

The Science of Leadership

From North America, Germany, France, and various parts of Asia, Jacqueline Applegate has learned leadership through the field of science and with a global pharmaceutical and chemical giant.

Images courtesy of Bayer

Jacqueline Applegate began her career as a scientist, focusing on agricultural and pharmaceutical chemistry, and has worked with Bayer for 21 years. Having moved from her adolescent dream of being the next Jacques Cousteau to becoming Bayer's senior representative for all its businesses in Australia and New Zealand, Jacqueline sat down with *The CEO Magazine* and spoke about reconciling her scientific background with the lessons in leadership and about people that she has gained throughout her career.

The CEO Magazine: What were your initial understandings when it came to the nature of Bayer as an innovation company?

Jacqueline: In the first five years I was there, I quickly realised that we were a business, so it wasn't just about the science. It is also about business and bringing to the market unique, innovative products that a customer wants to buy. During my first five years with

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Bayer, I actually went back and got an MBA, which was sponsored by the company through the Executive Fellows Program.

Why was agriculture the field you chose?

I fundamentally believe that if you're a general manager, you develop a general skill set, and it's a skill set that allows you—if you're good at what you do—to go between businesses. I've stayed in agriculture because I firmly believe in feeding the world. I do what I do because I have a passion about science overall. I feel very blessed to work with a company like Bayer because I can bring my skill set and knowledge in the agriculture industry; but I also feel very confident that I can take that skill set and step into the healthcare industry, or into science administration. And I think that's actually the best-kept secret about Bayer: It's a place where we live one passion and that is about science. Science has a positive effect on the world and improves

people's lives, and the company will offer you many opportunities to contribute.

Do you believe your background in organic science complements your leadership style?

I think it's quite complementary. If you think about leadership and certain skill sets, one of the things that you'll see in executives is that they're passionate and they've got drive and vision. Within those fundamental skills, you're going to see different types of leaders: extroverted leaders, introverted leaders.

What I think really makes a difference is the type of leader who is able to connect to people. From my perspective, if you really want to excel and take your organisation on a journey and take them with you, you need to bring the science part and the people part together well. I don't think one element is mutually exclusive of the other. I would say that if you can do both well, then you're going to be better off, your people >



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are going to be better off, and, in the end, your organisation is going to be better off.

When I go out and talk to people, with my background, I can talk to anyone about anything and relate to what they do every day, and be able to identify with what they do and what value they bring to the company. In the end, people want to feel valued; they want to see how they bring a personal, positive contribution to the overall success of the company. My technical background and passion for people allow me to really touch people and connect with them. In the end, people want to be connected.

The scientific method is to look at different hypotheses and, from a basic amount of information, make a decision to move forward. As a leader, science helps me in facilitating my decision-making processes working with my people. At the same time, you have to empower and trust that your people are doing a high-quality job.

I think it's a balance of bringing science and business together. You know when people want to solve an issue. Sometimes you're so close to the problem that it's good to have someone look at it from the outside and ask the question in a different way. By asking the questions, communicating, and collaborating with people, we often come to a better solution than we started with.

How have you collaborated with external partners to drive this personalised leadership approach?

We've actually used Bendelta to kick off our overall champions network, which supports our strategic goals as a company. It's important to create communities from the bottom up and critical to develop a coaching and facilitating network within the communities. Natalie Archer [Bendelta founding director] also worked with the organisation in the past. Our current approach of communities is about breaking down the barriers



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and is a self-nominated process where people work on topics they are interested in. Bendelta has been working with us to train 85-plus people. They've been with us on the journey and they're a very good organisation.

What are the key principles that drive your leadership philosophy?

I think inspirational leadership is an important element. I can't motivate people; motivation comes from within. But you can give people the vision and show them the direction and get them on your bus. There are also people on your journey whom you might ask to get off your bus because they're energy vampires. I think there are some CEOs who are quite successful who don't have that type of inspiring, passionate vibrancy. But I'm known to be high energy and to be passionate, I genuinely care about people, I take time to talk to people, and I think I show that I truly care. That's actually been a key success for me throughout my career, but it's

more about my personal conviction of loving people.

What is your vision for Bayer's future?

It's a highly competitive employer market here in Australia, but we want the best and the brightest. We want to be recognised as having a culture that is unique and favourable. We want to be an employer of choice. We also want to be identified as an innovation leader. In fact, we were recently placed in the top 50 in the Inventium BRW Most Innovative Companies for 2013.

At the same time, we want to become a one-billion-dollar company. Today, we're ranked anywhere between 13 and 16—depending on currency exchange—in the overall Bayer world. In a mature market, we continue to grow, which is important. Reaching one billion Australian dollars will take us further up that ladder and ensure we have a seat at the table for attracting resources and future investment. •

Where do you rate your organisation's strategic leadership?

Held by a few
Fragmented



Organisation-wide
Well-coordinated



Incremental
Slow to respond
Hesitant to reallocate resources
Fails to resonate

Visionary
Anticipates and moves first
Creates total alignment
Inspires hearts and minds

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