

# SIX OF THE BEST

There are many qualities that combine to make a good leader but the whole is always greater than the sum of the parts. Here are several corporate chiefs who rate highly.

Report: Leo D'Angelo Fisher

● There's no shortage of leadership consultants, coaches and trainers with a view of the attributes required to be a great chief executive in a rapidly changing competitive environment. But who, in the opinion of the leadership gurus, are the chief executives that best illustrate these qualities?

BRW asked six leading management thinkers to name names, and these are the business leaders they chose.



## Paul Borrud, former chief executive, Facebook Australia

Paul Borrud started the Australian and New Zealand operations of social networking site Facebook in March 2009; previously it was managed out of the United States.

Borrud resigned earlier this year but not before doubling the number of users to 10 million and attracting new advertisers. By the end of 2013, it is estimated that the local business will have online advertising revenue of \$100 million.

Sydney executive coach Chip McFarlane says Borrud inspired a young team to create a strong regional presence for Facebook.

"When working in an industry that is filled with Gen Y employees, the challenge is to be accessible while still maintaining a focus on task accomplishment," McFarlane says. "At the Facebook offices, Paul's desk was in an open-plan environment that gave visibility and access."



## Alan Joyce, chief executive, Qantas

The controversial Qantas chief, Alan Joyce, has resurrected his stalled Asian growth strategy with the creation of Jetstar Hong Kong, a joint venture

with China Eastern airline. But it is Joyce's decision last October to ground the Qantas fleet to break a crippling industrial dispute that appeals to the head of Sydney-based leadership consultancy LIW, Pia Lee.

"The decision put Qantas's reputation on the line but demonstrated a cool head under pressure," Lee says. "If his decision had failed, it was Joyce's head on the block."

Importantly, she adds, Joyce ensured that his bold move was seen in the strategic context of avoiding long-term damage to Qantas at a precarious time for international aviation.

"Once the consultation is over, the CEO must get behind a decision and communicate it in a way that leaves no one in doubt of the company's direction," she says.



## Simon McKeon, Melbourne executive chairman, Macquarie Group

As well as his part-time role at Macquarie, Simon McKeon is the chairman of the CSIRO but he is best known as a social entrepreneur with diverse interests, including the chairmanship of the Business for Millennium Development, which encourages business to engage with the developing world.

Executive coach and doctoral researcher on organisational leadership Earl de Blonville describes McKeon as "an exemplar of the future of leadership". De Blonville praises McKeon's "capacity for deep self-reflection" and a leadership style "calibrated around internal human qualities".

"In the highly complex and uncertain times we face, leaders who have not first developed their inner qualities cannot rely on mere 'styles' and rote affectations to lead," de Blonville says.



## John Murray, chief executive, Ridley Corporation

John Murray is the chief executive of listed agribusiness company Ridley Corporation.

Melbourne-based leadership coach and author Ricky Nowak, who is the author of *How to Make Good People Great Leaders*, admires Murray for building a corporate culture in which "people are empowered to lead, with values that are a blueprint for how their company operates".

"He provides a flexible and non-prescriptive approach to developing employees to their full potential through career opportunities, learning and coaching," Nowak says.



## Tim Orton, founder and managing director, Nous Group

Former McKinsey & Company consultant Tim Orton started management consulting firm Nous Group in 1999 with just two employees.

Today, Nous employs 140 people nationally.

Melbourne leadership presenter and trainer Rachael Robertson admires Orton for his "boldness and authenticity" which "permeates everything Nous does – the staff they recruit, the projects they work on and the clients they work with".

"Everything from the flat no-hierarchy organisational structure, the transparency around revenue and costs, and the bonuses that are distributed equally, is designed to foster collaboration and make staff feel engaged and committed," Robertson says.



## Giam Swiegers, chief executive, Deloitte Australia

The chief executive of training company Leadership Management Australasia, Andrew Henderson, says chief executives who communicate with staff with clarity, confidence and conviction about an organisation's strategy, vision and market position are more likely to build a stable and productive workforce.

Henderson says the chief executive of Deloitte Australia, Giam Swiegers, understands the importance of confidence in an organisation.

"By talking straight, being highly transparent and open to the ideas of others, Giam enjoys the confidence of the team and is able to build on that confidence to achieve the organisation's objectives with and through others." **BRW**

*In keeping with our theme on leadership this week, BRW also asked equity fund managers to name the chief executives they think have performed the best. Turn to page 46 to see if there are any names in common.*