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# The Value of Being High Impact

**This month, our military and country lost one of its recent heroes, General (R) Raymond Odierno, to cancer.**

While I cannot claim to have ever intersected with him, his reputation was even larger than his physical presence. As I skimmed through the hard-to-keep-up-with commentary flowing through just LinkedIn, I was blown away by sheer breadth and depth of the impact this one leader had on such a wide ranging and diverse group of humans. His four stars may have garnered salutes, but his character made him full of lasting impact. And I see at least three themes in these touching remembrances that I actually think those who choose to try to help turn the Office world around would be wise to take note of.

**Authentic - be real:** Everyone noted that what you saw is what you got with General Odierno. He listened, he coached, he led, he was tough (but fair)... on and on... but his integrity was seemingly built on the unflappable alignment of words and action. Can we all just get real for a minute on Office? A real flexible solution needs to truly be folded into the rest of the property and asset management apparatus. So many groups will tell me that all their customers are talking about is flexibility, but then when I ask them about what they are doing outside of using “flexible” on brochures, the truth is not really that much. Create a product and operation that can seamlessly handle and accommodate a company’s size and life cycle more appropriately. Create real value (a new lobby and fitness center doesn’t count anymore) for a company through an authentic environment and it won’t take much work to get employees back.





**He cared about people more than himself.** I can think of nothing I relish more than hearing from people who worked for or know me than, “he would have done anything for me”, and that was a reoccurring theme in the comments about General Odierno. In Office, we tend to build look-at-me structures and while we say many of the right things on brochures, occupiers can now see through this. “Well Mike, if we actually start building and operating office complexes that customers want, the capital markets won’t like it.” General Odierno ended up with 4 stars so it would seem that caring and success do not have to be uncorrelated. An authentically crafted and operated Office complex with increasing flexibility will find happy buyers and sellers. WFH will continue to be a life-giving freedom offered to employees, but the mental and emotional gas tanks will be filled up in this new work environment where human interactions happen at the highest quality level (not sheer quantity of it) and will become priced accordingly.



**He led from the front:** It is interesting to do a quick search on General Odierno and see how hard it is to find a picture of him where he is not out and about in his fatigues, looking just as dirty as the soldiers he is interacting with. He was part of some of the most serious moments in time in the middle east and also responsible for setting the strategy for some of the most positive changes that happened there. To do that, it seems apparent that he felt compelled to get in the thick of it to ensure he wasn’t making the wrong decision from a safe distance. The leaders within the Office world must adopt a similar hands-on approach. Some of my best learning while running big portfolios happened when I devoted energy, at all times of the day and week, to sit, watch, listen, talk to people, and then go back and help craft spaces, experiences, and an overall environment that workers throughout a company would actually look forward to walking into. It’s a tall order, but if we collectively want General Odierno-like high impact, we have to put in the time and effort in the trenches.



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I really wish I had had the opportunity to interact with General Odierno, but what I have come to appreciate about high impact people is that their DNA and the characteristics that made them so impactful live on through the countless people they invested in. That's an ambitious goal I aspire to never quit reaching for – it makes me want to keep pressing to be a better son, husband, dad... human. This opportunity lies before us in Office. I want to be part of doing the hard, but needed, work to finally start getting this right and building and running work ecosystems that positively impact people. Thousands of companies and millions of hard-working employees would love to walk in and out of environments that stop sucking out their souls one day and piece at a time, and, instead, start inspiring them to happily produce and innovate one human interaction at a time.



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