INSIGHTS FROM THE CAREER OF NAPOLEON

The career of Napoleon, with its ups and downs, gives us unique practi­cal insights into the advantages and disadvantages of his approach to leadership and the background and context in which different modes of power were employed. What did he show us?

How to get to the top – fast.

How to build a network of supporters and choose acolytes – the dos and don’ts.

Leaders being brilliant in their chosen area is a plus – but it may not be enough, it may only take them so far.

Charisma, personality and constant visibility can help to secure a power base.

Being prepared to risk everything in a sudden takeover has to be a priority.

Seizing every opportunity offered to gain advancement in leadership and power is recommended to get on the ladder of progress, but there may come a time when consolidation is needed.

Maintaining a power base needs control of the agenda, setting the rules, influencing all the decisions – or someone else will.

Being intimidating and threatening – and callous of human interests – may work to a degree but can be a disaster in trying to sustain leadership and power.

Depending on popular support and being elected to power is danger­ous, as crowds are fickle.

Trying to create a dynasty to leave a legacy depends on an appropriate successor and a stronger power base than most leaders might have.

Extracted from Napoleonic Leadership – a study in power, pp. 128-129