

## Reading Leadership qualities

- A** Douglas Ivester is Chief Executive Officer of Coca-Cola. Before you read the article about him, discuss what qualities you expect him to have.
- B** Now read the article and complete the fact sheet on the opposite page.



### Focus on Douglas Ivester, CEO of Coca-Cola

Ivester, a factory foreman's son and former accountant, stepped in smoothly to run Coca-Cola as CEO following the death of champion wealth creator Roberto Goizueta.

- 5 Early in his job as Coke's chief, Goizueta had recognised Ivester's drive, commenting that he was the hardest-working man he had ever met. Together the two changed the company's operations and capital structure to maximize  
10 shareholder value.

Both of Ivester's parents were factory workers from a tiny mill town in Georgia. His parents were children of the depression, he recalls, 'strong savers, very strong religious  
15 values,' and had very high expectations for their only son. If he got an A, his father would say, 'They give A pluses, don't they?'

- Doug Ivester is the guy who for nearly two years worked constantly to provide essential  
20 support to Roberto Goizueta as he not only turned Coca-Cola around but made it into a powerhouse. If you want to know just how driven Ivester is, know that more than a decade ago he set himself the goal of  
25 becoming the CEO and chairman of Coca-Cola. Then he put on paper the dates by which he intended to do that.

- By comparison with Goizueta, Ivester is an accountant by training, an introvert by nature.  
30 He worked systematically to obtain the breadth needed to be a modern chief executive – getting media coaching and spending three years' worth of Saturdays, six hours at a time, being tutored in marketing. He is a straight  
35 arrow, constantly encouraging his executives to 'do the right thing', yet he is fascinated with Las Vegas, which he visits once a year, gambling and people-watching a lot.

He is big on discipline, which to him means: be where you're supposed to be. Dress the part (he is opposed to casual Fridays). Return phone calls promptly (employees know never to get too far away from their office voice-mail, even on  
45 weekends). Still, when directing his troops, he asks them to set 'aspirations' (difficult targets).

- Hierarchy is out – it slows everything down; he communicates freely with people at all levels. The 'conventional' desk job is also out. Ivester prefers that employees think of themselves as knowledge workers – their office is the information they carry around with them, supported by technology that  
55 allows them to work anywhere. This really matters when your business is as large as Coke's, which gets 80% of its profit from overseas.

- At Coke, business planning is no longer an annual ritual but a continual discussion – sometimes via voice-mail – among top executives. Technology is not just nice; it's *crucial*. Huge volumes of information don't frighten Ivester; he insists that they are  
65 necessary for 'real-time' decision-making. With past-generation executives, their style was more 'don't bring me your problems, bring me your solutions,' says Tim Haas, Senior Vice President and Head of Latin America. 'Doug thrives on finding the solutions.' 'In a world this complicated and fast-moving, a CEO can't afford to sit in the executive suite and guess,' Ivester says. He believes that many of America's executives 'are getting terribly isolated.'

From *Fortune Magazine*

## Douglas Ivester

Parents' background/values:

Personal qualities:

Present position:

Management style/beliefs:

Previous job:

Achievements at Coca-Cola:

Previous boss:

Hobbies:

### C Answer these questions about the article.

- 1 The writer says that 'Goizueta had recognised Ivester's drive' (paragraph 1). What does *drive* mean? How did Ivester show that he had this quality?
- 2 'They give A pluses, don't they?' (paragraph 2). Who is Ivester's father referring to when he says *they*?
- 3 How did Ivester prepare for the position he now holds?
- 4 Explain the meaning of this sentence: 'Dress the part (he is opposed to casual Fridays)' (paragraph 5). Do you agree with this policy?
- 5 Why does Ivester want employees to think of themselves as 'knowledge workers'?
- 6 Ivester believes that many American executives 'are getting terribly isolated.' What is Ivester doing to avoid becoming cut off from his staff?

### D Find words and phrases in the article which mean the following:

- 1 Someone who has greatly increased the company's profits (paragraph 1).
- 2 A time of high unemployment and poverty (paragraph 2).
- 3 A very successful, profitable company (paragraph 3).
- 4 Very determined to succeed (paragraph 3).
- 5 Carefully, following a fixed plan (paragraph 4).
- 6 Organising people into different levels of importance (paragraph 6).
- 7 Something that happens regularly each year (paragraph 7).
- 8 Gets a feeling of satisfaction from doing something (paragraph 7).

### E Discuss these questions.

- 1 What do you think Douglas Ivester's main objectives should be as leader of Coca-Cola?
- 2 What sort of problems do you think he has to deal with when running the company?