



EXPERTS AT DEVELOPING CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TALENT

LEADERSHIP COACHING NEWSLETTER

This Month's Topic: **Inside-Outside Leadership Development**

When we look for future leaders, all too often, what we see are potential internal candidates who are good operators but don't quite have the right level of stature, vision, or strategic sense to lead. Potential candidates usually have not yet run a business of the complexity of what lies ahead on the horizon, so there is no prior experience to benchmark their pattern of previous successes.

In November 2007, Harvard Business Review had a thought provoking article, "Solve the Succession Crises by Growing Inside-Outside Leaders" which addresses this issue in an interesting way. In order to fully prepare your organization for the hard work of developing leaders, companies must commit to growing executives from an inside-outside perspective. Potential leaders need solid knowledge that only comes from being inside an organization over time and therefore have a solid and deep understanding of the problems the company faces and how things really get done internally, as well as having the ability to judge where the world and the company's market are headed and how the company might position itself.

Inside-Outside leadership requires individuals who have:

- A clear outside perspective, as industries are constantly shifting and opportunities are often created by organizations that disrupt traditional economic relationships. Just look at how low cost Asian manufacturers shifted many business models in the United States and
- Extensive inside knowledge where executives have deep and thorough understanding of specific company related knowledge, accumulated over time that is invaluable to both the company and the industry. Being able to take that knowledge and assess current employee talents and internal capabilities and map them effectively to new business opportunities and change initiatives is critical.

Developing future leaders who come from inside the company and are able to balance being an insider with insider knowledge while at the same time remaining somewhat detached enough in order to maintain the objectivity of an outsider is an important key to successful succession planning.

Developing these kinds of leaders takes time. It also takes a different focus during the recruitment stage where you look for individuals who are highly talented in a specific area of specialization who have the potential to be good future managers. Grooming an inside-outside leader requires developing, sometimes over a decade, executives that are blessed with an outside view and that have spent years learning the context of the company's strategy, systems and culture.



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Steps to start.

1. Give high potentials increasingly complex assignments to give them the chance to manage a whole business as early as possible.
2. Help future leaders maintain their unique perspective by providing them with a talented senior manager mentor, paying special attention to planning, budgeting, performance evaluation, and the presentation of new and unusual ideas and how to make them work.
3. Start early and balance your need for short term expectation with the need to invest over the long term in the development of your future leaders.

Questions to Ask Yourself.

Looking at your high potential managers, what are you doing to develop their inside-outside skills? What additional steps could you take that would really groom your up and coming employees for their next level position?

Recommendations

Recommended reading: *"Solve the Succession Crises by Growing Inside-Outside Leaders"*, by Joseph Bower, Harvard Business Review, November 2007.

Recommended Corporate Leadership University training courses: [Click here](#). These courses are conducted by Vision Quest Consulting at your location of choice. Call or email us for more information. 978-692-4454, wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com

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