCall said in an interview 'It is a matter of when, not if, a short haul electric plane will run' (Mirror, 2017). Not only has McCall brought faith and trust back to the customers of EasyJet, the profits have reached record levels since she assumed the role of CEO (Management Today, 2017).

Besides the aforementioned ways in which McCall adheres to Mintzberg's management roles, McCall also exhibits the qualities of a Disturbance Handler. To clarify, when an organization or team reaches an unexpected roadblock, it is the manager who must take charge. A manager must also assume control with mediating disputes within the team. (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles). The principle way in which McCall has demonstrated this skill during her time at EasyJet was when she changed staff contracts and job roles to ensure equal jobs were available for both men and women. It was McCall's mission within EasyJet to ensure the women in the working environment felt as equally valuable as the men. In an interview, McCall stated she was proud to announce they now had "a very [gender] balanced team" (CMI 2017) in the middle management.

McCall also demonstrated strong disturbance handler skills during the terrorist threats. In order to alleviate customer fears, McCall ordered a tightening of airport security for all EasyJet flights (Independent 2015). When it comes to her private life, Carolyn McCall has done her utmost to keep it separate from her business. Whilst grieving for her father, McCall kept up a strong appearance in work, and many staff was not aware of what was going on. The ability to compartmentalise is a great skill to have within a disturbance handler role.

As a manager, a CEO especially, being a strong negotiator is vital to the role – One may be needed to take part in, and direct, important negotiations within their team, department, or organization. (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles)

With the airlines shares nearly tripling during McCalls' reign as CEO, the cost of each share would have had to be negotiated. Especially considering McCall owned over 328,000 shares herself. McCall would have had to negotiate her own salary and the contract she had to sign to become the CEO of EasyJet. When buying more planes for EasyJet, there would have been more negotiations on the cost of each plane that could change depending on size. Further negotiations would have then taken place once the fuel cost had increased to ensure EasyJet received the best price available.

McCalls ability to remain successful also hinders on her ability to be a Disseminator – This is where managers communicate potentially useful information to their team. (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles). By having a daily operations meeting, McCall can send out any important information to the correct people all at one time, this shows the role of disseminator.

Finally, the most important ability of Mintzberg's managerial skill set is the ability to become a Leader. This is where a manager provides leadership for their team, their department or perhaps their entire organization. Being a Leader also encompasses performance management and the distributions of responsibilities throughout the team (Mindtools 2018, an explanation of Mintzberg's ten management roles).

McCall demonstrates leadership in many ways. For instance, McCall could often be seen helping the crew to clean aircrafts after all passengers had vacated. This showcases that although she is a leader, she is willing to roll up her sleeves and perform the less glamorous jobs in order to help her team. Actions such as these aid leaders such as McCall to better her understand her employees, and also what is needed from her as a leader. McCall was voted 'most admired leader' in Britain 2015 (Telegraph 2015). This suggests that her leadership skills are carefully crafted to inspire loyalty. Also shows that her colleagues follow with her leadership skills. Another great example of McCall's leadership skills and style would be when McCall handed out her email to staff and allowing them to contact her directly with any problems (CMI 2017).

In conclusion, a strong case can be made to argue Dame Carolyn McCall's positive powerful impact on the EasyJet company. Through the aforementioned examples, McCall clearly demonstrates all ten Mintzberg managerial skills throughout her reign as the CEO of EasyJet. Although there are few examples given of each role it is clear to see that Carolyn McCall has been a successful manager within each role. Despite having limited information involving McCall's roles within EasyJet as many operations have to be kept to privileged, there is still enough evidence to support she demonstrated Mintzberg's traits and characteristics.

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