



EXPERTS AT DEVELOPING CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TALENT

LEADERSHIP COACHING NEWSLETTER

This Month's Topic: **The Gap in Leadership Today**

October 2009

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According to The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) in Greensboro, NC, you, and your colleagues at every level of your organization, do not have all the skills needed to lead your organization effectively in the future.

CCL recently surveyed more than 2,000 leaders from 15 corporations from the U.S., India and Singapore, and found the four most important future skills – leading people, strategic planning, inspiring commitment and managing change – are weak points among today's leaders.

This news may be hard to believe with all the initiatives many organizations are implementing that are focusing on developing their future leaders. However, CCL, who is a leader in the field of leadership development, is correct. There is in fact a glaring gap between the skills leaders have now, and the ones they will need in just a few short years. We should get cracking to close the gap.

During this recent economic upheaval, many organizations have substantially reduced their leadership development training. For many, training is often the first thing to get cut during budgetary constraints. I've often wondered why organizations drastically reduce the very thing they need the most during stressful economic times.

Ultimately, our people are the key to positive, sustained results in high performance organizations. These times more than ever, require top notch talented leaders.

I believe no matter what's happening in the economy, managers and employees need to learn how to enhance their ability to collaborate and work more cohesively as a team. Teamwork and collaboration are critical for organizations in two ways. Internally, you won't get much done without it. Externally, you need partnerships with like-minded firms that advance your strategy, whether it's developing new products or breaking into emerging markets. Innovation is the cornerstone of growth – and teamwork is the lifeblood of innovation. The recent recession has made that clearer than ever. Rarely does innovation result from a solitary thinker having a "Eureka!" moment. It almost always arises from collaborative creativity. Innovation requires brainstorming, the art of listening, and the pooling of resources. This effort looks different in this environment, as does the collaborative effort and understanding required.

Fostering effective teamwork is not easy. Just because you report to the same manager, does not make you a team. Really working as a team and collaborating well is not easy. In a recent CCL study, 97 percent of senior executives reported collaboration as a key factor in organizational success. But just 47 percent believed the leaders in their organizations are skilled collaborators. That is a huge opportunity gap. If leaders recognize collaboration as such a key factor in organizational success, why aren't we more aggressive in tackling this issue?

Many organizations I have consulted and coached have many great individual leaders, but they don't often work really well together as a team as they are too busy in their silos working their own business issues. This is a common problem in organizations and everyone knows it. What we need to do is try and fix it. I had a client tell me yesterday that he had members of his management team that did not even recognize each other at an off site meeting. Not good. For certain these folks aren't working together if they did not even recognize each other.



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We all know business is done through relationships and the most important work gets done through collaboration and team work. It takes time to create effective cross-functional collaboration and teamwork so that it is valued as part of the culture throughout an organization, or a functional unit.

Spending time developing collaboration and teamwork skills in your managers and leaders through training and development is money well spent. Don't cut this expense out of your budgets.

What initiatives are you working on to develop this core leadership competency in your organization?

Recommendations

Recommended reading: **Team Players and Teamwork: New Strategies for Developing Successful Collaboration** by Glenn M. Parker

Recommended training: We have 20 years of experience developing team and leadership skills of senior management teams. For more information email info@visionquestconsulting.com

We offer leadership and executive coaching, and a new kick start coaching program for those with tight budgets. We also offer leadership training courses and consulting services to help organizations develop a deep talent bench. We focus on giving good managers tools to use to make them into more effective leaders. Call or email us for more information. 978-692-4454, wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com

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