

# Queen Elizabeth II: Duty over all

Sometimes, a leader's duty is simply to ensure the institution's survival. In the case of Queen Elizabeth II, her duty is to preserve the British monarchy, an institution more than 10 centuries old.

Also known as CEO of "the Firm," Elizabeth accepted her duty as most of the world's monarchies were crumbling away.

But she wasn't the first to understand the threats to monarchy. In a bit of corporate rebranding during World War I, her grandfather dumped the family name of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and replaced it with the oh-so-British-sounding Windsor. After the Russian Revolution, he refused asylum to the czar, his boyhood pal, fearing the "germ" of revolution might infect England. Without asylum, Nicholas and his entire entourage were shot. The Windsors survived.

In the 1930s, Elizabeth took a lesson from Edward VIII's abdication: An authority figure can never rewrite the rules for his own convenience and get away with it. Her duty is to hold the fort.

It hasn't been easy. She endured a disappointing marriage and now is the only one in her immediate family untouched by scandal or divorce.

**Tip 1:** She never fell for her own PR.

As CEO, she's doing fine. The family treasury grows every year. And in her second job as chairman of the board for the United Kingdom, she keeps a sharp eye on the prime minister. How? **Tip 2:** Through a daily briefing and a weekly audience in which she influences and intervenes in governing.

It's unclear, however, how she's done in grooming her heir. As a good leader, she has a vision—to carry on the monarchy—but can't rely on Prince Charles to do it. **Tip 3:** Do what a queen can't: Choose your successor.

But hey, if she lives as long as the Queen Mum, who died at age 101, Charles will be 79 when he takes over. In the meantime, Elizabeth will get up every morning to do her duty. As long as she remains in charge of the Firm, she'll keep her royal ducks in a row.

— Adapted from "Betty Rules," Rosalind Miles, *Maclean's*.