



Industry Forum

Business Excellence Through Inspired People

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Enduring Leadership

We all no doubt have our favourite leader whether that be a historical character- Wellington; from politics-Mandela; from the caring services-Florence Nightingale; from sport-Alex Ferguson; etc. Getting behind the perception of any particular leader, particularly in today's media dominated environment is quite difficult, and one wonders whether the characteristics, traits and behaviours of successful leaders have changed over time, or is there something timeless about leadership that we would do well to learn? After all the business world spends a lot of time debating the leadership question and investing in leaders and there is more and more evidence that investing in leadership development gives a return on business performance-see below as well.

Importantly leaders arise at all levels in a business, each making a leadership contribution aligned with the goals and objectives of the organisation. However how do those in a position of power and responsibility for leadership development such as CEO's, senior leaders and HR professionals see the leadership challenge today?

A recent research report conducted by the Conference Board and published under 'DNA of Leaders. Leadership Development Secrets' by Rebecca Ray and David Learmond' published in 2013 sheds some light on this question. The authors examine some interesting aspects of leadership detailed by engaging with seventeen global companies (including Siemens, BASF, Caterpillar, etc.)

Does Leadership Matter?

Few would argue that the leadership of organisations is not important. There is now clear evidence detailed in the above report that CEO's of companies that have enduring and sustainable approaches to leadership, rank the 'Development of Human Capital' as their most important issue to manage, and that within that over-arching statement, leadership development figures very highly.

Interestingly, the authors also highlight from a variety of sources that the quality of leadership directly impacts company performance. This point brings the question of leadership and leadership development centre stage and is therefore of prime importance in any organisation.

Leadership Values

The global companies that participated in the report have consistently and sustainably invested in leadership development for the long term, and by engaging with Human Capital and Business-Line Executives the authors were able to distil out the underlying features of leadership development and values.

Some findings were:

- A global mind set is the critical attribute for global leaders to embrace the diversity of opportunities available
- Regional differences still matter despite globalisation and a sensitivity and willingness to adjust to these is important
- The operating model for leaders evolves to a 'freedom in a framework' rather than a direction from HQ

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- Leadership development programmes and processes have been significantly simplified and streamlined to better meet needs
- Clear focus on providing support at significant leadership transitions
- A shift away from relying on standardised 'off the shelf' development initiatives towards customised and experiential initiatives
- 'Leaders as Teachers' – recognition that senior leader should play a key role in mentoring coaching and promulgating key values to the business

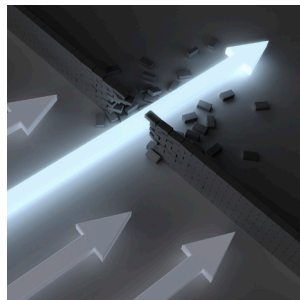
Twenty three leadership values were found to be part of the leadership development programmes in these companies:

| Leadership Value |
|---|
| VISIONARY - Clarity and consistency about the kind of leaders to develop |
| PROCESS ORIENTED - Identify talent early on and develop |
| VALUES DRIVEN - Leadership development underpinned by company core values |
| OPERATIONALLY EXCELLENT- Relentless focus on continual improvement |
| DATA DRIVEN - Use data to determine succession planning |
| COLLABORATIVE - Internal and external collaboration |
| LEADER LED - Senior leaders own the leadership process |
| INTEGRATED - Embed and align leadership development |
| GLOBALLY FOCUSED - Global mind set |
| CROSS-FUNCTIONAL - Develop cross functional capability |
| DIVERSE - Develop diverse talent |
| INTENTIONAL - Activities to develop exposure, education, and experience |
| FUTURE FOCUSED - Relentless focus on the future |
| MOBILE - Exposure of leaders to different cultures and environments |
| ACTION ORIENTED - Use of customised rotations and action learning |
| FLEXIBLE - Customised approach to leadership development |
| ADAPTIVE - Adaptation of best practice |
| HOLISTIC - Link leadership development to business strategy |
| BIG - Scale useful to rotate leaders through developmental roles |
| MATURE -Try, fail, regroup and relaunch |
| SAVVY - Focus and target |
| BOLD - Willing to take risks |
| HUMBLE - Leadership development is a journey not a destination |

Further the companies participating in the report recognised that there is a never ending quest to secure the above values in the leadership cadre they are developing.

Leadership Essentials

Learmond has taken this work further combining the above findings with previous findings from the Conference Board report published in late 2010 'Go Where There be Dragons. Leadership Essentials for 2020 and Beyond' by Mitchell and Learmond and suggests that there are six key leadership essentials as shown below.



Purpose



Trust

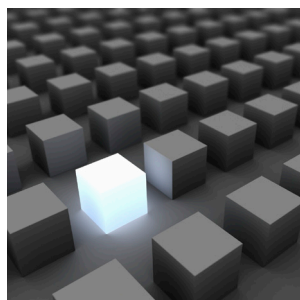


Collaboration

Key Leadership Essentials



Diversity



Edge



Resilience



where developing a:

- Compelling Purpose
- Strong levels of Trust
- Effective Collaboration
- Embracing Diversity
- Distinctive Edge
- Resilience

become essential activities for leaders to operate successfully in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, changing and ambiguous world.

Consequences for Leaders and those responsible for Leadership Development

Development of leaders and leadership capabilities is important to the future success and performance of any organisation. It is now clear what leadership values some of the best in class companies are pursuing. Whilst different weights will be given to these values in any business at a point in time the list of leadership values above provides a useful check for companies to see how these values are being developed in their organisation.

How would your current leaders score against the above values and what steps could you take to bridge that gap in their development?

How Industry Forum can help

Industry Forum have a wealth of experience in assisting organisations in the development of their leaders which can take place either on a one to one, team or group basis. For more details please visit the IF web site www.industryforum.co.uk/practical-solutions/organisation-development/executive-coaching-and-leadership-development/



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