

# ANTIETAM

## ROBERT E. LEE AND GEORGE MCCLELLAN AS CEOS AND HR DIRECTORS

---

There are few places better to examine the competencies of Leading People and/or Business Acumen than Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland. The scene of the cataclysmic Civil War battle, America's bloodiest single day, Antietam offers countless examples of leadership insights. The leadership styles of the two principal commanders, Robert E. Lee for the Confederacy and George B. McClellan for the Union, could not be starker, and therefore offers a wonderful study in contrasts.



The day begins with a discussion of the vision, values, and missions of each organization (and nation), and how that informed the leadership of each army at all levels. From there we discuss the skill of **team building** and how each commander viewed their role as team leader and how they built and empowered (or did not) their teams. We discuss the ways each commander **leveraged diversity** within the organization to achieve their goals, and look for ways they could have done so more effectively. We cover how general and their subordinates **managed conflict** when it arose – including the **crucial conversations** they engaged in and their use of their **emotional intelligence**. Lastly, we look at the ways these commanders worked with their subordinates to **develop** and improve them.

From a Business Acumen perspective, we deeply examine Robert E. Lee's decision to move his army into Maryland as a way of considering **financial management**. With limited resources, Lee had to carefully evaluate whether this campaign was one that he had the resources to undertake, and whether it was one with the potential to expand his resources. Technology also played a critical role in the battle. The Union Army had vastly superior technology in terms of its supply system and specifically its artillery, but George McClellan's poor **technology management** largely removed that competitive advantage. Alternatively, the technology upgrades Lee implemented after Antietam – melting down his obsolete cannons and casting them into new, higher performing ones – is another useful analogy.

This is an on-site, mobile tour of the battlefield. At each stop we evaluate these generals in terms of the two relevant competencies of **Leading People** and **Business Acumen**. At the end of the day participants are asked to write a performance evaluation for either General Lee or General McClellan that appraises each man in terms of their ability to lead people and run their "business." Lastly, an application piece asks participants to consider what lessons the battlefield and these commanders might teach them that they can apply in their daily work life.

