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Ford's Mulally Tops Executive Coach Stephen Xavier's Roundup of America's Best CEOs

RALEIGH, N.C., March 17, 2010 -- Ford Motor Company recently stunned industry experts by surpassing General Motors in overall sales for the first time in more than 50 years. Executive coach Stephen Xavier credits this accomplishment to the strategic leadership of Ford CEO Alan Mulally, and now Xavier has placed Mulally at the top of his new "America's Best CEOs" list.

Xavier, an executive coach and author of the new book *Not on My Watch: A Leader's Guide to Navigating the Impending Retirement Bubble Disaster, Building a Bench and Leaving a Legacy of Success*, has over 20 years of experience coaching and mentoring Fortune 500 clients worldwide.

"Ford's CEO Mulally turned down TARP money, took a 180 strategy from competitor GM and headed toward a profit," explained Xavier, America's Top Coach® (<http://www.americastopcoach.com/>). "Flying in the face of business and government critics alike, Mulally is heading toward recovery the old-fashioned way: with strategy, vision and guts."

Next on Xavier's "America's Best CEOs" list is Cisco Systems CEO John Chambers. "While AIG, Citigroup and GM went into catastrophic tailspins after the financial meltdown in 2008, they all changed leadership," Xavier stated. "But Cisco Systems did not. Chambers has led one of the biggest business comebacks of modern times."

Following Chambers on Xavier's list is Pepsi's Indra Nooyi, who has focused on developing healthier snack alternatives, making the company less dependent on its core product line. Next on the list is Costco's James Sinegal, who easily made the list not just by earning healthy profits and meeting consumer demand, but also for his commitment to paying his employees generous wages even in challenging times.

Others recognized in Xavier's list of America's leading CEOs are Rupert Murdoch of News Corp., Warren Buffett of Berkshire Hathaway, Fred Smith of FedEx and Apple's Steve Jobs -- all leaders who, against the odds, used innovation, vision and muscle to stay afloat. Angela Braly of WellPoint also made the list, with Xavier praising her courage and determination in standing up against Washington, D.C. insiders and talking actual numbers, not political rhetoric, regarding healthcare provider profits.

Rounding out the list is Citigroup CEO Vikram Pandit. "Although he is not one of my favorite CEOs for his more academic approach to leading," Xavier says, "his willingness to fight the hard fight in the face of critics in Washington and Wall Street alike earns him at least an honorable mention." SAS software's Jim Goodnight and Red Hat CEO Jim Whitehurst were also included on Xavier's list.

To those CEOs who did not make the list, Xavier offered some advice: “First, build and communicate a compelling future vision, rather than succumb to short-term cutbacks, and then empower others, from the management team to the rank-and-file, to act on that vision now.”

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