



KNOW WHO TO FOLLOW

ISSUE
29
June 08

"Bill had an uneasy feeling when Andrew, his division's vice president, assembled the group at an off-site location for an emergency meeting. 'Starting today, things are going to be different. No more Mr. Nice guy in the way we do business,' Andrew said as he explained his strategy to thwart the owners of the ailing company and assume control. The scenario took Bill back to a summer in his childhood. He had played follow-the-leader with a new group of older boys for whom the game included scaling fences and skateboard stunts. For them, it was easy not so for a five-year-old Bill. Before the game was over, Bill admitted defeat in the form of a broken arm and badly sprained ankle. Bill remembered how he felt looking up from the playground, the glare of the sun burning his eyes and the mocking laughter of the older boys stinging his pride. He was in such pain that he started to cry. The older boys called him 'wimpy' and ran off. They didn't realize how serious Bill's injuries were. But even when news spread around the neighbourhood, none of his new 'friends' ever visited him. Bill's father lectured him about, judgment, character and knowing when to walk away. At Bill's tender age, most of his father's advice hadn't meant much. But now, 20 years later, his father's words struck a chord. As Bill focused again on the meeting at hand, Andrew was finishing his remarks. "So, who's with me on this?" The folks who bought Andrew's reasoning began to clap. But some of Bill's colleagues began murmuring nervously amongst themselves. "You're either in or you're out", barked Andrew. Bill stood to his feet --- all eyes fixed on him. "I'm out," he said and was now the office pariah. But when he turned back to take one last look at everyone, he saw all of his colleagues following his lead."

LEADERSHIP

Publications Committee - Editor: Chris Mathas

LEADING FROM THE BOARDROOM

By James W. Lorsch and Robert C. Clark

"These days boards are working overtime to comply with governance requirements meant to protect shareholders from executive wrongdoing. But as Directors have become more hands-on with compliance, they've become more hands-off with long range planning. That exposes corporations and their shareholders to another – perhaps even greater – risk. Boards are giving the long term short shrift for a number of reasons. Despite much heavier workloads, directors haven't rethought their patterns of operating – their meetings, committees and other interactions. Compliance has changed their relationship with executives, however, turning directors into micromanagers who closely probe executives' actions instead of providing high-level guidance. Meanwhile, the pressure to meet quarterly expectations intensifies.

Directors need to do a better job balancing compliance with forward thinking. Boardroom effectiveness hinges most on the quality of directors and their interactions, the author's research shows. Directors must apply their wisdom broadly, handling compliance work more efficiently and staying out of the weeds on strategic issues. Using their power with management to evangelize for long-term planning, they must take the lead on discussions about financial infrastructure, talent development, and strategy. Reserving sacrosanct time for such discussions, as Philips Electronics' board does at annual retreats, is an effective practice: After one recent retreat Philips decided to exit the semiconductor business, where it was losing ground. Individual directors also must not shy away from asking tough questions and acting as catalysts on critical issues, such as grooming a successor to the CEO. In short, directors must learn to lead from the boardroom."

Most directors will say they squeeze time into their meetings to discuss what they call "strategic matters". In most cases, however, they're actually talking tactics.



Real Signs of a Strong Board

Survey of directors of Fortune 200 companies (2005) found that the key elements of success focus on the quality of Board composition, talents and processes:

- Is there understanding among board members on the key drivers of the company's business?
- Is their understanding among board members on appropriate metrics of corporate performance?
- Is the mix of experience and backgrounds of directors appropriate to the companies' businesses?"
- Does the board have manageable agendas and allocate time appropriately at meetings, so that management could present information but have adequate time left for discussion?
- Did the board disseminate information to directors before the meetings so that they could consider the issues at hand and prepare ahead of time?

Source: Harvard Business Review April 2008

Dear readers,
This issue of e-HR Trends contains a selection of articles and excerpts related to leadership. Each one focuses on a different perspective of this very challenging and much talked about subject.

We begin with a short story that highlights the fact that at the end of the day people follow because they want to and their choice is based on their own personal values. **We hope you have a wonderful summer!**

Upward Leadership – Lead your Boss

1. Understand organizational constraints
2. Understand your boss.
3. Build real rapport
4. Link ideas to business benefit
5. Deal with facts
6. Deliver solutions not problems
7. Aim to work as a partnership
8. Listen
9. Stick to your guns

Remember...

- *Figure out how to make a real difference*
- *Focus on the things that are within your influence*
- *Know your boss's learning style*
- *Link your contribution to the bottom line*
- *Speak openly and honestly with them*
- *Deliver solutions not problems*

Source: People Management 2006

Developing Leaders on Your Team *by Ram Charan*

"...keep emerging leaders focused on one or two things they must deliberately practice to expand their leadership capacity."

"Crisis may be an overused word, but it's a fair description of the state of leadership in today's corporations. At all levels companies are short on the quantity and quality of leaders they need. **Who holds the key to the solution?**" Line managers!

Companies that "excel in leadership development do so because they consider it an everyday endeavor and lay responsibility for it squarely at managers' doors. Managers in these organizations use their [own leadership competence] to help the high-potential leaders that report to them unleash talents in their current job, raise their sights to envision the next position, and clear the path to get there. Because they see people in action, they know better than anyone else what an individual excels at or should work on next."

"Managing with leadership development as a priority [depends on the following]:

- Identifying one or two areas where improvement will yield the largest returns
- Delivering deliberate, precise feedback that targets those areas."

The above does not require the manager to make large time investment; it does require the **discipline of consistency**. The great thing is that this level of consistency and focus will boost the performance of all members of the team.

The article goes on to explain in detail what the above two activities entail. This is a worthwhile read for managers wanting to improve their effectiveness at developing leaders and for HR professionals wanting to encourage managers to do so.

Source: Harvard Management Update Jan 08



How Successful Leaders Think *by Roger Martin*

"In search of lessons to apply in our own careers, we often try to emulate what effective leaders do. Roger Martin says this focus is misplaced, because moves that work in one context may make little sense in another. A more productive, though more difficult, approach is to look at how such leaders think." In this article the author shares what he has discovered through extensive interviews of over 50 successful executives. Specifically..."most are integrative thinkers – that is, they can hold in their heads two opposing ideas at once and then come up with a new idea that contains elements of each but is superior to both."

"... this process of consideration and synthesis (rather than superior strategy or faultless execution) is the hallmark of exceptional businesses and the people who run them. To support his point [the writer] examined how integrative thinkers

A rescue from "superhero syndrome"

Many leaders can't resist playing super hero, after all it makes them feel needed, admired and well liked. Inevitably of course there is a trap: their energy is absorbed by a constant stream of problems that ultimately leads to burn out. The following steps can be taken to avoid this syndrome.

1. Become a coach
2. Listen to others and respect their ideas
3. Discover the strengths of team members
4. Ask for help
5. Let yourself off the hook, let others take the lead.

approach the four stages of decision making to craft superior solutions. First, when determining which features of a problem are salient, they go beyond those that are obviously relevant. Second, they consider multidirectional and nonlinear relationships, not just linear ones. Third, they see the whole problem and how the parts fit together. Fourth, they creatively resolve the tensions between opposing ideas and generate new alternatives." In his article the author puts forward a number of examples of business leaders who apply integrative thinking. The encouraging thing is that integrative thinking is an ability that everyone can build.

Source: Harvard Management Update Jan 08 2008

"The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other [people] the conviction and the will to carry on"

WALTER LIPPMAN
Journalist

"Our distinctions do not lie in the places we occupy, but in the grace and dignity with which we fill them."

WILLIAM GILMORE
SIMMS,Writer



We would love to hear from you so if you have any question, comments, ideas or if you would like to receive the full version of any the articles appearing in this publication please contact the Publications Committee on the following email:

cyhrma@cablenet.com.cy