

THE SHEIKH CEO

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

From Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum



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The Sheikh CEO

Book Highlights

The Rise of Dubai Inc

Dubai increased its GDP from \$11B in 1995 to \$101B in 2015, and per capita income rose from \$16K to \$42.5K, while oil's contribution fell from 18% to 1.2%.

Dubai's economy is now services-driven: trade, logistics, real estate, and tourism.

Sheikh Mohammed founded the Dubai School of Government for continued innovation.

Historical context: Dubai lacked oil wealth like Saudi or Kuwait and had to diversify aggressively.

The 3 Ts of Dubai: Transport, Trade, and Tourism.

Dubai turned its selective disadvantage (low oil) into an innovation driver.

The “Maktoum Tradition” is built on:

- Belief in free enterprise,
- Fast decision-making,
- Building an enabling environment for private business

Core governance principles include:

- Union is the foundation
- No one is above the law
- Dubai as business capital
- Global competition Inclusivity and tolerance
- Prioritizing future generations

Lead With Courage And Vision

“Everybody starts small” – Growth depends on vision and bravery.

Set high goals; never settle for less than the best.

Don't fix broken systems—build better ones.

Business attraction tip: Ask what they want, then deliver.

Leadership mindset: **“Just do it, now”**.

Sheikh meditates before big decisions.

Risk is inevitable; manage it, but move forward.

Speed matters more than perfection.

Vision outweighs temporary failure.

Action Trumps Everything

Discipline = understanding time value.

Be early, be ready.

Know when to pivot or quit.

Don't overthink or delay—start fast, refine as you go.

Pay attention to the smallest details; they build the biggest wins.

Always move—whether lion or gazelle, you run to survive.

Make goals personal and delegate ownership.

Learn to fail fast and refresh your thinking

Own your delivery—make it personal

Prioritize ruthlessly, focus energy on one big task

Never Believe That Your Work Is Complete

Innovate or perish.

Stay bold and curious.

Talk to new people.

Think differently, Leaders must adapt fast and frequently.

Make lifelong learning a habit, Agility beats strength in the long term.

Treat learning like going to the gym

Embrace lifelong learning as a daily ritual

“Never say never”

The most agile survive—not the strongest

Allocate time for **non-traditional ideas**

Surround Yourself With Strong Leaders

“Three horses in the race”: encourage competition internally

Helps with experimentation and diverse problem-solving

Promote based on merit, diversity, gender balance

Diversity = innovation

“Surpass yourself time and again”—not about defeating others

Win Hearts and Minds

Bad timing can kill great ideas

A leader knows when to act

Keep your mind clear—make your own coffee.

Tell stories that start with “why” and end with meaning.

Work for something bigger than yourself—impact is the real reward.

Disclaimer

This is just a summary. This summary is as per my interpretation and Learning, Please excuse any errors

For a better understanding, reading the book is highly recommended

Please excuse any errors

Thank You For Reading

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