

# ANTIETAM

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

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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 leadership insights. The leadership styles of the two principal commanders, Confederate General Robert E. Lee and Union General George B. McClellan, could not be starker, and therefore offers a fascinating **study in contrasts**.



The day begins with a discussion of the vision and values of each organization (and nation), and how that informed leadership at all levels in each army. We then discuss the skill of **team building** and the commanders' contrasting views of their role as team leaders 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 the generals and their subordinates **managed conflict** when it arose – including the **crucial conversations** they engaged in and their use of **emotional intelligence**. Lastly, we look at the ways these commanders worked to **develop** and improve their subordinates.

From a Business Acumen perspective, we examine Robert E. Lee's decision to move his army into Maryland as a way of considering **financial management** and **risk management**. With limited resources, Lee had to 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 program 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 evaluate the performance of either General Lee or General McClellan and critique 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 that they can apply in their daily work life.

