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## **Robert F. Smith Shows Us What Effective Leadership in Action Looks Like**

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Robert F. Smith is celebrated globally for his philanthropy and business prowess, but it's his approach to leadership that sets him apart. An approach that mirrors many of Peter Drucker's Management as a Liberal Arts principles.

Smith's success is Drucker's MLA in action.

A case study not only on the importance of effective leadership but also on our organizations' responsibility to contribute to building a better society. Philanthropic-focused leaders like Smith are Management as a Liberal Art, personified.

### **Philanthropy & Business Beyond Profit**

Founder, Chairman, and CEO of [Vista Equity Partners](#), Robert F. Smith doesn't qualify himself as a businessman. But instead—an inventor, investor, and philanthropist. His focus is on creating opportunity, not only within Vista's ventures but also in the communities where it functions.

His philosophy is clear: we all have a responsibility to build a better society. To encourage our organizations to participate in the betterment of the community as a whole.



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**The 2% Solution:**

Smith knows that a business' role doesn't stop within the organization. But instead, must extend far past it. Put in simpler terms, it's a corporation's responsibility to contribute to the 2% solution.

“The Solution builds from the tradition that American families on average allocate 2% of their income for charity, and asks U.S. companies to do the same by investing 2% of their profits over the next 10 years into communities that have been systematically held back by the racial wealth gap.” – [Robert F. Smith](#)

Smith encourages organizations to see this contribution as an investment, not an act of charity.

To take up the mantle of responsibility and leave things better than we found them.

And to do it in a way that promotes success and opportunity for future generations.

Whether that investment be made in capital, know-how, or responsible management solutions, a corporation's responsibility is to its community. Not just to its profits.

Smith's call to action mirrors that of Drucker's philosophies. [Management as a Liberal Art](#) asks organizations to provide meaning beyond financial gain. To acknowledge their place and power in society, and do something about it.



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Drucker suggests through effective leadership that businesses can successfully bridge this gap between conventional profit-first models to champion innovation that benefits the whole.

Both minds call for workers, managers, and future leaders to challenge traditional business models that leave people behind.

**Embracing Lifelong Learning**

Spearheaded by Smith (and supported by his fresh take on leadership), Vista Equity Partners exemplifies Drucker's MLA in action.

Part of Vista's mission is to take an "adaptable" approach to growth. One that prioritizes value creation in partnership with effective leaders.

To keep advancing, Vista has taken a strategic approach to adaptability. Put another way—the organization and its managers are lifelong learners.

They promote the advancement of technology with the specific intention of creating opportunity. It's the company's investment in software, data, and technology that enables technological advancements to better society.



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Vista's portfolio includes leading enterprise companies. This means they're building better businesses in community with other organizations striving to do the same.

This community of "better business" not only reflects Drucker's principles but hinges on the openness to learn and adapt.

Drucker tells us that leaders and organizations must encourage innovation and profit by placing an emphasis on the constant search to improve knowledge and skills. That businesses—and managers—must be able to adapt. Not only to the ever-changing needs of an organization but to the people who work within it and those who live beyond it.

Smith has built an organization that functions within Drucker's philosophies. The firm's success positions MLA as the approach to foster better business through the ability to learn and adapt.

**Supporting Future Leaders**

If MLA urges us to lead with management principles that are community-oriented, Smith encourages us to go one step further and take direct action through personal philanthropy.

We know that a well-managed organization respects the individual dignity of its workers. And that effective leaders prioritize people. But Smith shows us that that includes not only people functioning within your own organization, but outside of it in the community as well.



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Future leaders exist within both.

### **Philanthropy & Mentorship:**

Smith's philanthropic efforts extend beyond just MLA in principle. They're MLA action.

He urges us all to see the importance of mentorship and internships. For managers to place their focus on the greater mission of contributing to society.

To him, it's about waking up each day and making an effort to create change. Some days that looks like direct influence through his leadership roles. Other days that means donating time, funds, and knowledge to his community.

Smith shows us that it's up to each individual leader to make society a more just one for people of future generations. And that taking action now, promotes the ability of future leaders to pay forward MLA in action.

### **Effective Leaders Prioritize People:**

Both Smith and Drucker know that effective leaders have the power to alleviate some of the burdens society has placed on minorities, disadvantaged communities, and younger generations. They see leadership as an opportunity to make endless contributions to building better.



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Smith shows us that a leader must strive for economic justice. And that the power of your impact comes from visibility. To make change as a leader, you must get out there and be visible to your community.

You must be a mentor in action and in principle.

When leaders like Robert F. Smith show up—both within their organizations and within their communities—they're effectively ushering in a new era of management.

An era sprung from Peter Drucker's Management as a Liberal Art philosophies.

The answer rings clear.

Effective leaders must strive to put people first. To position people and community above profits.

A model that not only promotes a better society. But better business, and more innovative solutions.