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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 14.1** Before reading this chapter, which statement did you feel was more accurate: “Leaders are born” or “Leaders are made”? How do you feel now, and why do you feel that way?
- 14.2** The time-sensitive model of leadership argues that leaders aren’t just concerned about the accuracy of their decisions when deciding among autocratic, consultative, facilitative, and delegative styles; they’re also concerned about the efficient use of time. What other considerations could influence a leader’s use of the four decision-making styles?
- 14.3** The time-sensitive and life cycle models of leadership both potentially suggest that leaders should use different styles and behaviors for different followers. Can you think of any negative consequences of that advice? How could those negative consequences be managed?
- 14.4** Consider the four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Which of those dimensions would you respond to most favorably? Why?
- 14.5** Can you think of any potential “dark sides” to transformational leadership? What would they be?

CASE: GENERAL MOTORS

When she gets out of bed, what does Mary Barra (CEO of GM) think about? “I spend a lot of early mornings thinking about executing our plan quickly. The big thing I worry about is speed,” says Barra. CFO Chuck Stevens agrees, highlighting a statement from the faulty ignition switch internal investigation about the culture at GM, “No sense of urgency. No accountability or responsibility. A siloed mentality.” Barra has reacted quickly and with force to make culture change a reality by implementing a number of initiatives including “GM 2020,” which is a program designed to create cross-functional labs throughout the company. Barra has also pushed hard to create a new culture of speed by creating a year-long transformational leadership course for upper-level executives that Barra personally leads. It’s not focused on company strategy, but rather the interpersonal skills she believes are necessary to create change. HR chief John Quatrone says, “Mary believes that if we change the behaviors [of top managers], people who work for us will see that and emulate it.”

Barra’s major vision for GM is to lead in safe autonomous driving. This puts them directly up against the fast-moving cultures of Google, Uber, and Tesla. Barra believes GM’s recent acquisition of Cruise Automation (\$581 million) puts them square in the driver’s seat. After a successful, high-profile test of an autonomous Chevy Bolt (with Barra riding in the back seat), Barra told a large group of Cruise employees, “If somebody [at GM] says you can’t have something, or you can’t do something, or it’s going to take this much time, and it doesn’t make sense to you, challenge them. I want you to take the energy and speed and how you look at doing things and drive it into the core of GM.”

GM believes that they have the advantage. GM product chief Mark Reuss says, "The piece that is not well understood outside of the automotive industry is how hard it is to take technology and integrate it into a car. It seems like you should be able to layer it in and have it work and that would be great. *Right*. The effort to integrate that into the car is equal to or more than the technology itself. A car has to work right every time, all the time." So far, the technology companies have spent billions of dollars in development and have little to show for it. Still, Barra is not willing to bask in success for long. Onstage at GM's headquarters she told her group, "Don't confuse progress with winning. Are you doing what you can? Or are you doing what it takes to *win*?"

- 14.1 Do you think GM can outduel the technology companies for safe autonomous driving vehicles?
- 14.2 Would you consider Mary Barra to be the prototypical transformational leader? In what ways does she fit or not fit that model?
- 14.3 Given GM's history, why does Barra put a premium on her executives' leadership behaviors?

Source: M. DeBord. "Mary Barra Is About to Become the Most Influential CEO in GM History," *BusinessInsider.com*, February 17, 2017: <http://www.businessinsider.com/mary-barra-most-influential-ceo-in-gm-history-2017-2>; C. Fussman. "What I've Learned: Mary Barra," *Esquire.com*, April 26, 2016: <http://www.esquire.com/lifestyle/cars/interviews/a44325/what-ive-learned-mary-barra/>; P. Ingrassia. "Hail Mary," *Fortune*, September 15, 2016, pp. 84-89; B. Luscombe. "13 Questions with Mary Barra," *Time*, June 2, 2016: <http://time.com/4354740/mary-barra/>; and R. Tetzeli. "The Accelerators," *Fast Company*, November 2016, pp. 68-74, 100.

EXERCISE: TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

The purpose of this exercise is to explore the commonalities in effective leadership across different types of leaders. This exercise uses groups, so your instructor will either assign you to a group or ask you to create your own group. The exercise has the following steps:

- 14.1 Imagine that a space alien descended down to Earth and actually uttered the famous line, "Take me to your leader!" Having read a bit about leadership, your group knows that leaders come in a number of shapes and sizes. Instead of showing the alien just one leader, your group decides it might be beneficial to show the alien a whole variety of leaders. Each member should choose one type of leader from the table to focus on (each member must choose a different type). Try to choose examples that are personally interesting but that also maximize the diversity within the group.

Orchestra Conductor	Fashion Designer	Drummer in Rock Band
Coach	Personal Tax Accountant	Point Guard in Basketball
Film Director	Nightclub DJ	Bartender
College Professor	Fitness Trainer	Sheriff
Talk-Show Host	Prison Guard	Millionaire Philanthropist
Stockbroker	Real Estate Broker	Agent
Psychotherapist	MBA Program Director	Auditor
Campaign Manager	Construction Project Supervisor	CEO
Diplomat	Sports Color Commentator	Vice President of Marketing