

DiversityGlobal Magazine

• Bringing Innovative Human Capital, Diversity and Inclusion to a Global Workforce •

Leveraging Executive Coaching

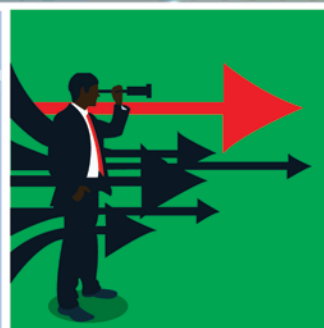
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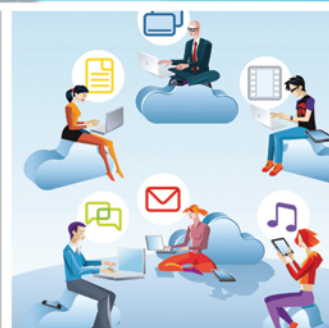
Leadership Embraces and Exercises a Vision to Build Corporate Viability



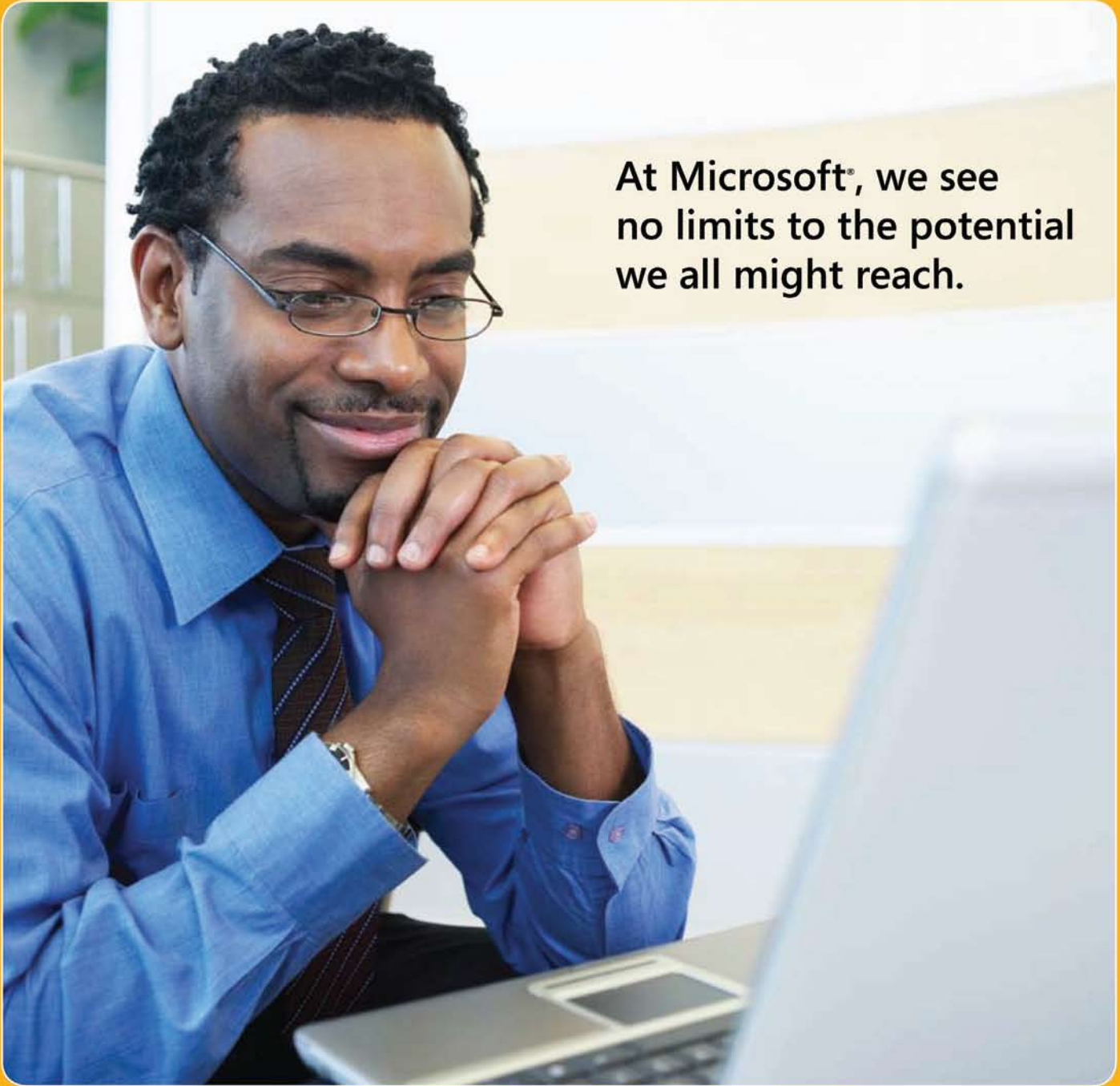
Driving Europe's Social Innovation Through Corporate Programs



Risks Accompany Corporate Political Spending



Leveraging Social Media to Find Diverse Customers and Suppliers



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we all might reach.

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* HUBs (Historically Underutilized Businesses) include certified minority, women, disabled, veteran and small [SBA 8(a), SDB, and HUB Zone] enterprises.

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DiversityGlobal Magazine's mission is to generate conversation in Thought Leadership among thinkers, CEOs, managers, and entrepreneurs about the coming sea changes in global corporate diversity that will transform how people innovate and lead. DiversityGlobal captures the creativity, excitement and opportunity created by rapid societal, economic and technological change and brings it home to thoughtful managers.

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Turning to **European Schools and Universities** for Strategic Diversity Progress

The venerable European schools and universities have advanced knowledge for centuries. For over 800 years, they have been places where free-thinkers, change agents, and innovators have found safe haven for expressing ideas and concepts that were not always popular. As the champions of tolerance for all ideas and embracers of society's intellectual output, it is natural to look to these experienced institutions for assistance in promoting inclusion of minority populations and tolerance for diversity in the communities they serve. There is urgency for increasing the pace of integration of minority groups because the recession increased the pace of migration and immigration, leading to large communities of people with low social and economic status.

The educational system is a logical place to turn to for developing and implementing strategic initiatives, as its role and influence is broad. It offers the means for equalizing educational levels among all groups, and educating a whole community of children and adults on issues like diversity, equal opportunity, and inclusion. The earlier children are taught principles of tolerance and inclusion, the more likely they are to become tolerant and inclusive adults. Integrating diversity into school curriculums and teaching materials is one strategic approach. However, it is not enough. There are too many people in the European population who are grossly underrepresented in the universities.

Social polarization benefits no one. Those on the low end represent an underutilized talent pool. People barred from full participation in society become economic drains. Those on the high end must invest increasing amounts in social programs that try to overcome the polarization, usually without changing the hearts and minds of people. Schools and universities have the means and influence to promote cohesion and integration, but meeting the challenges of the 21st century demands a strategic approach. Piecemeal programs are ineffective at producing long-lasting change.

There are more frequent calls for making critical changes to the educational system. The European University Association's Lisbon Declaration recognized the systemic and strategic changes needed to create an inclusive,

competitive, and vibrant system. Schools and universities share a common profile and mission, and that has created an elitism that no longer serves Europe well. Strategically, 21st century Europe needs an educational system that reflects the diversity defining the communities served. To do this means breaking away from standardized missions and profiles, creating programs that share principles of diversity and inclusion, and entering communities where there is little or no access to educational opportunities. In some ways this is quite similar to the strategies businesses have developed to attract, train, and hire a diverse workforce. Businesses do not use identical strategies to attract different cultural, race, or gender-based groups, and neither should universities.

Numerous curriculum additions can contribute to a more inclusive society. Revising curriculums to include diverse cultural contributions to historical events is one strategy. Schools can add multicultural classes and include trips to museums and historical sites that give culture a more global perspective. Adult education classes held in the communities, designed to draw people into the educational system on a long-term basis, are beneficial. Affirmative action programs that promote minority participation in vocational and technical schools or universities can advance assimilation.

Universities must also change internal practices. Diversity and inclusion needs to begin at the staff level. Not only does this add diversity to instruction, it promotes excellence and innovation in research in a globalized environment. Critics say that adding multiculturalism to university discussions only opens the door for people to express their intolerance. Quite frankly, that opinion is increasingly becoming anachronistic. People need equal educational opportunities and appreciation for the excellence a diverse society can bring. If the European schools and universities fail to become strategic partners in bringing long-term change, the potential consequences are dire. Whole groups will continue to be excluded from the one resource that offers the greatest opportunities for change – education.

New initiative to celebrate the sharing of Aboriginal cultural knowledge

Victoria, Australia

A boriginal community projects that transfer cultural knowledge to young people will be showcased in a new Victorian Coalition Government initiative.

The Cultural Strengths Initiative will support the showcasing of up to 20 Aboriginal community cultural projects across Victoria by funding

the making of short films and the mentoring of young filmmakers.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Jeanette Powell announced the initiative and invited Expressions of Interest for eligible projects to be filmed.

“The Cultural Strengths Initiative will celebrate community activities that strengthen cultural identity and connection for young Aboriginal people,” Mrs Powell said.

“We want to showcase the important achievements of Aboriginal communities and organisations delivering innovative projects and facilitate the sharing of knowledge between organizations and communities,” she added.



Jeanette Powell Minister, Aboriginal Affairs

ESRC wins top Accolade from UK Businesses

Swindon, UK

The Economic and Social Research Council has been given a prestigious award by the UK's top businesses.

Members of the Demographics User Group (DUG), which represents major companies including Barclays, Marks & Spencer, and Sainsbury's, have commended the ESRC for its increasing focus on retail research, and developing training in quantitative skills.

Keith Dugmore, the Director of DUG said: “During the last two decades,

retail companies have become very data-rich. Businesses that provide a wide range of services to millions of customers every day make use of data from many different sources - especially government - to make decisions about their operations and future investments. Many have also accumulated large files of information to better understand customers, their transactions, and locations.”

The ESRC is continuing to invest in retail research, including the £2.5 million Retail Sector Initiative that is supporting collaborative projects to undertake research and knowledge exchange activities. It is also looking at proposals for a series of Business and Local Government Data Research Centres.

Manpower Group Honored for Commitment to Board Gender Diversity

New York, NY

Manpower Group, the world leader in innovative workforce solutions, was honored at the Women's Forum of New York's 2013 Breakfast of Corporate Champions for its demonstrated commitment to gender diversity within the company's board of directors.

New York's premier organization of women leaders recognized national Fortune 500 companies and New York area Fortune 1000 companies whose corporate boards are at least 20 percent female. More than 30 percent of Manpower Group's board of directors is comprised of women. Jeff Joerres, Manpower Group Chairman and CEO, and Cari Dominguez, Manpower Group board member, attended the breakfast, discussing the global competitive value of gender diversity and how America's most successful companies make it a reality in their boardrooms.



*Jeff Joerres Chairman and CEO
Manpower Group*

The Hartford Pledges \$100,000 To Typhoon Haiyan Relief Efforts

Hartford, CT

The Hartford has pledged \$100,000 to the American Red Cross disaster relief efforts in support of those affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The contribution includes a \$50,000 corporate gift and a dollar-for-dollar match of employee donations up to \$50,000.

“Our hearts go out to the Filipino community and all those whose family and friends have been impacted by Typhoon Haiyan,” said Greg Brown, senior vice president of Commercial



Greg Brown Senior Vice President, Enterprise Operations, The Hartford

Operations at The Hartford and a board member of the American Red Cross, Connecticut and Rhode Island Region. “We are confident the country will rebuild and move forward from this catastrophe.”

Lockheed Martin Recognized for Minority Business Development Award

Bethesda, MD

The Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) has selected Lockheed Martin as the recipient of the 2013 Distinguished Supplier Diversity Award. The prestigious award is presented annually in recognition of corporations, programs and individuals that have significantly advanced the growth and development of minority business enterprises.

“Lockheed Martin strives to lead by example when it comes to opening doors to opportunity and entrepreneurship,” said Dr. Ray O. Johnson, Lockheed Martin senior vice president and chief technology officer. “Working with a diverse supplier base also supports job growth and brings new perspectives and agility to Lockheed Martin products and services.”

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD., Lockheed Martin is a global security and aerospace company that employs about 116,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration, and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products, and services. The Corporation’s net sales for 2012 were \$47.2 billion.



Nancy Deskins, center, director category management & supplier diversity accepted the award on behalf of Lockheed Martin.

Women at Accenture Grow to Number More than 100,000



Pierre Nanterme Chairman and CEO, Accenture

New York, NY

The number of women at Accenture continues to grow. The company announced that a total of more than 100,000 women – 36 percent of its global workforce of approximately 281,000 people – now work across its offices and operations.

“Our commitment to inclusion and diversity at Accenture, including attracting, retaining and advancing women, is critical to being a high-performance business,” said Pierre Nanterme, Accenture chairman and CEO. “We strive to provide an environment and culture that develops leaders, empowers our people and enables them to advance.”

“Our unique programs for women aim to support their career development and progression and help them thrive – not just in their careers, but also in their family and personal lives,” said Nellie Borrero, managing director, Global Inclusion & Diversity, at Accenture. “At the same time, these programs create a strong sense of belonging and pride in our company and drive collaboration and success.”

WellPoint Recognized for Commitment to Diversity

Indianapolis, IN

WellPoint, Inc. announced that it was awarded the Sam H. Jones Award at the 13th Annual Mayor's Celebration of Diversity Awards. The awards are presented to businesses and organizations throughout Marion County, Indiana that embrace and celebrate diversity and inclusion.

WellPoint received the special Sam H. Jones Award, named in honor of the first president of the Indianapolis Urban League who was a tireless advocate for peace, justice and racial understanding. The award recognized the company for their exemplary performance in community relations, supplier diversity, leadership development and workforce diversity.



Karin Sarratt vice president, talent management and chief diversity officer, WellPoint

"As a company that calls Indianapolis our hometown, we are very proud to be members of this community," said Karin Sarratt, vice president, talent management and chief diversity officer at WellPoint.

Global Social Entrepreneurship Focus of New Partnership

Washington, DC

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has convened a three-year partnership that will invest in young entrepreneurs who are pioneering innovative new models to address global development challenges.

USAID will commit \$2 million to support the project, which will be matched by an additional \$2 million in support from General Atlantic, the Newman's Own Foundation, the Pershing Square Foundation, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and Echoing Green.

The partnership will invest in 20 young social innovators working in developing countries in two classes of the Echoing Green Global Fellows

Program, according to USAID. The project goal is to "prime the pump" for global social entrepreneurship by supporting individual entrepreneurs as well as by fostering the growth of "social entrepreneurship ecosystems" and increasing support for social innovators in developing countries.

Entrepreneurship and innovation are proven economic drivers that help create jobs and reduce poverty through sustainable market-based solutions, USAID said.



Walmart Announces \$10 Million Fund to Spur Innovation and Support U.S. Manufacturing

Washington, DC

Walmart U.S. President and CEO Bill Simon joined 280 of the nation's mayors in Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Meeting to announce a new fund for innovation in American manufacturing and a new supplier commitment to bring production of bikes and jobs to South Carolina. It will be called "The \$10 million fund for innovation."

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation will fund the five-year program and work in collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Mayors to launch it in March 2014. The fund will provide grants to innovators in the manufacturing sector and seeks to create new processes, ideas, and jobs that support America's growing manufacturing footprint.



Bill Simon, President and CEO Walmart, United States

"If we want to grow manufacturing and help rebuild America's middle class, we need the brightest minds in our universities, in our think tanks, and in our towns to tackle obstacles to U.S. manufacturing," said Simon. "The \$10 million fund will identify and award leaders in manufacturing innovation and help us all work together to create opportunity."

KEEP CLIMBING



A LARGER NETWORK MAKES A SMALLER WORLD.

Size alone isn't the only measure of an airline (or even the best one), but when it makes the world easier to access, we believe it's a sign of progress. With over 350 destinations across six continents, Delta remains committed to building new relationships and working with diverse businesses across the globe. Our Supplier Diversity program has afforded us the opportunity to partner with minority and women-owned businesses who offer innovative ideas, products and services. If you would you like to explore opportunities with us, please visit delta.com/supplierdiversity.



Managing the Multigenerational Workforce Through Engagement

Just when it seems as if businesses have coped with everything imaginable, they are experiencing a new challenge: a workforce made of at least four generations.

- By Simone Summers





There are at least four generations in the workforce today, a trend expected to continue as the lifespan increases and people continue working well into their 60s for personal and financial reasons. Each generation has unique characteristics, with the younger ones greatly influenced by growing up with technology. Since each generation has a different communication style, career expectations, and technology comfort level, managers are challenged with promoting a collaborative business culture that elicits innovation from each generation by utilizing their particular skills, experience, and knowledge. To succeed requires developing a greater understanding of each generation's perspective in critical areas like diversity, idea generation, technology as a collaborative tool, and stereotyping.

Today's workplace is marked by demographics that cross a span of thirty

to forty years. The generations still working include the Matures (ages 68-86); Baby Boomers (ages 49-67); Generation X (ages 34-48); and Generation Y or Millennials (aged 33 and younger). The implications are many. Picture a 30-year old Gen-Yer who vigorously embraces sophisticated technology and abhors silos participating on a project team with a Mature accustomed to top-down direction and strict guidelines, a Gen-Xer who values

A CORPORATE CULTURE THAT PROMOTES INTERGENERATIONAL SHARING BENEFITS FROM THE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER ACROSS AGE GROUPS, AND THE ORGANIZATION IS LIKELY TO SEE FEW AGE DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS.

self-reliance and work-life balance, and a Baby Boomer who embraces long hours, competitive challenges, and still believes it is possible to change the world. Assuming equal representation of each generation in the workforce, half grew up with technology (Gen-Y and Gen-X); one-quarter was or near to middle-aged when the technology revolution hit (Baby Boomers); and one quarter chooses to continue working past the traditional retirement age and so mostly adapts to technology out of necessity (Matures). There are other differences among the generations also. For example, Gen-Y has grown up in a globalized, diverse environment and is quite comfortable in a diverse workplace.

Making False Assumptions About Generations

One of the issues managers deal with is generational stereotyping. Younger workers may assume Baby Boomers cannot use technology

or Matures may view heavy use of mobile technology as non-productive. The goal of management is to create a climate in which each employee, without regard for their generational membership, use their talents and capabilities to the fullest. Stereotypical thinking of generational diversity holds people back by leading to behaviors based on assumptions rather than facts. An older manager may assume a younger employee will not work extra hours on a project and refuses to invite the employee's participation. The team is deprived of the person's talents and unique perspective that would add depth and breadth to the effort. Generational stereotyping hurts productivity and creativity, innovation, and morale.

An engaged multigenerational workforce will experience some conflict. It is how the conflict is managed that determines whether it will increase creativity and productivity, rather than become a source of perpetual problems. Employees who feel alienated will not work at full capacity and are naturally reluctant to express opinions and share ideas.

Employers have a responsibility to support an age-neutral workplace where each person is engaged and respected. Offering training and development opportunities that promote understanding is a step in the right direction. A corporate culture that promotes intergenerational sharing benefits from the knowledge transfer across age groups, and the organization is likely to see few age discrimination claims. Managers need to learn how to motivate different generations and provide the type of work challenges most appreciated.





more than
skin deep

Almost anyone who eats french fries will at some point eat a McCain french fry. Founded in 1957 in a tiny rural village in Canada, McCain has become a global potato company. McCain is an international leader in the frozen food industry employing more than 20,000 people and operating 57 production facilities on six continents. If you are a certified MBE or WBE that can add value to the products and services we source, visit the Supplier Diversity page at <http://www.mccainusa.com/diversity/supplierDiversity.aspx> to register.

This increases retention while reducing conflicts and the probability of disengagement.

Starting From Common Ground

Motivating each generation is not as difficult as it sounds because they have commonalities. For example, Baby boomers do not appreciate bureaucratic managers and want to hear a message that says their opinion is valued and contributions are recognized. Generation-X members also do not like bureaucratic managers and appreciate supportive training and development as a sign of appreciation and confidence. Millennials resent condescending attitudes

towards their youth, while Matures resent condescending attitudes towards their advanced age.

One of the many advantages of having an engaged multigenerational workforce is that it better reflects the communities and markets in which the business operates. This can increase the engagement between the business and a diverse public. Homogeneous teams tend to have members that reinforce existing perspectives and approaches. Diversity of viewpoints and perspectives promotes new approaches and ideas that would not emerge otherwise.

There are many excellent examples of corporations tackling engagement of the

multigenerational workforces. Initiating and promoting conversations about generations is important because communication increases understanding of perspectives and needs. AT&T created a multi-generational Employee Resource Group called OxyGEN. The group is a resource for attracting, developing and retaining young professionals by sharing knowledge and experiences of older workers. It is designed to help young professionals find their way in the company; develop thought leaders among emerging professionals; give experienced professionals the opportunity to lead the new generation; and encourage advisors and retirees to share their knowledge. Debbie Storey, the Senior VP Talent Development and Chief Diversity Officer for AT&T explains that, "The millennials are leading the way on using social networks and are gaining knowledge from more experienced professionals."

The Director of Human Resources Management and Development, Audrey Tremblay for L'Oréal Canada says the company's Adding Value to Generational Differences program enables "...a mix of different generations to work together to better appreciate their differences and develop collaborative skills."

Technology and Human Resources Pave the Way

Technology may seem like a generational barrier, but a collaborative culture can change that perception. While the younger generations embrace technology without hesitation, the older generations have the work knowledge and experience that only comes with time. Using technology for training and development, to promote the sharing of ideas and suggestions, and networking among diverse groups works puts everyone on equal footing and breaks down the stereotypes that create conflict.

Creating a supportive culture is the result of effort on many fronts. Senior management needs to take the workforce makeup into account when developing Human Resources strategies. Hiring decisions should not be controlled by one generation because people tend to hire people like themselves. The HR policies and procedures must recognize generational differences and ensure that each generation is taken into consideration for promotions, succession planning, and career development. No one said it would be easy for businesses to accommodate so many generations under one roof, but there is no doubt the effort is rewarding.

ONE OF THE MANY ADVANTAGES OF HAVING AN ENGAGED MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE IS THAT IT BETTER REFLECTS THE COMMUNITIES AND MARKETS IN WHICH THE BUSINESS OPERATES.



Keeping Short Coaching Sessions on Target for Long-Term Results

- By Peter Scott



Keeping coaching sessions tightly focused on the needs of the coached person will produce excellence in brief sessions.

If asked, most coaches would probably say they prefer to start a coaching program with the understanding it will include as many sessions as required based on the client's needs. They would likely add that each session should take as long as necessary to work through feedback issues. However, coaches are dealing with leaders who have reached their positions because they are able to efficiently set goals, map out strategies, and efficiently execute them. They are juggling multiple responsibilities and sitting down to 'have a long chat' with a coach will hold little appeal. Coaching sessions might be brief, but that does not change the end goal. Companies investing resources in professional coaching programs expect

a return on investment. Fortunately, with the right approach, the short coaching sessions can be just as effective as longer ones.

Coaching can play an important role in developing leadership, but corporations can ill afford to have critical staff tied up in long sessions. Despite the fact that coaching is associated with better performance through the delivery of customized development opportunities, it still has an image problem in some ways because of the difficulty in making a direct association between investment in the program and a measurable return on investment (ROI). Yet ROI is the language of leaders, so the first rule of thumb is to develop clear goals and expectations for each coaching session, no matter how brief. It is important

to resist the temptation to lower expectations when time is short because that jeopardizes the entire program. The length of the session is not of importance. It is the results of the session that count.

What Fits in the Session?

Assume there is good chemistry between the coach and the staff member, and the coached person is motivated to increase self-awareness to enhance leadership capabilities. It is now up to the coach

to design the session to achieve maximum results in the allotted session time. Using the language of leaders, the coach has to set goals for each session based on assessments of the coachee's needs. Coaching is not designed to fix behavior problems. It is meant to help leaders or potential leaders learn and grow. If the sessions devolve into the equivalent of 'reprimand' conversations, the effectiveness of coaching is lost.

The coaching conversations have to be targeted and support the reasons why coaching was started in the first place. Reasons include leadership development, succession planning, improving work performance, taking organizational performance to the next level, increasing employee engagement, and improving talent retention rates. Each coaching session should correlate to the reason for coaching. Coaching is a fluid process

COACHING CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP, BUT CORPORATIONS CAN ILL AFFORD TO HAVE CRITICAL STAFF TIED UP IN LONG SESSIONS.

in that, in the absence of coaching expertise, focus can easily shift from business performance to personal issues. The reality is that short sessions of coaching need to address clearly defined business issues to keep conversations on topic.

German-speaking countries, known for their direct approach, find coaching programs are most effective when they complete a thorough analysis of the employee's situation. The first session is used to gather information for the development of future interventions.

These countries approach coaching as a supportive function leading to an ultimate goal. However, the fluidity of coaching means conversations can shift over the course of the program in response to issues that arise as the coachee's self-awareness grows. There are no hard and fast rules as to what is addressed in a coaching program, so it is incumbent on the coach to keep each conversation representing a step towards reaching goals. Coaching is future-oriented and keeps conversations in a business context, even when touching on personal issues, behaviors or traits that cross the work-life divide.

Walking Away With Something

People entering coaching conversations expect to walk away with something. Coaches must ensure the greatest likelihood of that happening. The interesting thing about expectations is the fact they drive attitudes and a willingness to learn. Coaching conversations have to be relevant to the person being coached, whether it is an employee developing leadership capabilities or an entrepreneur who wants to

ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF COACHING IS TO UNBIND PEOPLE FROM THEIR PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES AND TRAITS THAT ARE LIMITING PERFORMANCE.

increase business efficiency by better understanding a personal leadership style.

The conversation needs objectivity, relevancy, and should deliver a clear understanding of how the coachee can take what is learned into the workplace. Effective coaching means the person coached has found something useful in the session. Experienced coaches prevent conversations from

devolving into personal therapy or complaint sessions.

Here are some guidelines for brief coaching sessions. First, the coach must not let the staff person inject too many issues into a single session. An experienced coach determines the relevant issues based on conversations with the coachee because people get hemmed in by personal issues. One of the purposes of coaching is to unbind people from their personal perspectives and traits that are limiting performance. For some people, a single session is enough to unleash their potential.

Coaches do not need to know all the details about the reasons an employee or entrepreneur can benefit from coaching, and that harkens once again back to focus. Coaches need to

understand the person's characteristics and way of thinking that is standing in the way of development and problem solving. The conversation is then steered in that direction so a person being coached increases self-awareness and takes a broader perspective.

If this sounds a bit vague, it reflects the nuances of the coaching role. Effective coaching can adapt to circumstances because it zeroes in on the real issues and needs and avoids becoming chat sessions. Coaching conversations are not griping or therapy sessions. It is up to the coach to ensure sessions do not devolve into that format. In the time allotted, the coach should focus on the ultimate goal, guide the conversation to promote progress, and help the coachee understand what needs further attention and thought.



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Cost Effective Approaches that Create Business Value

Cost effective approaches to creating business value go beyond traditional resource reductions. They focus instead on ways to empower each of the components in an integrated organization.

By Belinda Jones

Businesses of all sizes want to achieve sustainability. After a long period of expense cutting, retrenchment, and mergers and acquisitions, it is good to step back, reconsider the state of affairs, and verify that business

value creation is still the end product of coordinated efforts. Businesses can easily get caught up in the day-to-day operations and forget to assess if the business is still working as an integrated, empowered unit. Despite a slowly improving economy, there is continuing pressure to maintain a razor-edge

balance between minimizing operational expenses and generating revenues. This discussion purposely stays away from discussing traditional cost-cutting approaches because all viable businesses are familiar with and have employed them during the economic crisis. Instead, the focus is on generating

real business value through a process of empowerment.

Innovative Input from all Directions

Operating with less is the name of the game right now. Senior managers are asking employees to do more with fewer human and capital resources. Innovation initiatives fall by the wayside because harried managers and over-worked employees are already as productive as possible and taking on another project is out of the question. Borrowing from the vernacular: It is what it is. As more businesses cutback staff hours and layoff personnel, increasing payroll expenses is not an option. Instead, managers must look at the resources at hand and ask themselves if they are being used to their greatest advantage.

Fortunately, this is an age in which technology can increase productivity, profitability, and business value. Most businesses have technology infrastructures in place and only need to consider how they can be used more efficiently and in ways that encourage employee networking and idea generation. For example, businesses are using social media to connect local and global employees and encouraging them to share perspectives and knowledge and to submit innovative ideas. There are a number of operations that still view social media primarily as a tool for connecting employees to customers or other external stakeholders and fail to promote internal networking using existing technology.

However, make no mistake about it - external stakeholders are an important source of value creation. In 2011, while the



recession was still in full swing, Kraft Foods launched the Supplier Innovation Challenge in recognition of the fact that the best ideas are often found externally. The “Collaboration Kitchen” website is an open door invitation into the food giant’s operation, and the contributors do not have to be current suppliers. One of the innovation successes emerging from this project was a collaborative alliance between two minority suppliers that led to a Kraft food packaging solution. Vickie Hsi, former Associate Director of Supplier Diversity for Kraft Foods, points to the fact the Innovation Challenge uses technology to “...create a pipeline of innovative and creative ideas.” Even small businesses can solicit marketplace input via social media sites, and the only associated cost will be the time spent analyzing the ideas.

No System Overlooked

Management expert Edward Deming wrote that, “Not a single day should go by without some kind of improvement being made somewhere in the company.” Creating business value is an ongoing process that represents the smooth integration of all the components, including people, equipment, financial operations, projects, and strategies associated with social responsibility. Making smart decisions based on accurate information is critical to maintaining integration. For example, companies need to ask themselves if they are getting maximum benefit from the money spent in the communities. Are charitable donations or social programs supporting

organizations with missions and values that blend with the corporate missions and values?

The connections are not always obvious. Reading that Accenture supports the Self-Employed Women’s Association, in conjunction with WEConnect International and large business partners, to help small women-owned business in India sell collected street waste does not explain the business value created for Accenture. It sounds more like a donation. However, Al Williams, Chief Procurement Office at Accenture, explains the program in this way, “We re-engineered the supply chain by removing the third party waste reprocessing link so the businesses could generate more profit. Accenture then began processing large amounts of the waste through partnerships with manufacturing firms and selling the sustainable products locally.”

Evaluating the current social responsibility policies and procedures is a cost effective approach to maximizing business value. Management needs to make sure it is getting accurate, timely, and thorough data on all programs and initiatives. Any amount spent internally and externally needs to add to business value and not become a drain on resources. There should be a direct connection between expenditures and the benefits earned in terms of increased profit, mitigating business risks related to future talent and resources availability, promoting the business brand, developing new market opportunities, and building strong stakeholder relationships.



EVALUATING THE CURRENT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IS A COST EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO MAXIMIZING BUSINESS VALUE.

What Innovations does the Supply Chain Hold?

The supply chain is a critical component in every business. It obviously needs to be efficient, reliable, and offer competitive prices. However, is the corporation maximizing its business relationship with its suppliers? The company’s supply chain is filled with talented business owners who hold the key to market-driven innovations. The problem is making the right connections between suppliers and key corporate personnel. There should be a high level of engagement with suppliers at every tier. Innovative ideas and problem solutions tend to bubble up, but the bubbles need an outlet.

Technology can once again come to the rescue. Businesses can open supplier portals to increase communication. Suppliers can share expertise, knowledge, and ideas with the understanding the right corporate personnel is reading it. Many of the best ideas for new products, enhanced customer services, more efficient distribution channels, and new market niches were initiated by corporate suppliers, including small businesses. If there are too many hoops for the suppliers to jump through to communicate with their clients, they will take their ideas to competitors.

Employees are empowered by creating communication networks. Stakeholders are empowered by becoming participants in corporate innovation. Communities are empowered through well-crafted socially responsible programs. Suppliers are empowered through a vigorous partnership with corporate clients. In the final analysis, it is really empowerment that drives business value.

Removing Barriers to Success in Executive Coaching Programs

Executive coaching has taken on new importance as stakeholders hold top corporate leadership, including directors, responsible for their decision-making.

- By Peter Scott

Corporate stakeholders are more vocal than ever before, demanding corporate compliance with legislation and governance regulations or challenging company policies and actions seen as unethical or socially irresponsible. One of the roles of directors is ensuring there is a risk management policy in place, in turn relying on executives to make good decisions that support the policies and contribute to corporate success in the future. From this perspective, executive coaching is a risk management program because it ensures executives are high-performers with enhanced self-awareness, able to make good decisions, prepared to minimize risks, and in cases of succession planning, ready to assume new roles when the time comes. Companies have a lot at stake in the success of the coaching programs, making it an imperative to fully understand what can trip any coaching program up.

People reaching executive positions are usually viewed as having already developed success competencies and knowledge. Does a Chief Executive Officer or Vice-President for Diversity and Inclusion really need to participate in a coaching program? After all, they are already top performers. The risk is that people who are top performers can still fail because they lack self-awareness and interpersonal skills that can turn top performers into strategic leadership. Top leadership may see their positions as proof of their leadership effectiveness, motivational skills, and ability to get the job done. If that were really true, CEOs would never get fired for making blunders or for developing resentful organizational workforces.

Soft Skills for Hard Results

Executives can fail their organizations in many ways, from making outright bad decisions to refusing to recognize their limitations. It is safe to say that for most executives, soft skills (what some call the 'touchy-feely' skills) are not high on the list of needed competencies. Yet it is often the lack of executive soft skills that can drag down performance and results. For any executive coaching program to work, the people being coached must be willing to increase self-awareness and knowledge of personal



capacities, weaknesses, values, and motives. An executive involved in a coaching program that refuses to accept that the fact successful leadership requires a willingness to better understand personal perspectives and traits is going to believe the program is not relevant to their role. The net result is a failed effort, and an executive with an even more entrenched idea that coaching to develop empathy and compassion has no relationship to a strategic vision.

Even if the coached person is completely open to increasing self-awareness, it will not happen unless the right coach is chosen. There has to be a good fit between the coaching skills and the executive's needs. As a one-on-one consulting relationship, there must be some rapport between the coach and the executive. Even beyond the rapport is the need for a coach who is willing to provide honest feedback and has the skills to develop customized strategies that overcome leadership development barriers specific to the coached.

One of the first barriers executives must overcome is realizing that how people view them does not necessarily mesh with self-image. An executive may be surprised that other executives and managers hold the opinion she is uncooperative, abrasive, indecisiveness, and so on. What one executive considers to be thoughtful leadership, others may be calling lack of decision-making skills. The person being coached has to be willing to accept honest feedback on leadership style and qualities, but the coach has to be able to deliver the

feedback in a productive manner.

Already Successful... So Why Change?

The main threat to coaching success is an executive unwilling to consider other people's perspectives, the true status of interpersonal relationships, and level of open-mindedness. The executive who believes he is always right is likely to have ingrained habits that must be revisited to overcome resistance to feedback. A reluctance to admit weaknesses to others or to self is a natural response for people who reach high organizational levels. They did not get where they are by being weak. In many ways, the executive coaching program is like a personal SWOT analysis in which a coach helps the executive complete the analysis honestly and thoroughly.

The difference between leadership training and executive coaching is that the executive has already succeeded and values the personal characteristics that led to success. When power is earned and the pressures

are intense, introspection can seem like a waste of time. Executives have to be motivated to change or feedback falls on deaf ears. It is difficult for executives to admit a leadership style could be ineffective in meeting new challenges. For example, a commanding leadership style may have worked in the 1980s but is ineffective in building a modern collaborative, global organization.

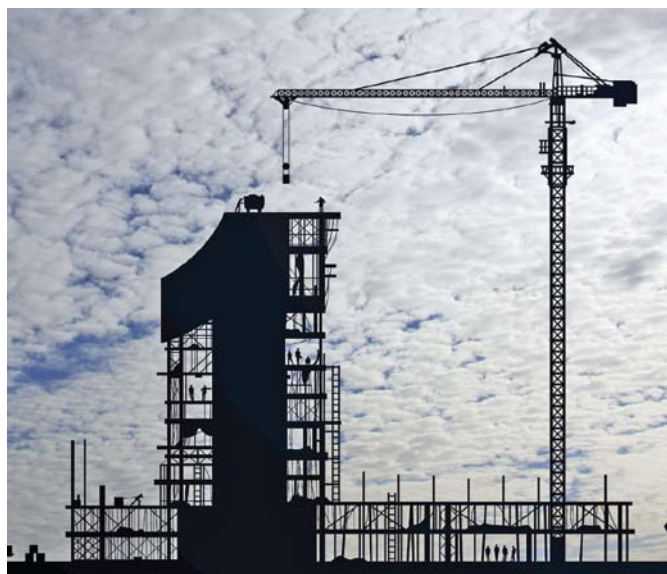
Coaching Program With a Custom Fit

That leads to a final point. The executive coaching program needs tailoring to the executive's needs and individual style. That approach encourages full participation and produces the greatest results. It also harkens back to earlier advice on coach selection. Utilizing an effective coach and getting a leader to agree to pursue real change and improvement are the two most important qualities of a successful executive coaching program. Corporate governance plays an important part by making authorization of the program

A QUALITY EXECUTIVE COACHING PROGRAM BRINGS TOGETHER INTELLIGENCE FROM MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES THAT INCLUDE COMMUNICATIONS, PSYCHOLOGY, CONSULTING, COUNSELING, AND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE LEADERSHIP.

a component of a risk management or succession policy. Encouragement from directors sends a clear message that the coaching process is considered vital to corporate success and continuance.

A quality executive coaching program brings together intelligence from multiple disciplines that include communications, psychology, consulting, counseling, and transformative change leadership. It can improve business acumen, analytical thinking skills, relationships with other corporate leaders and staff, organizational skills, communication skills, and more. Participants in coaching programs often express surprise at how much they learn about themselves. Leaders assuming a "lonely at the top" determination are trying to face a rapidly changing marketplace with competencies and traits developed in the past that will not necessarily work in the future. It also explains the daily news stories of executives who are supremely qualified and yet are obviously failing. Think about it...



Risks Accompany Corporate Political Spending

European and U.S. Corporations are grappling with the risks and consequences of political spending decisions.

- By Donna Chan

Corporations view political spending along a spectrum that ranges from freedom of expression to a desire to influence political candidates, government officials, or lobby groups for competitive purposes. The overriding goals are to improve firm performance and thus shareholder value, the only two factors outside of exercising social responsibility that justify expenditures. However, as a strategic maneuver intended to increase corporate competitiveness, political spending presents numerous risks as well as benefits, and they must be carefully balanced. Since political spending could be defined as a high-risk strategy, developing good corporate governance principles and instituting transparency is critical.

The issues surround political spending affect businesses in every country. In Europe and the U.S., the most recent discussions have centered on corporate transparency and the potential for government corruption. Since Europe is composed of a diversified set of countries, it is not surprising that a 2011 National Integrity System assessment carried out in 25 countries by Transparency International found a diversity of integrity systems in the political, governmental, and business sectors. For example, Switzerland and Sweden do not mandate party financing regulations. The UK, France, Lithuania, Germany, Slovenia and Poland regulate lobbying.

In the United States, the picture is similar though confusing. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act makes it "...unlawful for certain classes of persons and entities to make payments to foreign government officials to assist in obtaining or retaining business." However, in the controversial *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the U.S. Supreme



Court ruled that publicly-traded corporations, labor unions, and associations could not be prohibited from making independent expenditures for political purposes and did not need shareholder consent.

Drilling Down to the Real Issues

When drilling down to the real issues, corporate political spending in any country, regardless of the laws, needs to be considered in light of the risks it brings to the corporations. The reality is that a country may allow political spending on campaigns and lobbying, or in support of particular political causes, but there will be an impact on stakeholders and potentially the bottom line. Assume a company that brands itself as having an ethical culture makes a big donation to a political candidate with a questionable reputation or contributes to a political lobby group that could influence the government to develop policies contributing to the company's ability to do business, but will hurt the local community. For example, a company donates to a lobby group promoting mining of a critical company resource, but the community environment becomes unlivable. There is also the issue of resource allocation. Every dollar, euro, or pound spent for political purposes is a dollar, euro, or pound that cannot be invested or used for business expansion or research and development.

Balancing corporate responsibility, stakeholder interests, and political spending can be complicated and raises numerous questions. Topping the list is: How much should corporations disclose? Large

American corporations seem to be answering the question by voluntarily disclosing their political spending, after coming to agreements with shareholders. In Europe, companies are increasingly self-monitoring. The U.K. Companies Act requires shareholder approval of political budgets, which has not ended spending as some expected. However, it did serve as a brake on the value and pace of spending, with companies spending less than the amount approved by shareholders.

The risks that accompany political spending are a matter of degree. One of the issues is the appearance of the company "elite" using other people's money to support favored political candidates or causes, with very little accountability or justification. Even in publicly traded companies, seeking shareholder approval can still be viewed by external stakeholders as executives "playing political favorites" because the largest shareholders have the loudest voice. Another issue in the U.S. is similar to one unions experience when making political contributions. The spending may not reflect or may misrepresent shareholder preferences.

Yet another risk is that the business may be seen as having too much influence in politics, creating an uncomfortable image of corporate executives determining the nation's business, financial, social, and environmental laws. The verdict is out as to whether political spending hurts or harms market share. However, political spending can raise outcome expectations among stakeholders.

COMPLETING THE PICTURE IS STRONG BOARD OF DIRECTOR OVERSIGHT OF THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES DEVELOPMENT, SUBMISSION OF SPENDING REQUESTS, DECISION-MAKING, AND DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY.

Transparency and Boundaries Offer Balance

What is driving U.S. companies to disclose political spending is a growing interest in being transparent. They are moving more towards the European model by reaching agreements with shareholders as to the amount and disclosure of political spending or by acting on their own initiatives. These companies include familiar names like Microsoft, Time Warner, and Merck. Transparency is important to assuaging double concerns as to whether the corporation's spending is for the benefit of the company as a whole or whether elected officials or their staff members are being "bought." This boils down to reputational risk and a risk of misalignment between corporate values and spending.

There are also legal liability risks. Corporations must adhere to the law, and political spending is particularly prone to corruption. There are several ways to manage the risks, and they all come down to good corporate governance. Leadership must develop corporate policies and procedures that establish boundaries. The boundaries apply to the decision-makers, as well

as employees. A company can quickly get in trouble when employees engage in political activity. Policies and procedures present what is acceptable, delineate the issues and organizations that can be supported, and limit corporate liability. Procedures include identifying the process of submitting requests for spending. Transparent decision-making helps stakeholders understand the justifications for the spending decisions. Decisions can be upper-management committee-based or managed by a corporate leader, usually at the executive level. Information needs to be posted on the company website about policies, procedures, and spending.

Completing the picture is strong Board of Director oversight of the entire process of policy and procedures development, submission of spending requests, decision-making, and disclosure and transparency. There is no single system that is appropriate for corporations. However, all European and U.S. businesses have a vested interest in maintaining an ethical culture and a healthy relationship with stakeholders and the government. Maintaining control of political spending is just good business.

Applying Positive Psychology to Business Coaching in a World of Change

Executive coaching has taken on new importance as stakeholders hold top corporate leadership, including directors, responsible for their decision-making.

- By Ingrid Johnson



Business talk today concerns the multifaceted impact of the recession and struggling economy on workforces trying to cope in environments marked by cutbacks, increased workloads, concerns about job security, and other stresses. In turn, Human Resources professionals must spend considerably more time dealing with human fears on a routine basis and are as often the messengers of bad news as they are of good news. This is an environment that can take an emotional toll that interferes with the ability to maintain a positive outlook and erodes self-confidence. Offering a strategy for overcoming the negative mindsets is business coaching based on positive psychology principles. The coaching program uses a scientifically-rooted approach to developing and maintaining positive

mindsets, helping people recognize their potential, and improving business results through workforce development.

The positive psychology paradigm is based on the scientific study of the power of positive thought processes and mental strengths to enable people to overcome adversity, anxiety, and low confidence levels. Applying psychology in the business setting is not a new idea, but it has taken on new importance in an environment that is best described as volatile, uncertain, and stressful. Human Resources professionals are frontline leaders who daily deal with critical issues like workforce reductions, compensation issues, disciplinary procedures, and many other difficult situations involving employee relationships and personal issues that impact work performance. Employees are trying to remain productive despite experiencing high anxiety levels. Every day, corporations are announcing new layoffs, heightening the fear. In this setting, everyone is a candidate for coaching on the power of positive mindsets.

Nurturing Strengths Rather Than Identifying Weaknesses

Positive psychology coaching in the business setting identifies, develops, and nurtures people's best qualities and strengths and helps them find their ideal roles where use of those personal assets can be maximized. It helps people be optimistic about the future, a much needed quality in difficult economies. A well-structured

program re-engages employees by teaching methods for overcoming negative mindsets. This is a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy that has proven adaptable to various settings. Positive organizational behavior (POB) principles used as workplace interventions and management practices are an offshoot of positive psychology used in counseling settings.

Positive psychology takes a different approach than other types of psychological programs. Rather than identifying deficits and ways to overcome them, it focuses on people's assets and how to develop their full potential. From the get-go, it depends on zeroing in on the positive to help people develop strategies for practicing optimism, maintaining mental and emotional balance, strengthening a commitment to goal achievement, and so on.

That is what positive psychology can achieve, but there is still the matter of how it applies to business coaching programs. There is a difference between a "feel good" motivational program, typically found in business settings, and positive organizational behavior coaching. Positive psychology assesses, measures, and records efforts in order to judge the returns on investment. One of the nice features of this approach is that it is a training program that can be defended with hard data and provides accountability for results, which executives demand when considering training and development program funding. It is challenging to convince senior managers that a coaching program designed to create positive emotions

is a hard-core business strategy. Yet, positive psychology fills training gaps because it considers the whole person rather than just their productivity. Personal growth is encouraged, leading to people rising to challenges by relying on their renewed confidence and optimism. It is a holistic coaching approach that considers a person's physical performance and emotional state and the means for achieving superior workplace performance by increasing self-awareness and fostering positivity.

One of the many advantages of this coaching style is that it can be applied to everyone in the organization, from the executive level to lower-level staff, because personal happiness is not the purview of senior managers. Management theorists frequently discuss the importance of every organizational member buying into the culture and vision and exercising position leadership. Anxious people have difficult concentration on job performance, leaving enormous productivity gaps and undeveloped leadership. Positive psychology shifts people's focus from anxiety to strengths and personal vision.

Turning Coaching Program Upside Down

Though the principles of positive psychology coaching can be applied in general development programs, formal management coaching should rely on professional, accredited coaches since the program blends an evidence-based approach and scientific principles. Professional coaches have specialized assessment and reporting

Though the principles of positive psychology coaching can be applied in general development programs, formal management coaching should rely on professional, accredited coaches since the program blends an evidence-based approach and scientific principles.

tools that are quite different from traditional business coaching tools. The positive psychology tools assess existing strengths rather than identifying weaknesses. It flips commonly accepted coaching principles upside down. For example, the Values in Action strengths survey is a questionnaire that measures human strengths. The questionnaire has been donated to the public domain so managers can spend some time getting comfortable with the type of factors that Positive Psychology considers.

In fact, the founder of positive psychology, Dr. Martin Seligman, maintains the Authentic Happiness website that is accessed by over two million global users. Coaching people to increased happiness addresses three pathways: the Pleasant Life is through emotions; the Engaged Life is through connection with internal or external activity; and the Meaningful Life is through personal meaning. When a coach works with a staff member like the Human Resources Director, the ultimate goal is to assist the person with finding what has meaning to that individual and then connecting what is personally intrinsically rewarding to job performance, effort, mindset, and so on. If it sounds a bit esoteric, remember that this is a scientifically based program with measurable results.

In strained business

environments, there is a natural tendency for staff members to put up defenses and become disengaged. This is during a time when businesses need each and every member to be at the top of their game. Positive psychology offers a method of re-engaging staff by helping them find and rely on their personal traits, strengths, and capabilities. Ultimately, it is about being happy and translating that happiness into quality performance in work and personal lives.



Nielsen

Rates Itself on Supplier Diversity and Scored Successful

Nielsen is a top-ranked ratings company with a clear vision of remaining an industry leader in data collection. A key part of the plan is developing a supplier diversity program that becomes an industry benchmark.

By Sharon Ross



*Lamont Robinson
Vice President Supplier Diversity,
Nielsen*

In a few words, Nielsen is a company that measures what people watch and buy. The longer version is more complex. Nielsen does collect data on what people watch on television, but it also collects data for businesses that need to know more about retail market segmentation, the relationship of mobile technology to television show preferences, consumer shopping trends, how to best introduce and market new and innovative products, and how social media interfaces with television.

Nielsen has customers across industries and truly has a finger on the marketplace pulse. In the process of serving its customers, Nielsen also learned more about itself. That led to bringing Lamont Robinson onboard in October 2012 as the Vice President, Supplier Diversity to develop, manage and grow a supplier diversity program.

Robinson was introduced to supplier diversity while working at Abbott Laboratories and had his first opportunity to work as a full-time supplier diversity leader at Cardinal Health. The next career step was building a successful supplier diversity program at Novation, a health systems contracting partner, as the senior director of supplier diversity. At the point of accepting a position at Nielsen, he had 12 years of experience in the health industry and was ready to challenge himself in another industry.

A Convincing Approach

Robinson's first question at Nielsen was, "Which of our customers most strongly believe in supplier diversity because they are the ones we want to develop relationships with first?" When customers have strong supplier diversity programs, they will push us, and we want to be proactive and not reactive."

He had his eye on developing a supplier diversity program that reflects the makeup of the communities measured by Nielsen. Forming client relationships first was a calculated approach to quickly locate qualified diverse suppliers already connected to the data industry. Approximately 65 percent of Nielsen's budget is tied up in technology and telecommunications, and market research makes up a large percentage of the balance.

"We must be very innovative in finding ways to include diverse suppliers in new opportunities and in utilizing our brand and name within the supplier diversity community," Robinson explained.

There are strategies in different stages of development and deployment. One calls for developing a series of white papers revolving around supplier diversity and minority communities that would be distributed throughout the industry. A strategy in the development phase is the Coding Project, which involves measuring market share for diverse manufacturers across the board. The information will be presented to clients like Walmart and Kroger so they can learn

The fact the business is minority-owned is not enough. They must identify their differentiators so I can internally sell it to the departments.

- Lamont Robinson

about the diverse suppliers providing products to retailers. An industry white paper will follow.

It is crystal clear that Robinson is developing a sophisticated and unique approach to supplier diversity that could conceivably spark innovative approaches in many other firms. A main challenge is convincing diverse suppliers to identify their differentiators.

"The fact the business is minority-owned is not enough. They must identify their differentiators so I can internally sell it to the departments," he said.

Read (and Talk) All About It

An early success is the publication of the "Supplier Diversity Annual Report 2012." The report earned accolades from supplier diversity professionals, clients and non-diverse suppliers. The information is transparent and discusses what was accomplished in the past, what is happening now, and what is planned for the future. It covers spend, various spend categories and success strategies. The report has already become an industry benchmark.



Another victory for supplier diversity occurred internally. Robinson partners with the senior vice president of global diversity and inclusion on a quarterly basis, and together they meet with each business unit head. The business unit articulates its efforts to meet diversity goals, the status of spend versus goals and plans in the pipeline.

"In addition to the Business Unit Scorecard discussions, we also implemented the first quarterly Diverse Spend Summit which is led by our chief financial officer, Brian West. At the Summit, each of the business units talks to the group about where they are in terms of supplier diversity and the best practices implemented," Robinson added.

The second tier supplier diversity program has two phases. The first phase consists of all the suppliers with the capability of reporting second tier. The second phase involves starting strategic conversations with suppliers to find second tier supplier

opportunities. Robinson received a proactive call from a supplier to ask if Nielsen knew a way it could partner with a tier one supplier. The supplier let Robinson know the different types of diversity solutions they had to offer and asked for an opportunity to partner with a first tier supplier. Minority suppliers calling Nielsen are proof that efforts are working.

Creating Liaison Eyes and Ears

Two webinar series are already launched on an education platform – one for current suppliers and one for the general public.

The Nielsen Supplier Diversity Academy is in the implementation stage. The academy is a unique program in which five U.S. sites were identified and each one has a supplier diversity liaison to serve as the eyes and ears for Nielsen's supplier diversity program. The liaisons help Nielsen find procurement opportunities and assist in the engagement of diverse suppliers at their sites.

The academy was formed in recognition that most

past supplier opportunities have been on a national or global scale and with the goal to increase the number of partnerships with local, smaller suppliers.

Robinson has high standards for Nielsen's supplier diversity program.

"You have to have a passion to assist diverse businesses. You must want to help companies and communities. Companies like Nielsen must be incubators for these companies to grow," he said.

The Annual Report showcases the role supplier diversity plays in achieving results. The rich array of innovative approaches is a reminder that concentrating just on spend is not enough because it turns the program transactional.

"We need to look at the program more strategically," Robinson explained, "by building solutions for supplier diversity based on client solutions rather than just defining diverse suppliers we can bring into the supply chain."



Leveraging Social Media to Find Diverse Customers and Suppliers

Social media is evolving into social business, implying business intelligence. Conducting social business includes deliberately turning social media into an integrated tool for customer and supplier recruitment.

- By Debra Jenkins



The new term floating around management circles is “social business,” which takes social media to the next logical level of deliberate integration of technologies to create a business advantage. Finding the right customers and suppliers are two important factors in business success, so leveraging social media to fulfill that function makes perfect sense.

Social media is maturing and is now recognized as an avenue for creating real business opportunities and improving competitiveness. Traditional methods for finding suppliers and customers, like cold calling and direct mail marketing, have very limited value in a globalized, technology-based business environment. Social media, as the core of a social business, is a much more relevant communication system for a widespread marketplace.

The same principles for developing social media strategies integral to a social business apply to finding the right suppliers as well as finding the right customers. Social business creates measurable value through marketing, social enterprise networking, branding, collaboration and thought leadership. It does not matter whether a business is targeting suppliers or customers in terms of principles. As social media transforms into social business, it is a value proposition. This is in comparison to setting up social media sites to earn some “likes” without regard for establishing a business case.

Setting Up the Feedback Loop of Perpetual Motion

It is challenging to manage social tools that drive specific goals, like attracting the right suppliers and customers. Social media cannot be approached as a standalone project. It needs embedding into all

Social media is an excellent collaboration tool for working with suppliers as well as customers. The days when social media “likes” were enough are quickly coming to an end. Businesses must develop a social media value proposition supported by strategies to attract the right suppliers and customers.



INDUSTRY FORUMS PROVIDE EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND ATTRACT THE MOST CREATIVE AND ACTIVE SUPPLIERS WILLING TO SHARE EXPERT KNOWLEDGE.

critical business functions. Integration into marketing, customer service, product development, supplier management systems, and research and development is crucial.

Manufacturing is one of the most recent industries to realize the value of doing social business. ThomasNet research indicated that 68 percent of small to medium-sized industrial suppliers are communicating with prospects by using social media. The research respondents, manufacturers and distributors reported using social media to generate customer leads, market products and services, conduct industry and marketplace research, and solicit opinions about suppliers. It works in reverse, too. Suppliers are using social media to generate new business and to find out what their customers are saying.

Manufacturing is purposely mentioned to prove that social business applies to all industries and not just retail or service

industries. Used as a value proposition, social media can enhance traditional activities like customer and supplier engagement and attract just the type of suppliers and customers desired. In the process, the business captures invaluable input that can be used to improve customer service, achieve cost efficiencies, and even more spectacularly, develop new and innovative product ideas. Then social media is used to promote the new products or improved customer services, attracting even more of the right suppliers and customers. This is similar to an open feedback loop that continually grows.

These are not vague concepts. Dell developed a customer engagement website called IdeaStorm, and in the last six years has implemented over 500 new product ideas out of thousands submitted by customers. Without social media, it would have been costly and difficult to gather the ideas. The same applies

to engaging suppliers able to bring innovative ideas and proposals to Dell.

The difference between implementing social media and developing a social business is that in the latter the ideas are not lost due to lack of follow-up. There is a system in place for monitoring new engagements and ensuring the right internal departments and for staff to assess ideas and take action. Dell also developed a business intelligence system to monitor online conversations about competitors, Dell, new technologies and customer needs. The data is translated into new products and services. The social business strategies are centralized, while the various social media functions are distributed across the functional units. To keep the functions on target, representatives meet regularly as a team to discuss strategies and results.

Taking the Random Out of Social Media

Taking advantage of the full power of social media requires strategizing, which many companies fail to do. Strategies are supported by activities designed to attract the best suppliers and the ideal customers.

For example, many businesses use social media as a way to communicate with current suppliers under contract, but that approach excludes potential suppliers. To attract new suppliers, the business can maintain a LinkedIn account and regularly research suppliers and create groups that encourage collaboration. Actively working the account for making B2B connections and to establish thought

leadership in the relevant industry turns random conversations into value propositions.

Businesses are also making use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and some of the newest programs like Vine to attract customers. Businesses are increasingly relying on video for marketing, replacing static images and reflecting a marketplace that wants to be entertained. Vine is a video-sharing app that allows people or businesses to make six-second looping videos. The short timeframe forces a business to drill down and identify the competitive heart of its brand to attract the customers savviest in the use of social media.

Blogs and industry forums are just as effective as popular social media sites and tools. Industry forums provide excellent opportunities to develop thought leadership and attract the most creative and active suppliers willing to share expert knowledge. Those are the suppliers for which businesses are always on the lookout.

Social media is an excellent collaboration tool for working with suppliers as well as customers. The days when social media "likes" were enough are quickly coming to an end. Businesses must develop a social media value proposition supported by strategies to attract the right suppliers and customers. A social business is prepared to turn new connections into stakeholders in the company's success, and that is where the real power of social media is found. It could be said that an intelligent business today is a social business.

Leadership Embraces and Exercises a Vision to Build Corporate Viability

Effective corporations move forward by hiring and developing talent that internalizes its vision.

- By Malibu Kothari

Successful businesses need a vision, but the vision will languish unless there are people able to bring it to life. Companies frequently fail to connect lack of leadership planning with the failure to achieve viability and continuity. Yet, as management guru John Maxwell says, “People buy into the leader before they buy into the vision.” Companies expecting to lead in the marketplace must have visionary and strategic leadership driving the company forward. When facing an uncertain global economy and striving to achieve sus-

leadership capabilities. Strategic human capital planning looks beyond rote procedures and articulates long-term leadership goals, while ensuring continuation of effective day-to-day operations. The foundation of leadership success is the corporate vision. Leaders internalize the corporate vision and values, develop long-term strategies for viability and sustainability, and effectively communicate the vision, values, and strategies with others throughout the organization. Their clear vision and shared values motivate people to voluntarily make the right decisions, with minimal



tainability, they should not be focused only on retrenching and cost-cutting. These activities may temporarily increase the bottom line, but do not address viability. Of more importance to continuity are leadership bench strength, key position talent recruitment and retention strategies, and succession

planning efforts.

Companies get bogged down in rote Human Resources processes, especially in countries with complex regulatory systems. One position comes open and someone who has “walked the walk and talked the talk” is promoted without regard for real

supervision and controls, within the context of the corporate mission. This leaves strategic leaders free to get the day-to-day work done while developing viability and continuity strategies grounded in vision.

Encourage or Discourage...That is the Question...

People rise through the ranks and assume managerial position based on past success in reaching short-term goals. When a company relies mostly on people reaching their top performance level as managers but not leaders, the vision suffers. Successful

as separate functional silos rather than blending them together into a leadership strategy. People step into jobs merely because they are next on the list and then fail in spectacular ways, leading others to wonder how it went so wrong. Succession planning requires a strong leadership development system that blends the evaluation of skills needed for effective leadership and a leadership development program that promotes the development of capabilities. The natural and potential leaders can arrive via a talent pipeline that recruits compatible professionals. Once hired, the development

growth, and stability. The visionary approach is then articulated in the day-to-day management, leading to the institutionalization of the new learning. There are many managers who are results-oriented and enthusiastic, but they are ineffective team builders and unable to unite the organization in a way that moves it forward.

One of the most important questions every business should ask is this: Does the Human Resources and business structures discourage strategic leadership and focus on following routines and bureaucratic controls in functional areas? If so, there are several implications. The next generation of leaders able to move the business forward is not being developed; rather, managers are maintaining the current company position, which may be entirely ineffective in the future marketplace. In addition, succession planning is focused on filling positions to get the job done today without regard for the skills needed for success in three, five, or ten years. Viable and sustainable businesses look at available positions as opportunities to advance strategic initiatives by placing the right internal or external leaders in key positions.

Leading the Charge into an Unpredictable Future

Corporations investing in strong visionary leadership benefit in numerous ways. Key leaders influence others within the business by their willingness to invest in fresh approaches to problems, human resources, innovation, and strategic planning. They are considered to be risk-takers,

but only from the sense that they pursue forward-thinking strategies to best manage a future that is never completely predictable.

How does a business achieve a quality leadership structure? The first step is to assess the current processes. To build a stronger leadership bench, the business needs to define the leadership brand, the leadership qualities most applicable to the business, and leadership gaps in the talent pipeline. Secondly, executives must invest in recruiting people with the potential to strategically lead the business. Third, in ongoing development of new hires and in-house leadership must be embedded, routine operations. This step requires assessing the broad development efforts from a strategic viewpoint and not just counting the number of training workshops offered. Leaders and development should never be locked into functional silos.

Finally, leadership must be woven into the organization at all levels. In this system, succession planning is an important but natural component of the entire process. Successful corporate leadership systems have never been the result of accidental processes. There are many companies that had the right leadership but failed to close capability gaps; had no process for identifying and developing leadership potential; and never put a system in place for attracting leaders who were forward thinkers others would choose to follow. These businesses are easy to identify. They are struggling endlessly to adapt to the marketplace and wondering why they are always chasing the competition.

WHEN A COMPANY RELIES MOSTLY ON PEOPLE REACHING THEIR TOP PERFORMANCE LEVEL AS MANAGERS BUT NOT LEADERS, THE VISION SUFFERS.

corporations recruit and develop outside talent and develop internal leadership capabilities, rather than relying on structured, systematic procedures typically resulting from traditional Human Resources functions. This explains the movement to integrate the Human Resources function into the executive-level decision-making process and develop a strong leadership bench by moving beyond mechanical processes.

There are two main factors that ensure strong leadership is entrenched in the business – leadership development and succession planning. Unfortunately, many companies treat them

process begins immediately to cultivate skills and capabilities, and to intervene when apparent limitations are exposed.

The companies first to emerge from the previous five-year economic calamity will be the ones with strategic leaders in place and in the pipeline. The strategic leaders produce outcomes that are linked to corporate vision and values. The leaders are continually building organizational competencies through team and staff direction, leading to a sustainable competitive advantage. Strategic leaders go beyond managing current resources and apply vision to long-term strategies for risk management, financial

Gerrie Electric

Sells Solutions and Service First, and Products Follow

Gerrie Electric's success is attributed to focusing on solutions and service first, and slow-but-steady growth. While competitors were struggling, this company was preparing to go global.

- By Valerie Gomez



Elaine Gerrie
Co-President and CEO
Gerrie Electric Wholesale Ltd.

"When our account manager goes into a business, it is to look for solutions and ways to help the customer solve problems or increase efficiency. From that approach comes product sales. Our differentiator is that we are not looking for the sale. We are looking for the solution," says Elaine Gerrie, co-president and CEO of Gerrie Electric Wholesale.

It is the philosophy of a company started in 1957 by Elaine's father in Burlington, Ontario. Gerrie Electric provides solutions to Ford Motor Company of Canada and a host of other businesses and manufacturing facilities. The long-term success of the company is not surprising when you understand the passion this business has for helping, and not just selling to, customers.

The "co" in co-president is Elaine's sister, Heather. They share titles and the management of the family business, learned from the ground up. Despite being the company founder's daughters, they did every job in the company and were not parachuted into leadership roles. In fact, Elaine called on Ford for 11 years, taking over a responsibility her father had personally managed since 1957.

Gerrie Electric represents a business that began with the ability to see opportunity where it existed. The distributorship was started in Oakville because Ford had moved to town. Starting with one employee, it now has over 300 employed, and the first branch was opened in 1974 in Georgetown. Two years later a branch was opened in Milton. That started the concept of a slow-but-steady today two-year pattern of expansion, through new branch openings or buying other companies, and that still continues.

There are now 23 Gerrie Electric locations in Ontario, eight divisions and a majority-ownership joint partnership in Brazil. The divisions cover just about everything imaginable that an electric distributorship can cover, a sign of the importance Gerrie Electric places on being able to deliver what customers need. The division names make it clear that Gerrie Electric delivers much more than product sales: Electric Supply, Lighting Solutions, Automation Group, Project Services, Supply Chain Solutions, IP Network Solutions, Process Group and Clean Energy. Elaine

describes the company's value proposition as "... not just selling products. Our value is in providing solutions and technical support."

Way Ahead of the Curve ... and Staying That Way

One of the challenges Gerrie Electric continually faces is staying current with technology. To achieve this goal, employee training is frequent and ongoing. Every month, employees attend training workshops in Canada and the United States. This is a strategy for keeping the company's leading edge to protect the value proposition offered to customers.

"We are way ahead of the curve," says Elaine, "and we plan on keeping it that way." She knows her company is on track when Ford continues to give Gerrie Electric business because they get solutions and not a sales pitch. When customers call with an emergency, Gerrie is there any time of day or night.

Elaine makes it clear that Gerrie Electric has achieved success because it does the right thing where customers are concerned and not because the company is owned and managed by women.

"It wouldn't do us any good to be a women-owned business unless we provide quality solutions," Elaine

emphatically states.

The steady-and-slow growth strategy, coupled with a diverse customer base, has been extremely successful. Gerrie Electric supplies customers in a variety of market segments, including industrial and manufacturing; commercial residential contractors; retail; and institutions such as municipalities, university and school boards. This approach makes the company nimble and adaptable, also enabling it to retain the employees with technical expertise. When the recent recession ended, Gerrie Electric was prepared to adapt to increased construction and industry business. To encourage talent to remain with the company, there is a profit sharing plan and the profits after that are plowed back into the company.

How did Gerrie Electric get to the point where it formed a partnership on a global level? According to Elaine, she and her sister are avid travelers and are always looking for opportunities while traveling. Right before the recession hit, they had settled on India as a target market, so Elaine and Heather decided not to expand outside Ontario at that point. When the recession ended, the global picture had changed. Brazil was now on the radar screen because

so many good things were happening in the country, including the World Cup, the Olympics and a growing middle class. Gerrie Electric joined a group of U.S. electrical distributors and ended up buying a majority interest a regional distributor with them.

Canadian Way of Doing Business as a Work Family

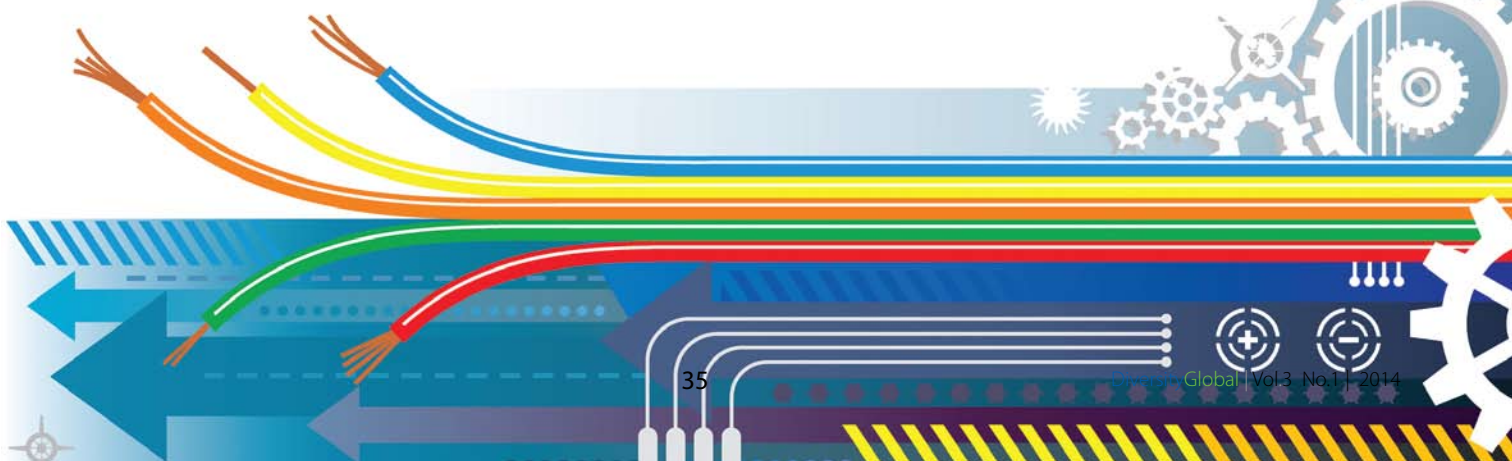
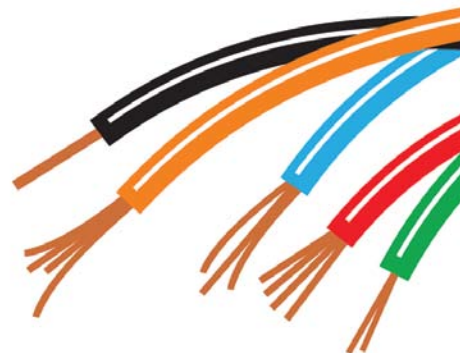
It is important to understand that Gerrie Electric also attributes its success to being a work family. Elaine explains, "A lot of our success is not just about external customers. It is the culture within our company. It is the same culture that was developed in 1957 – it is still there. We regularly conduct surveys to ensure our employees feel empowered and treat the company as if it is their own."

Perhaps that reflects the difference in the way Canada approaches business compared to many other countries. "Whether a company is women-owned or not, Canadians do business differently in that everything is considered part of a chain. We care about upstream and downstream," Elaine said.

Elaine offers some advice for other Canadian women-owned businesses.

Gerrie Electric was one of the first companies certified by WEConnect Canada. The value of joining WEConnect was that it widened the company's circle. Organizations like Canada Aboriginal Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC) and WEConnect Canada can play important roles in helping small businesses thrive. They provide opportunities to network and share ideas and best practices.

There are takeaways from Gerrie Electric and a discussion with Elaine Gerrie. The one-employee company has grown to a \$150 million operation by providing customer solutions. The company does not like peaks and valleys, and it instead maintained a steady course through the decades and avoided the temptation to overreach. The proof this approach works is the fact the next two-year expansion plan is in the works.



Driving Europe's Social Innovation Through Corporate Programs

Europe's businesses have taken leadership roles as social innovators, and they are producing results one community at a time.

- By Anna Gonsalves



Unfortunately, all of these problems exist and can be overwhelming when taken as a whole. One thing has become clear – a sustainable social market economy is needed or all the government programs imaginable will simply fail to make any real progress. Practically and realistically speaking, there is simply not enough tax revenues to go around. Clearly, government needs the help of businesses because they are the source of employment, social inclusion, investments in marketplaces, and sustainable practices in product and services development and production needed to drive social change.

Leaping Beyond Check Writing

Social innovation and workplace innovation (some consider them the same principles, depending on the country) can take many shapes and forms. They can be advanced through corporate policies, systems changes, direct community investments, Human Resources policies and procedures, and supply chain management. For this reason, the corporate programs cover a wide spectrum. Telefónica developed an initiative named Wayra

The European Commission defines social innovation as “new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations.” What really makes social innovation different from other change concepts is that the means AND the ends are important. Coupled with the

social innovation concept is one called workplace innovation, which is a generic term for business innovations that are designed to improve working conditions, organizational performance, labor productivity, and innovation capability. Social innovation and workplace innovation are closely related and ultimately have the same goal – to improve the human condition through innovative and effective decision-making at all systems and organization-

al levels and the implementation of change initiatives. These broad concepts are becoming reality in practical ways through corporate programs that generate business value while helping to solve economic and social problems at the same time.

If government could “fix” everything, there would be no unemployment, discrimination, urban blight, poverty, lack of access to health care, illiteracy, or carbon emissions.

to assist entrepreneurs in the information and communications industries with the development of commercially viable and scalable businesses.

In Germany, the Wayra projects include ClearKarma, a mobile app to help consumers make healthy food and product choices, and Cleverlize, which helps educators create and sell advanced e-learning technologies. Ultimately, the goal is to increase opportunities for people under the age of 25 – a group experiencing 40 percent unemployment rates. The company has many other initiatives in Spain, Ireland, Mexico and numerous South American countries.

Not all that long ago, writing a corporate check to make a big nonprofit donation was considered admirable. Social innovation is leaps and bounds beyond this traditional approach. A good example is Ertzberg. The urban development firm in Belgium combines sustainability practices with an innovative social model in its architectural designs and urban concepts. The company does not just design energy efficient buildings. It is the driving force behind the Belgian Sustainable Building Council that encourages socially-focused entrepreneurs. Ertzberg partners with 't Lampeke, an association that works with disadvantaged people of all ages.

The Thomas Becker jewelry manufacturing company in Germany partners with OroVerde to produce products that use materials obtained through environmentally sound extraction processes and sold through fair trade practices. Tchibo GmbH in Germany has applied social standards

Social innovation is a couple of levels above CSR or corporate social responsibility. First, CSR does not assume collaborative effort. Second, it does not assume innovation.

to its supply chain through partnership with Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The supplier qualification program is called Worldwide Enhancement of Social Quality, and the process includes on-site dialogue between suppliers and managers, NGOs, and buyers at its coffee and non-food products local production and distribution sites.

Pera Innovation is one of Melton Mowbray's largest employers. The UK market town has high youth unemployment. The Pera Constellation Model links local organizations together to help steer young people towards careers in innovation, management, and science. The company partnered with its own Pera Foundation, The Melton Learning Hub, The Prince's Trust, the Melton Borough Council, EDT, Say Yes UK, Young Enterprise, and LEBC. The effort has helped more than one-thousand disadvantaged and disengaged people under the age of 30 embrace entrepreneurship. The community saw returns of

6-to-1, and Pera developed greater brand awareness while also developing new networks of associations.

Coca Cola partnered with the French government and developed the Passport to Employment program. Its key goal is helping deprived or disadvantaged high school students, and those recently graduated, with basic employment strategies like successful job interviewing.

The Golden Thread

This is just a small sample of the variety of strategies employed by European companies (or European branches of foreign companies) in an effort to make social innovation a reality. The projects address everything from engaging an aging population to developing jobs for the chronically unemployed to feeding and educating children living in poverty. A common thread is that social innovation is founded on the principle of collaborative effort. Thus, many initiatives represent partnerships between government and business.

Europe 2020 is a ten-year strategy for stimulating sustainable and inclusive growth. The ambitious plan addresses employment, R&D innovation, climate change and energy efficiency, education, poverty, and social exclusion. The goals are ambitious. For example, the European Commission set a goal of having 75 percent of workers in the age group of 20 to 64 years old employed by the year 2020. There is only one way that reaching this goal is even remotely possible – there must be collaboration between government agencies, nonprofits, and corporations. Thus many of the corporate social innovation programs use Europe 2020 as their foundation and impetus for initiating change.

Social innovation is a couple of levels above CSR or corporate social responsibility. First, CSR does not assume collaborative effort. Second, it does not assume innovation. Social innovation recognizes that the effort to bring economic and social equality to Europe needed new approaches. Problems that existed before the Great Recession have ballooned for many reasons – aging population, advancing technology accelerating job obsolescence, immigration and migration, discrimination. However, there is one more reason – increased awareness and understanding of the depth and intensity of the problems. European corporations are instrumental in driving change through collaborations and program implementations. Their efforts are Herculean and admirable, but there is still a very long way to go.



Changing Talent Retention Strategies for a Changing Asia

Despite being a major player in the recovering global economy, Asia's employers face changing employee expectations about worker retention.

- By Jill Motley

Asian workforce members earned a reputation over the years for being long-term employees who are loyal to a single employer for most of their careers. That scenario is changing dramatically, with enormous implications for employers competing for talent in a competitive environment. Globalization and technology are forcing employers to change their Human Resources strategies for talent retention as more mobile workers in Asia take charge of their career paths. People are no longer waiting for employers to determine their work life and are on the move as they look for more challenging opportunities and a chance to develop skills to their full potential. No longer limited to local communities, talent is able to find ideal employment opportunities around the world thanks to technology. To hold on to talent, employers must develop retention strategies that meet the needs of a sophisticated workforce more interested in personal development than compensation.

Asian countries are on a path of rapid growth and increasing economic influence. Companies doing business in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, China, and many others are discovering that retaining staff has become more difficult. It was not so long ago that the Asian workforce was defined by its loyalty to employers, frequently maintaining careers with only one or two employers until retirement. Retention was not an issue, so the Human Resources focus was on compensation management and career paths inside the company.

Technology and globalization have had a great impact on Asian countries, which are now recognized as key drivers of economic growth on a global basis. There has been some skepticism that Asia's economic growth is tied too closely to Europe's and the United States' demand for goods and services. Recently, regional statistics indicated that domestic consumption is on the rise, and that indicates a more affluent and skilled workforce. Accompanying the changing economic picture has been a more independent workforce that is no longer limited to working for local employers or working for the same employer throughout the employment years. Globalization, technology, thriving economies, and foreign investments have created enormous demand for Asian talent. The end result is that employees have career path choices that did not exist before, leaving employers with the challenge of developing new strategies for talent retention.

Motivating with Challenges

What motivates long-term career employees is different from what motivates a mobile workforce with options. A survey of employers in Asian countries found that employees are more interested in maximizing their potential than they are in getting a raise or a promotion. The slow progression through a salary scale or successive promotions is simply inadequate to retain energetic, skilled, and creative talent. They want to choose their own career paths, do challenging work, feel a sense of achievement, and believe that their efforts are valued. In the same



survey, four out of ten employees in the Asia-Pacific region indicated they are planning strategic exits from current employers when the right opportunities arise. Asian employees will patiently continue working with their current employers until a challenging opportunity becomes available. Changing employers is typically not done for more money but rather for more opportunities.

Talent retention practices must be revised to match the needs of this particular type of workforce, or businesses will find themselves dealing

with high turnover rates and a talent shortage. Though employers will continue giving promotions and raises, business researchers have known for a long time that these rewards are not motivators for people primarily interested in challenging work and self-fulfillment. So what can Human Resources do in order to keep talent onboard as the competition for talent heats up?

It is clear that Human Resources must play a strategic role in working within the organization to develop systems for rewarding each person's

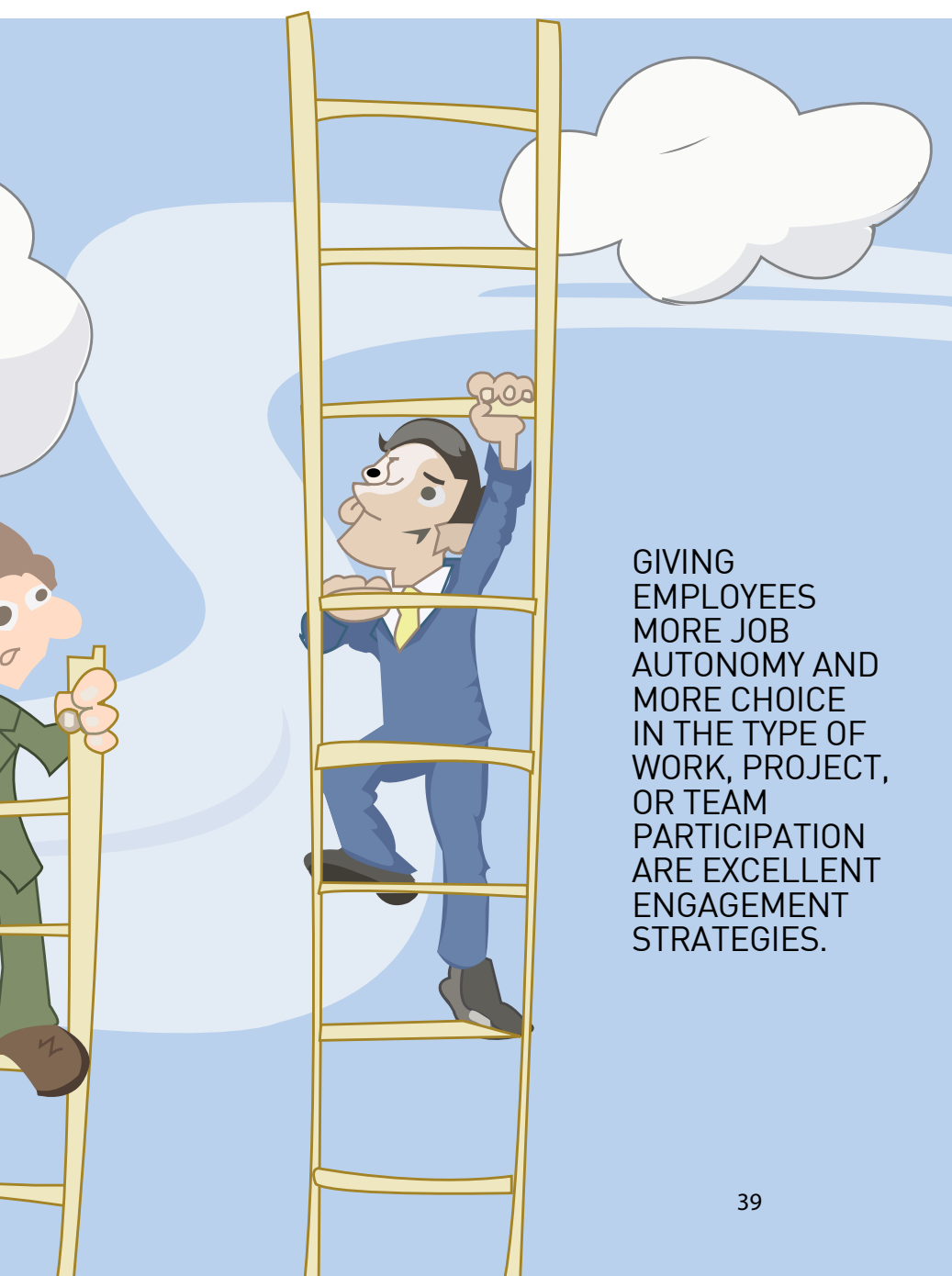
contributions to business success. Intelligent and motivated employees want to know that the hours spent at work are impacting the business in a positive manner. When promotions and money are not motivators, employers must be more creative. Giving employees more job autonomy and more choice in the type of work, project, or team participation are excellent engagement strategies. Similar advantages are gained by allowing managers within the organization to recruit internal talent with specific skills to work on challenging and interesting projects.

A Reason to Stay

Foreign companies becoming employers in Asia also need to understand that each Asian country has its own culture and thus its own needs. Customizing the approach to employee recruitment and retention by country can give a business a competitive edge. Along the same lines, employers need to fully understand the workforce demographics. With five generations of employees working, Human Resources can develop a set of strategies designed to retain various members of specific groups. For example, offering flexible schedules and teleworking options may increase Generation Y retention rates.

There are some strategies that are one-fits-all. Intelligent, skilled people recognize the value of training and development. Giving people opportunities to hone skills and add competencies, and then allowing them the chance to use those newly-developed skills on interesting projects, keeps them engaged. Human Resources should also track the skills development of its workforce members to ensure people are placed in the ideal positions and on teams where the skills are appreciated and fully utilized.

The Asian workforce is on the move, but there are plenty of ways employers can rise to the challenge of increasing employee retention rates. The first step is throwing old assumptions out the window and recognizing that a rising Asia means a more mobile workforce. The proven strategies follow one rule: Keep employees challenged and engaged. That is just another way of saying: Don't give them a reason to leave.



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First Step to Doing Business in Asian Countries? Get Familiar with ASEAN Economic Community

Pull out the thesaurus and look up synonyms for the word “growth.” That is how Southeast Asia is increasingly described.

- By William Bell



Expanding economies ... workforce increase ... increasing middle class ... expanding domestic consumption ... growing trade ... These words are music to the ears of businesses looking for new or expanding global opportunities. These are also words used to describe many countries in Southeast Asia. The robust annual growth rates of 5 to 7 percent projected through 2015 for

the six countries of Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines make the economies in the United States and most of Europe look sluggish.

With so many Southeast Asian nations performing well, it is natural they are attracting foreign business investments. However, first things first, and the first step to doing business in Asian countries is getting

familiar with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

If a business could go to a single point of contact and gain an understanding of how to access 10 countries with a population of over 600 million and combined economies worth \$2.6 trillion, it would feel like a generous gift of potential economic success.

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was

formed to create a single market that promotes economic activity, the free flow of goods and services, foreign and domestic investments, and the development of skilled labor.

The AEC is also instrumental in changing how the rest of the world views Southeast Asia. For decades, this part of the world was viewed as unstable and poor. Ironically, the ASEAN countries are projected to achieve within another five years what the U.S. and Europe are struggling to hang on to or develop – a successful middle class and a technology savvy-workforce.

Time to Change Perspectives

This is not a song of praise with no basis in facts. By 2030, approximately 51 percent of the population in 7-out-of-10 countries is expected to be middle class. This will increase domestic consumption. It is also likely to increase entrepreneurship, creating new resources for foreign investors looking for business joint ventures, alliances and partnerships.

One of the most difficult aspects of going global is choosing the country that is most likely to lead to success because so many factors influence business ventures. It is important to fully understand things like the business-friendliness of the government regulations and laws and how well the company can function within the cultural context.

Southeast Asia does have its challenges, but even the challenges present opportunities. Local Asian companies have been able to succeed by focusing on their domestic markets with little to no competition. Those exporting overseas were largely focused on producing

low-cost goods, perpetuating the image that Southeast Asian countries primarily produce low-quality products.

As the businesses and markets mature and competition grows, foreign corporations have enormous opportunities in helping these businesses build real brands.

Each year the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (CoC) publishes the ASEAN Business Outlook Survey, and the 2014 report makes it clear that the ASEAN region holds opportunities. However, it does predict that the AEC will need more time to reach its stated goals. The initial timeline was 2015, but the CoC believes 2020 is a more reasonable goal.

The goals of the AEC address a number of factors from the free flow of goods internally and the export of goods to foreign nations. AEC proposes creating a single market and production through zero tariffs and the removal of non-tariff barriers, including the elimination of import duties.

One of its most important goals is promoting trade facilitation by standardizing customs rules and regulations and smoothing the customs clearance process. According to CoC, one of the challenges of doing business in this area remains the difficulty in moving products in a reasonable timeframe through customs. However, the AEC is clearly aware of this challenge and striving

to correct it by securing a uniform system of trade and customs as the ASEAN Single Window.

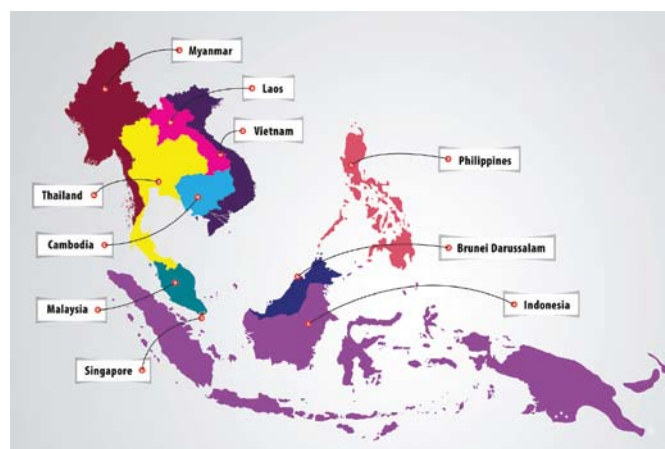
A key to continued growth is the free flow of investment, so that 'too' is addressed by the AEC. There are dual goals to attract foreign direct investment and to increase intra-ASEAN investment.

The AEC is currently working on the existing investment protection agreements to produce more comprehensive and standardized versions that incorporate international best practices. Raising investor confidence is crucial to meeting growth goals, which requires having reliable processes in place for dispute settlements, investing, transfers of capital and profits, government agency transparency and coordination, treatment of losses due to strife, and non-discriminatory treatment of investors.

Healthy Economic Pulse

The Chamber of Commerce surveyed U.S. business executives to develop its 2014 outlook report. This is an excellent way to put a finger on the pulse of the expectations that multinationals and other domestic businesses have in doing business within Asia.

Respondents indicated that Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand are the countries most likely targeted for expansion. The reasons mentioned for expanding into ASEAN countries include the



The ASEAN Economic Community inspires new words of praise that include dynamism, prosperity and world stage. These words ring so nicely after six years of recession and post-recession recovery struggles.

potential for business growth, to increase market share, diversification of the customer base, economic recovery, reasonable production costs, and stable governments and political systems.

ASEAN countries have Free Trade Agreements in place that make it possible to use the region as a base for exporting goods to ASEAN partner countries like China, Japan, Korea, India, New Zealand and Australia. The region includes growing industries like electronics, pharmaceuticals, oil and petrochemicals, consumer goods, and machinery and equipment.

The ASEAN Economic Community inspires new words of praise that include "dynamism," "prosperity" and "world stage." These

words ring so nicely after six years of recession and post-recession recovery struggles.

Executives, senior level managers and entrepreneurs looking for opportunities in a growing economic setting should look south to Southeast Asia.

Between 2015 and 2020, the AEC is likely to have a significant impact on corporations doing business in the region. The ongoing work of the AEC will impact distribution channels, supplier networks, logistics, marketing, branding, manufacturing and much more. The ASEAN has a wealth of information that can greatly simplify the research process and help businesses decide if the time is right for entry or expansion into this area.



Building Leadership Bench Strength for a Global Business Environment

Now, not later, is the time to prepare for leadership succession. Developing a plan for continuously strong bench strength is a plan for long-term success.

- By Dave Desouza

Anyone who enjoys learning the history of commonly used expressions must wonder about the source of the term “bench strength” when used in reference to succession planning and leadership gaps. It reflects America’s love of baseball, as it refers to the skill of players sitting on the dugout bench, ready to step up and play ball as needed.

In baseball, player gaps usually occur because of injuries or sickness. In business, leadership gaps

reflect lack of planning. For many businesses, the bench of capable and competent talent is not in a state of readiness to move into key leadership positions as required. Maintaining leadership bench strength is a critical strategy for ensuring there are always developed leaders ready to move the organization forward. It is not simply a strategy for filling vacant positions.

The process of developing bench strength has to take many factors into account that are unique to the organization. They include identifying the position in which a vacancy could potentially lead to business interruption; developing a consistent approach to identifying high potential talent; and designing a development program. Businesses operating in multiple markets must also develop global bench strength, adding a complexity to the process.

Inertia in leadership planning can threaten the long-term viability of a business. As baby boomers retire at an accelerating rate, they are taking with them years of experience, developed competencies, experience-based decision-making abilities and individual talents. Many have worked their way up through the ranks and are in mid-to-senior management and executive positions. It is not just retiring boomers creating leadership vacuums. Talent turnover is an equal risk, and it can happen with very little warning. Another source of leadership gaps is the rapidly changing global business environment.

Well-managed companies develop bench strength to meet the needs of succession planning and anticipated leadership needs. Leadership development programs should produce an optimal pool of talent and can do so by meeting certain criteria. First,



the pool of talent should be of sufficient a size to fill key positions, on a global basis, now and over the next five years. Second, the leadership bench needs to reflect corporate diversity, inclusion policies and goals. Third, the process of developing bench strength must include a talent retention plan or the effort is at risk of being wasted.

Beyond Vacancies and Into Future Planning

Succession planning is not simply about replacing positions. A point often overlooked concerning leadership bench strength is that succession management considers talent able to assume positions in a growing, competitive and adaptive business. Leadership development is aligned with the corporate mission and long-term goals and prepares talent capable of helping the business capitalize on growth opportunities, which may occur tomorrow or five years from now.

That is quite different from prepping someone to replace a vacant position so that day-to-day work continues uninterrupted. Leadership development considers talent acculturation; decision making style and abilities; ability to manage in new market spaces; and ability to design and implement strategic initiatives.

The first step is doing an assessment and gap analysis. What are the key current positions critical to ongoing success, and what competencies are needed now and in the future to fill those positions and future leadership roles yet to be created?

This is a strategic process in that it enables the organization to identify high-potential talent for development. Competencies and attributes include

decision-making abilities, exceeding performance expectations, ability to get results, analytical skills, ability to identify problems and problem solve, interpersonal skills, ability to articulate the corporate culture, ability to grasp financial concepts, and whether the person has a global perspective.

Identifying the right people is a process in itself, involving skills assessments, mentoring and coaching, and job performance. However, job performance in this case refers to a broader concept than completing daily work assignments. It refers to how well the person takes ownership of job responsibilities, informally and formally leads coworkers, contributes to departmental efficiency, and so on.

Developing Leadership Capacity

The leadership development process needs assessment also. Though most corporations have training and development programs, the question is whether there are also programs developing leadership capacity.

Job training is not leadership capacity development. Ideally, leadership development strategies include encouraging talent to cross functions to give more opportunities to identify and strengthen competencies, while developing a corporate mindset and diversity of thinking.

To develop leadership strength in a global setting, talent development can include greater mobility and greater local manager autonomy within established guidelines. Leaders need cultural awareness, the ability to function in rapidly changing marketplaces, and the talent to lead in international business

Effective succession planning requires the full support of top management because it requires the integration of multiple human resources functions that include talent selection, training and development, performance assessment, compensation, assignment to mentoring programs, and others.

settings.

Effective succession planning requires the full support of top management because it requires the integration of multiple human resources functions that include talent selection, training and development, performance assessment, compensation, assignment to mentoring programs, and others. It takes a corporate investment of time and effort, but more importantly, a top-down approach ensures that the succession management plan is linked to strategic business plans and takes a long, broad view of the organization.

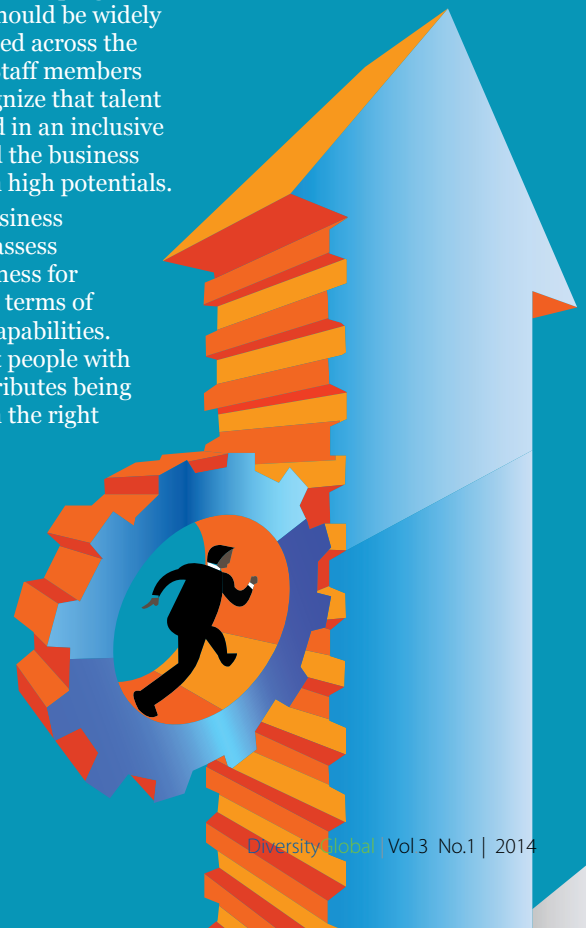
In addition, the process for developing leadership should be widely communicated across the enterprise. Staff members should recognize that talent is recognized in an inclusive manner, and the business will invest in high potentials.

Every business needs to re-assess its preparedness for the future in terms of leadership capabilities. Are the right people with the right attributes being developed in the right

way? Does the leadership identification and development process reflect a diversity of people with a diversity of experiences?

Having a robust succession plan for keeping key leadership roles filled is not just a management theory recommendation. It is an imperative in a global marketplace that is in a continual state of change and becoming ever more complex.

When the bases are full and there are two outs, is there a batter ready to step up to the leadership plate and bring the runners home?



On Second Thought... Writing a Social Media Policy

Workplace social media is filled with potential land mines for employers and employees. Developing a social media policy is a step toward preventing a public relations and legal disaster.

- By Joshua Ferdinand

Some employers would like to ban social media use by employees during business hours, but that kind of policy is not practical in most cases.

Social media has become a critical marketing, sales and customer service tool. At work, employees are also going to sneak peeks at personal text messages, slip in a few comments on Facebook, post in chat rooms and send tweets via Twitter. This is while managing the company's social media accounts and interacting with customers, other employees, and the general public.

Employers must develop a social media policy that is communicated, enforced, and regularly updated to better manage the quality and content of the business-related postings. The overriding policy message for employees is this: If there are second thoughts, do not post, tweet or click.

Ask the author of a book that refers to workplace social media as a "necessary evil" if a social media policy is needed, and it seems likely the answer could go either way. However, Aliah D. Wright, author of "A Necessary Evil: Managing Employee Activity on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn ... and the Hundreds of Other Social Media Sites," is clear that not having a policy creates a business risk, especially as social media use grows and the line between personal and business life blurs.

The expanding body of business literature on social media, the increasing number of legal and employment cases involving social media, and the growing number of people losing their jobs over questionable social media postings are all indications that developing a policy, and clearly setting out the principles and guidelines for use, has assumed importance.

The policy establishes a standard for managing and

monitoring social media risk. It mitigates employer risk of legal action should an employee violate the policy. It lowers (though not eliminates) the risk of damage to the reputation of the business that can result from thoughtless employee postings.

Protecting Business Reputation

There are daily news stories about high-level managers losing their positions because of something they wrote using social media.

Recently, an executive (who ironically was a communications director), on her way to an assignment in Africa, made a pointless joke about AIDS and included racial references. She was fired. A barista was fired for writing snide comments on his personal blog about coffee house customers, even though the postings were made during off hours.



A female programmer at a tech conference overheard two male attendees making what she thought were sexist jokes and tweeted a picture and a disapproving message about their behavior. The result: one man lost his job and she was fired.

It is terrible when a business works hard to build a careful brand image and strong reputation for social responsibility, only to have

both severely damaged by a few thoughtless employee messages.

As the use of social media expands, some consultants advise writing a policy for each type of social media. However, a single policy can have multiple parts and include the corporate policy on Facebook usage, LinkedIn usage, Twitter, YouTube, corporate blogs, wikis and so on.

Blanketing all of the specific policies are Codes of Conduct governing employee online communications as corporate representatives.

In the policy, specific areas are addressed where risks of damage to the business are particularly high. For example, the policy needs to inform employees that disclosure of proprietary or confidential business information is not permitted. The company logo or trademark should not be used in Internet postings unless company authorized. Employees need to identify themselves in any personal postings that make comments about the business and should include a disclaimer to make it clear to the reader that the employee is not speaking on the behalf of the business. The corporate policy also needs to reserve the right of the company to remove inappropriate or offensive postings. Though some people view this as censorship, the employer has a right to protect its brand and reputation.

Employers can also make it a policy that employees cannot say anything negative about coworkers. What it cannot do is stop employees from making comments about their jobs or working conditions, per a National Labor Relations Board ruling.

Still Emerging

The laws on employer vs. employee social media rights are still emerging one case (and firing) at a time. Even passwords are up for debate. Though the employer has a right to know employer-issued passwords, rights to access to private passwords when employees use company equipment are still murky. The policy content and employer expectations need to be well communicated through regular worker training.

A well-written policy lays out the “dos and don’ts” of workplace social media

usage, including what is acceptable when representing the company. The employer conversation with employees can discuss work-life balance issues and the fact that private social media postings can be positive or negative reflections of the business.

Employees need to remember that professionalism, on and off the job, is always important as social media blurs the lines between work and private lives. Though employees have a right to privacy in their personal lives, people are often fired for unprofessional behavior outside of work when it reflects poorly on the company. How the employee “acts” on social media is equally important. Employees should also be reminded to not share personal information with the public.

Attorneys are advising companies to affirmatively destroy employee expectations of privacy. The key word is “affirmatively” because silence on the subject of privacy may be viewed as giving the employee the right to privacy. The same is true when the employer specifically affirms that the company respects the rights to privacy of employees. The employer needs to be careful that it does not give away its power to manage and monitor social media activity involving the business.

Social media is here to stay, so a corporate policy is needed. Common sense says that employees should act as professionally online as they are expected to act whenever representing the company other times. Corporate values should be reflected in employee social media postings, meaning they should be ethical, responsible and non-discriminatory.

The real message of the policy is this: If there are second thoughts – just don’t post it.





Belize Blue Hole

Protecting Belize's Beauty Just Comes Naturally

In Belize, visitors can choose to be whatever tickles their ecotourist fancy. It is a land of imagination so go ahead and be a naturalist or an adventurer while contributing to the protection of a rare spot on earth.

- By Pamela Grant



underwater beauty



Belize barrier reef



Sea life within Belize barrier reef



Orchid Garden Eco

Blue-crowned
motmot

Lodge at Chaa Creek

It is getting harder and harder to find unspoiled spots on earth, and that is precisely why ecotourists should look toward Belize.

Snugly tucked up against Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the west, there is a comfort level found in Belize that is increasingly difficult to find elsewhere.

Its history is bound in the story of powerful ancient Mayans, and its environment is filled with the contrasts of a barrier reef and mountains, jungles and rain forest. It is a bit like the yin and yang of nature and for the ecotourist Belize represents an opportunity to truly enjoy nature while leaving a very small carbon footprint.

Belize is a remarkable country. It is quite small with a population of 300,000, but its reputation for

environmental sustainability is large and with good reason. Belizeans love their country and want to share it with the world but are not willing to let development destroy its treasures.

Each year the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development of Belize issues a report, in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs and the United Nations Development Program, to assess the challenges of protecting the country's gorgeous natural landscapes while developing the infrastructure and facilities needed to accommodate visitors.

This well-thought-out approach and transparency to sustainable development is a model that many other countries should emulate.

Discover Potpourri of Natural Environments

Situated on a Central American peninsula along the Caribbean coast, there is much to protect. Belize's territory is 95 percent mainland, and the balance consists of over 1,060 island coastal cays.

The coast is 168 miles long, and looking out to the blue Caribbean waters is where ecotourists will find the first natural wonder – the Belize Barrier Reef Complex. This particular barrier reef is the largest in the northern hemisphere and is filled with underwater adventures for scuba divers and snorkelers. For those who want to stay on top of the water, there is sailing and boating and carefully controlled fishing.

The waters off Belize give people a chance to see a well-protected underwater environment that is getting more difficult to find in other areas of the world as human contamination destroys delicate water ecosystems. In Belize, the coral and sponges are still colorful, and the dolphins and manatees are able to safely roam without threat of propeller damage.

Emerging from the warm waters after touring the barrier reef, look toward the mainland and adventure of a very different kind waits. Belize's mainland is a potpourri of rainforest and jungles, caves, and streams and rivers buried deep in the Maya Mountains.

Each adventure group must be guided by a licensed Belize tour guide, which is one way the country

protects its environment. Keeping a watchful eye over visitor behavior makes sense in this day and age. One reason ecotourism developed was simply because people can do so much damage to delicate ecosystems, even if unintentionally.

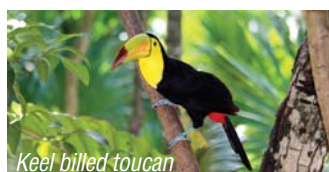
The real problem that Belize visitors have is deciding how to spend their time in the country because there is so much to do that appeal to ecotourists. Visitors can take a steep hike through a rainforest to Antelope Falls and be rewarded with a breathtaking view of the ocean.

The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary is the only jaguar preserve in the world, but the jaguar has plenty of company since the forest is also filled with monkeys, pumas, tapirs, ocelots, brilliantly colored birds and much more. If seeing a real jungle is on the agenda, then head for the Blue Hole National Park which also contains the mile-long St. Herman's Cave.

Archeological Bent?

There are also adventures waiting ecotourists with an archeological bent. Belize was once home to as many as two million ancient Mayans, and remnants of the remarkable civilization still exist.

Ecotourists can tour ancient Mayan ruins like Lamanai, Altun Ha, Caracol, Xunantunich and many others. Lamanai has a bit of everything, including a residential area, three pyramids and one of the few remaining ball courts. Reflecting a long history



Keel billed toucan



Belize jaguar



Belize parrot



Antelope Falls

consisting of European settlers and colonization, there are also 16th century ruins of Spanish churches near Lamanai.

Belize gained its independence in 1981 and is ethnically diverse. Called a melting pot, the country serves as an example of how diverse groups can work together for the common causes of economic success and environmental sustainability. The largest portion of the population is made up of ethnic groups that include Mestizo, Ketchi, Creole, Mopan Mayas, Yucatec, East Indians and Garifunas. However, there are also Africans, Germans, Arabs, Chinese and Dutch Mennonites. The embassy of Belize proudly points out that ethnic groups are heavily intermixed.

Protecting National 'Green' Treasures

There are large resorts in Belize offering ecotourists low-carbon footprint stays and assistance with planning eco-adventures under water or on land. For example, the Orchid Garden Eco-Village Hotel is located in a jungle savannah and serves dishes using locally grown vegetables.

The Hamanasi Adventure and Dive Resort developed an environmental management policy and employs recycling, reducing and reusing strategies to minimize its carbon footprint. For example, vegetable and fruit scraps are composted and linens are changed every three days. Hamanasi is certified by the Green Globes rating system and actively maintains nature preserves.

The Lodge at Chaa Creek is another example of a resort that practices sustainability and offers customers a variety of customized ecotours. This is a "green" hotel located in the jungle along the banks of the Macal River, maintains a private nature reserve, and has earned numerous awards for its efforts to maintain the local environment from beaches to mountains. There are other resorts, and most of them are focused on protecting their country's natural resources.

Ecotourists looking for a beautiful, well-preserved spot on earth will find what they want and more in Belize. This is a country where a visitor can choose an adventure and become a mountain explorer, an archeologist, a reef diver or a simple hiker. Do whatever tickles the fancy while following one rule of thumb: Only environmentally sustainable tickling allowed.



Macal River



Maya Mountains

Following the Yellow Brick Road of Content Reinvention for Mobile Devices

- By Karen White

Tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices are now widely adopted, and the convergence of media has finally arrived. Is your content on the right road to reinvention?

In the movie “Wizard of Oz,” Dorothy walks down the yellow brick road anxiously saying, “Lions, and tigers, and bears, oh my!” repeatedly. The expression became an idiom used to reflect fear of a rumored threat.

Now the expression could be, “Tablets and smartphones and mobile devices, oh my!” and the rumored threat is that all online content, which already costs businesses tons of money, now has to be reworked to fit mobile devices.

The good news is the threat that everything must be redone from scratch is greatly overstated. However, the convergence of media and the smaller devices people are using does mean some

changes are in order. Music and video files, enhanced publishing options, and interactive software like apps are driving content reinvention.

Victim of Disorganized Thinking

The Wizard tells the Cowardly Lion, “As for you, my fine friend, you are a victim of disorganized thinking. You are under the unfortunate delusion that simply because you run away from danger, you have no courage. You’re confusing courage with wisdom.”

Businesses need courage and wisdom to manage new technologies. Sometimes it is wise to run away if the

It takes courage to embark on content reinvention that ties together the mobile devices making up the platform and successfully connecting them to websites.

mobile business model is not a good fit. However, mobile technology has created multiple platforms with scalable formats that attract and expand the consumption market.

It takes courage to embark on content reinvention that ties together the mobile devices making up the platform and successfully connecting them to websites. It takes wisdom to know how to design the

content to attract paying customers.

No business wants to be the victim of disorganized thinking, but it is easy to become one by taking a haphazard approach to content reinvention. There are two types of reinvention to consider.

The first concentrates on technicalities. As much as 80 percent of desktop Web pages will not fit on the smaller mobile device





screens. The last thing a company wants is for the mobile version of the desktop Web page to require a lot of zooming and pinching to be usable.

The second type of reinvention takes advantage of technology advances. As mobile technology gets more exciting but more complex, it is good to step back and do a little organized thinking on how to drive customers to sales points on and off-line. For example, apps send consumers to websites, but they can also send them to specific physical locations like restaurants. Think of smartphones as mini-computers used to check out

of brick-and-mortar shops, shop online, electronically deposit checks, scan QR codes on posters for later delivery of products to doorsteps, and more.

Businesses failing to adapt to the mobile technology put themselves at a disadvantage as millions of consumers choose handheld devices over desktops to access the Internet. Tablet computers and smartphones are never far away from over 90 percent of consumers. In fact, marketing studies indicate that 2014 will be the year when more people will access the Web through smartphones instead of personal computers.

No wonder it is time to develop organized thinking on delivering content through mobile technology channels. One thing is clear: if a website

is too difficult to use, the consumer can simply use the handy device to zip over to a website that has been properly structured to fit the mobile marketing and sales environment.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road to Mobile Marketing

To reach consumers efficiently and on their own territory, it is important to follow the right yellow brick road to mobile marketing. Effective marketing means that mobile sites work as well as websites.

The first reinvention type uses software that automatically reformats a website to fit a consumer device. Obviously, the scaled down mobile website is going to have to give up something to fit the smaller screens. That is precisely why many companies choose to create mobile sites that are dedicated to the mobile technology. “Wizard of Oz” programming creates specific software designed just for the smartphone or tablet computer technology.

Think of it like this: Does advertising look the same on a large billboard as it does on a postage stamp? Technology issues are not quite that simple, but the principles are the same. Content needs to meet the needs of the user.

There is also the issue of brand image. If a business is going to use mobile technology for marketing and sales, it is important that the end product looks professional and up-to-date. Trying to squeeze a billboard on a postage stamp, or a full-sized Web page on a smartphone screen, looks exactly like what it is – a shortcut.

Reinvented content should take full advantage of mobile technology in a way that enhances the consumer experience by

making it memorable and smooth. Content access and use need to be at least as simple as it is on the website. Per AF-Studio.pl & Super Monitoring website monitoring firms, approximately 57 percent of mobile device users said that they would not recommend a business to others if the mobile site is poorly designed.

Read What My Medal Says: ‘Courage’

The Cowardly Lion in the “Wizard of Oz” earned a medal for courage because he kept doing courageous acts without realizing they were courageous and represented wisdom.

Being courageous in business by reinventing content to take advantage of mobile technology may not earn the business a medal, but it will certainly earn new, better engaged and more loyal customers. Scalable video content, customized apps that take consumers directly to websites, on-the-spot scan sales and payments, texted mobile coupons, social media access, business reviews, price comparisons, downloaded music, comparison shopping, and a lot more are possible via mobile technology.

Going down the yellow brick road of content reinvention is a bit overwhelming for many lions of business. But the rate of mobile growth is so astonishing it cannot be ignored. Statistics indicate that at least half of all mobile device owners used them as their primary Internet source, and over 70 percent of tablet owners purchase products and services online via mobile technology every week.

Organized thinking, courage and wisdom can take a business far on the road of mobile technology.

Redefining Flavor with Sauces, Stews and Soups in Republic of Benin

Benin's residents shop local food markets several times each week to stock up on fresh vegetables and exotic fruits. Their low-fat, high-nutrition meals are exactly what the doctor ordered for the rest of us.

- By John Jacobs

It is refreshing to read that residents of the Republic of Benin savor healthy foods as their diet staples. In a world filled with fat-heavy, nutrition-poor diets that are leading to skyrocketing rates of cardiovascular disease and obesity, it is time to turn toward simpler lifestyles where the food eaten is a recipe for good health.

Westerners tend to minimize simple diets, yet they are exactly what most doctors order. Simple does not equate to bland, but too many make that assumption. Benin is a West African kingdom filled with fresh food markets overflowing with green beans, yams, oranges and a host of other foods required for good health.

The Republic of Benin is on the Gulf of Guinea and surrounded by Togo, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

The country is working to develop its economy, but it could already teach advanced lessons on good health through food choices.

The Republic of Benin is food self-sufficient, remarkable in a world where few countries can make that claim. As a largely agriculture-based economy, the main food exports are peanuts, cashew nuts, cocoa, palm oil and coffee. However, there is a bounty of fresh and healthy foods grown in local gardens and farms and sold at markets.

Beninese cooks visit the outdoor food markets several times a week to select from a colorful array of green beans, okra, tomatoes, onions, peppers, corn, yams, mandarin oranges, pineapples, bananas, apples, lemons, and much more. Seafood and lamb are two of the most popular main dishes, but many meals are



Pilipili sauce



Poulet à la Sauce Blanche



Owo soup



Poisson et Soupe de Gombo



Stir fry with couscous or quinoa



made up of only vegetables, fruits, and perhaps couscous or some other type of starch.

Sauces, Sauces and Even More Sauces

Stews and sauces define many Beninese recipes. A stew made of shellfish, onion and tomatoes is livened up with pilipili, a type of hot sauce. Stews are often thickened with okra, a healthy alternative to white flour or cornstarch.



Yams are featured in dishes like obgono soup and pounded yam or owo. Owo soup is made with smoked fish, fresh tomatoes, ground chilies, ground crayfish, locust beans and water. It is usually served with boiled yams or maybe plantains.

Sauces are a hallmark of the Beninese meals. They can contain anything the cook chooses to add, including vitamin-loaded eggplant, pumpkin seeds, peppers, tomatoes and so on. The sauces are poured over main dishes, vegetables, rice, and a variety of porridge or mush recipes made from grains and grasses. Sauces also become soup bases or stew thickeners.

Tomato-based and peanut-based sauces are common. However, they are certainly not the only types of sauces created by talented Beninese cooks. Who would want to resist Poulet à la Sauce Blanche (chicken with white or cream sauce) or Sauce Poisson et Soupe de Gombo (fish sauce and okra soup)? Beninese Callaloo is a traditional classic Beninese stew that is made with goat meat, okra, and cassava greens that are cooked in a chili and onion base. Dried prawns ground to a powder are used to thicken the stew. Akassa is a south Beninese food that is made from cornmeal wrapped in local leaves.

The array of sauces turns even the simplest dishes into epicurean delights. For example, Ago Glain is a traditional recipe consisting of crab cooked in an onion and tomato sauce. The dish is thickened with a type of peanut butter. Chilies add the final dash of flavor. Another common sauce is lamounou dessi, which is made with smoked shrimp, fish and a variety of vegetables. Sauces are often used to add flavor to porridge-type of food staples.



The Beninese Peanut Sauce is made with peanut butter, chilies, tomatoes and onions and easily livenes up any starch-based food.

Looking at a few of the traditional recipes is the best way to understand how simple foods are kept healthy while turned into exotic dishes. The traditional recipes are rich in ingredients like beans, cassava, yams, corn, millet and rice.

Turning Simple FOOD into Exotic FOOD

In terms of food, Benin can be divided into north and south, but the entire country has been influenced by the presence of European traders during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The south is more urbanized than the north and has a large Afro-Brazilian community consisting of the descendants of European traders. French is the official language, which is surprising until learning that the French have been trading in Benin since before 1840, and Benin was under French colonial rule from 1904 to 1958 within the federation of French West Africa. The country gained independence in 1960, but the heavy French influence is seen in the sauces and the French cuisine served in local restaurants.

The invisible division between north and south diets primarily reflects the climate's influence on

agriculture and the country's geography. Most fishing is done in the south because there is a small coastal strip of land on the Gulf of Guinea. Meals are more likely to include fresh, dried or smoked fish.

In the north, beef and lamb are more common than fish. Though poultry and meats like goat, beef and lamb are used in recipes throughout the country, they are not eaten at every meal. In some cases, it is a matter of economics and availability, but in many instances it is a matter of choice. Meat is considered a ceremonial food and mutton is often eaten on the Muslim feast day of Tobaski, at weddings and on other holidays.

Anyone invited to enjoy a Beninese meal in Benin should remember that the right hand is used while eating. Locals consider the right hand to be the clean hand and would be insulted if anyone ate with the unclean left hand.

Most people probably first taste Beninese food in a local restaurant serving West African foods. This type of food is an excellent choice if good nutrition and enjoying innovative flavors, created through expert use of vegetables and fruits, are desired.

The Beninese have taken nutrition and dining to a new level of enjoyment, and that is so appropriate for a country that clearly appreciates earth's bounty.

Long-term Unemployment: The New Challenge for Many Countries

Job seekers are finding it increasingly difficult to secure a new job within six months or less, according to the new edition of the ILO's "Key Indicators of the Labour Market".

GENEVA, Switzerland

Unemployment spells for workers are becoming longer in some countries compared to the pre-crisis situation in 2008, according to the new edition of the ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

"Headlines on a recent decline in unemployment rates hide the bitter reality that many jobless workers are finding it increasingly difficult to get into a new job within a reasonable period of time of six months or less," says Ekkehard Ernst, chief of the ILO Employment Trends Unit.

The latest edition of KILM – an online reference tool offering data and analysis on the world's labor market – includes information about the dynamics of job losses and job creation in 70 developed and

emerging economies. The new figures show that in countries with similar unemployment rates, there can be substantial differences in labor market trends.

While both the United States and Germany had unemployment rates of around 6.3 percent between 1970 and 2013, unemployment spells were on average shorter in the US labor market. In France, where unemployment rates have been about 30 percent higher than in Germany since 1991, it takes, on average, less time for an unemployed worker to find a job in France than it does in Germany.



In developing countries, the story is different. Workers move faster between spells of unemployment and employment than in advanced economies, but that's because they transit frequently into informal employment.

In Mexico, for instance, the number of people entering and leaving the labor market between 2001 and 2012 were 3.7 percent and 69 percent higher, respectively, than in the United States – one of the advanced economies with the highest labor market turnover.

"Unemployment rates only give a rough picture of the functioning of a country's labor market. Our data will help countries adapt their policies to those categories of workers who are most affected by the dynamics of the labor market," explains Ernst.

The data on unemployment flows in the KILM cover, depending on the country, up to 30 years (1980-2012). It is the first time that such statistics have been collected to obtain a single, consistent picture of labor market dynamics in both developed and developing countries.

Skills mismatches are widespread

Countries at all development levels find that adequate education and skills make the difference between inclusive growth and growth that leaves large segments of society behind.

Developing Women Leaders is Key to Driving Economic Growth and Business Success

DAVOS, Switzerland

Manpower Group, the world leader in innovative workforce solutions, and World Economic Forum (WEF) strategic partner, advises companies on how to address gender parity and lack of women leaders to maximize human potential and drive better business results.

Launched in January 2014, at WEF

Davos, Manpower Group's new insight paper, "Cracking the Case – Why you need women leaders. How to get them and keep them," details how unleashing the full potential of women leaders helps drive success across businesses and examines how companies can address the disconnect between what women want and what employers offer them.

Manpower Group's annual Talent Shortage Survey revealed that of the 35 percent of employers struggling with talent shortages globally, only 24 percent are seeking to recruit from alternative talent sources and only 2 percent of these are actively recruiting women. Data from the World Economic Forum suggests a strong correlation between countries that are most successful at closing the

gender gap, and those that are the most economically competitive. The research found that the companies with a high percentage of female employees, particularly in board positions, fare better than competitors.

This gap presents a unique opportunity for companies that are impacted by the global talent shortage and are pressured to expand their talent pipeline. The 862 million women not participating in the global economy remain the world's greatest under tapped talent resource. As traditional ways of working are changing, organizations must address this conundrum by closely re-examining the one-size-fits-all HR programs that have not helped move women into employment or, even less so, into leadership roles.

Mumbai, India

Developing economies are poised for social change. This, combined with a need to grow globally, is increasing pressures on companies to innovate in new, exciting ways. Trends that are creating widespread disruption, collapsing industries, and transforming spaces are giving context to opportunities for growth.

GIL India: 2013 paved the way for an interface with delegates on 'Disrupt, Collapse, and Transform - Are You Ready?' As disruptive technologies replace current trends the presentation drew the delegates' focus to what they could do to cope with the rapidly changing business environment – from newer business models to integrating 'Smart' with everyday objects. With the virtual world becoming increasingly commonplace, the world around us is collapsing fast, causing the rigid boundaries between industries to

'Disrupt, Collapse, and Transform' is the Foundation for Successful Business Innovation

fade rapidly. Innovations in technology and materials are responsible for transforming the manner in which the human race interacts with the external environment, associated enablers, and internally within the society.

The Blue Sky Innovation workshop touched upon the current business scenario and concluded that, while it is important for companies to focus on the cash cows of the present, the rapidly changing market could mean that the current business is heading towards a dead end. It is important to make sure the companies are aware and in tune with the greater market changes

and looking to develop new offerings that keep up, and potentially, disrupt collapse and recreate new and current market spaces.

Mark Simoncelli, Global Director, Growth Implementation Solutions, Frost & Sullivan said, "Blue Sky innovation complements traditional innovation in driving business performance. Collaborations can lead to increased pipeline of ideas, more robust ideas with quicker and more directed development, and a reduction in costs. Innovation requires synergized interaction between all the key players in the broader innovation environment. The key components, separately and in combination, provide the foundation for successful innovation. Organizations move beyond an ad-hoc approach when they develop the capabilities and synergies that support sustainable innovation. But the larger question is - How should you be incorporating Blue Sky thinking into your business?"

Framingham, Ma

Staples Inc., a large office supply chain store, with over 2,000 stores worldwide in 26 countries, is bringing its new tagline - "Make More Happen" - to life by launching the Make Your Idea Happen contest and inviting entrepreneurs to share their big ideas for a chance to receive all the products and services they need to succeed.

"Staples now has more products and more ways to shop to help small businesses make their big idea happen," said Steve Fund, senior vice president, marketing, Staples. "The Make Your Idea Happen contest is another way we are helping them succeed."

Small business owners can enter the Make Your Idea Happen contest on Facebook.com/Staples or Staples.com/MakeMoreHappen. Contest entrants will be asked to provide an overview of their idea in 100 words or less. Staples and a panel of small business experts will then select the top ten submissions from which winners will be selected. Submissions were accepted from Jan. 13 to Feb. 3, 2014, and the grand prize

Staples to Give Inspiring Small Businesses Everything They Need to Make Their Big Idea Happen

winner will be announced on Friday, April 22.

The panel of small business experts will consist of business professionals and entrepreneurs who have "made more happen" in their specific fields, including celebrity chef and owner of Roblé & Co., Roblé Ali, small business expert and business columnist Gene Marks, and CEO, entrepreneur and jewelry designer, Kendra Scott.

"As an entrepreneur myself, I've been lucky enough to have met talented people throughout my career to help me on my path," said Chef Roblé. "As a judge of the Staples Make Your Idea Happen contest, I hope to inspire others to bring their ideas to life too."

The winners of the contest will



Steve Fund, Senior vice president, marketing, Staples

receive a complimentary mentoring session from Marks and Scott, who will offer their expertise to help those small businesses make more happen.

All entrants will be judged based on their creativity, passion and story. The top three prizes will include remote consulting sessions with small business experts and a combination of Staples gifts cards and cash at a value of \$25,000 (grand prize), \$15,000 (first place), and \$10,000 (second place). The remaining finalist prizes are a combination of Staples gifts cards and cash at a value of \$5,000 each. These finalists can spend their winnings at Staples to get all of the products they need to make more happen.

Eighty-four percent of Executives say Developing and Managing Teams is Essential for Future Competitiveness

Toronto, Canada

An overwhelming majority (84 percent) of business executives say their organization's ability to develop and manage teams will be essential for future competitiveness, according to a new EY survey. The firm named one of Greater Toronto's Top Employers for 2014, takes that belief seriously in its own organization, too.

"Our survey finds that, increasingly, a company's ability to form, lead and nurture high-performance teams will be critical to its long-term success," says Stephen Shea, EY's People Leader in Canada. "At EY, tapping into a full range of diverse skills and expertise to build teams that have a shared commitment to quality and results has been a critical part of our purpose for some time. Our people have always been – and continue to be – our greatest asset, and the reason for our success. We're grateful to be recognized for that commitment."

When it comes to managing people, according to The power of many: How companies use teams to drive superior corporate performance, 85 percent of business executives deem inclusive leadership – the ability to encourage teams to voice diverse perspectives – to be an effective means of improving performance. Yet, half of respondents say they do not have the leaders with the ability to manage and motivate these teams.

"At EY, we empower our leaders to embrace – and encourage – different perspectives and provide ongoing coaching and feedback, flexing their style as appropriate," explains Shea. "By promoting a shared vision, the right mix of people and a commitment to quality and results, we deliver

exceptional client service and foster an overall high-performance culture."

The findings reveal effective team leaders demonstrate the following actions:

- Provide clear direction and leadership
- Create an open and inclusive team culture
- Empower
- Develop and coach

"Every company needs to define what they mean by high-performance teams," warns Shea. "Only then can they embed that in a consistent way, transferring best practice from one team to another so that it evolves into the high-performance culture they desire."



UPS Earns Recognition as a John Deere "Partner-Level Supplier"



Atlanta

UPS will be recognized as a 2013 Partner-level supplier in the John Deere Achieving Excellence Program. The Partner-level status is Deere & Company's highest supplier rating. The Atlanta-based company was selected for the honor in recognition of its dedication to providing services of outstanding quality as well as its commitment to continuous improvement. Vice President of Network Operations Matt Connelly, Vice President of Enterprise Accounts Rusty Tebo and Director of Enterprise Accounts Angie Bellafiore will accept the recognition in a Feb. 18 ceremony in Davenport, IA.

UPS has provided solutions to Deere & Company since the 1980s using an array of offerings, including small package and air freight services to supply parts distribution centers and dealerships. UPS ships to approximately 590 Deere locations throughout the United States.

Suppliers who participate in the Achieving Excellence program are evaluated annually in several key performance categories, including quality, cost management, delivery, technical support and wavelength, which is a measure of responsiveness. John Deere Supply Management created the program in 1991 to provide a supplier evaluation and feedback process that promotes continuous improvement.

Wall Street Project Conference Focuses on Equality From Boardroom to Entrepreneur



Sanita Jackson, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., Founder, Rainbow PUSH, Cathy Hughes, Founder, Radio One, and Martin L. King Chairman, Rainbow PUSH



Grammy nominated R&B group SWV (Sisters With Voices) with Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.



Isiah Thomas, NBA Hall of Famer; NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell; Everett L. Glenn, President & Chief Executive Officer, Entertainment & Sports Plus and Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

New York, NY

From February 11-13, 2014, the 17th Annual Rainbow PUSH Wall Street Project Economic Summit brought together people who have the best minds, most experience, and greatest far-reaching ideas for unifying a country made up of diverse entrepreneurs, employees, and consumers. The Rainbow PUSH Coalition and Citizenship Education Fund suggestion is this: Give minority businesses and entrepreneurs equality in the board rooms and capital markets and watch the U.S. economy grow and the trade deficit shrink.

That was the message of Founder and President of Rainbow PUSH, Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr. in his opening remarks at the summit's plenary session, a message reinforced by the other conference speakers. A review of 160 corporations and their practices revealed that major IPOs, bond offerings, and board rooms are missing something very important – diverse participation. As the U.S. wrings proverbial hands concerning the best strategies for fixing the economy and closing the trade gap, there is untapped talent and economic potential that continues to operate on the periphery of the traditional markets.

The core message of the conference, attended by over 700 of the nation's political, corporate, and entrepreneurial leaders, was that African Americans, Hispanics, and other diverse peoples must fully participate in the economy for the nation to thrive. For this reason, the Economic Summit addressed many challenges that exist now and into the future. Illustrious speakers highlighted minority opportunities on corporate and non-profit boards, the status of minority broker dealers doing business with corporate giants, strategies to accelerate revenue growth, investment opportunities in Africa for business growth, and trends in employment viewed through a visionary lens.

Most of the participating corporate giant names - Goldman Sachs, General Motors, Toyota, and others – are recognizable. Hopefully, the future holds the promise that many of the names of the minority firms and entrepreneurs will be just as recognizable because of their success and contributions to economic prosperity. The U.S. simply cannot achieve its full economic power until it completes what the Rainbow PUSH called the "unfinished agenda" of economic justice.

Nielsen Names Dr. D. Sangeeta Chief Diversity Officer

New York, NY

Nielsen (NYSE: NLSN), a leading global provider of information and insights into what consumers watch and buy, today announced the promotion of Dr. D. Sangeeta to the role of Chief Diversity Officer, effective immediately. Sangeeta will report to Chief Executive Officer Mitch Barns.

"Diversity and inclusion are key to Nielsen's success," said Barns. "Our ability to provide clients with insights around consumer behavior worldwide is predicated on a diverse workforce that reflects the more than 100 markets in which we serve. It is a critical business imperative and an integral part of our ability to innovate, grow, and succeed. As a leader in our organization, Sangeeta has been essential in cultivating this



*Dr. D. Sangeeta,
Chief Diversity Officer, Nielsen*

culture of inclusion, and I am thrilled she will be leading our diversity efforts globally."

As Chief Diversity Officer, Sangeeta will be responsible for ensuring that Nielsen remains an employer and business partner of choice and enables innovation by leveraging

diversity as a competitive advantage. She previously served as the executive sponsor of the Asian American Advisory Council at Nielsen and actively advanced inclusion initiatives at all levels. In her new role, Sangeeta will focus on defining strategic diversity and inclusion objectives alongside senior leadership, improving the diversity of Nielsen's leadership team, and recruiting and retaining diverse associates at all levels. She will also lead Nielsen's Diversity Council and employee resource groups, all of which serve to strengthen recruitment, retention, community outreach, and professional development.

"I am excited to take on a role that focuses on building diverse talent, reflective of the next-generation workforce at Nielsen," said Sangeeta. "I am passionate about diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and I believe they are the vehicle to help both our associates and clients realize their full potential as we continue to expand into new markets."

Sangeeta will continue to lead Nielsen's Global

Measurement Science organization, overseeing methodological innovation and preservation and strengthening data integrity, a post she has held since 2012. In this role, she will continue to report to Chief Operating Officer Brian West.

Since joining Nielsen in 2008, Sangeeta has held a number of senior positions, including Client Service Executive for Global Business Services, North America Buy and Chief Business Process Improvement Officer.

Prior to joining Nielsen, Sangeeta spent more than 18 years at General Electric and Battelle in a variety of leadership roles spanning global operations, risk management, marketing, acquisitions, business process improvement, and research. During her 14 years at GE, she received 26 patents for her research, some of which are still integrated across GE businesses. Sangeeta received a Master's Degree in Chemistry from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, and a Ph.D. in Materials Chemistry from the University of Illinois.

All Things Equal at the 2014 Colloquium on Global Diversity for Women

New York, NY

If there are three words that describe the 2014 Colloquium on Global Diversity, sponsored by GlobeWomen, they would be "dynamic, productive, and energetic." The theme was Creating a Level Playing Field for Women, so the focus was on what it takes to build a sustainable business and grow across borders. If enthusiasm is

a barometer of future business success, the mostly women leaders and business owners attending this conference are key leaders in the future of American success.

Held February 20-21, 2014 at the MetLife Building in New York City, this was an event that lasted a day-and-a-half but produced long-term benefits for anyone hoping to glean nuggets of information, strategies, and ideas for business growth and global expansion. The 24-year-old summit is intense, packing an enormous amount of information into the presentations, but offered an opportunity for participants to listen to global speakers and network with other like-minded women entrepreneurs.

In fact, the speakers represented the global movers and shakers, like Jonina Bjartmarz, former Minister of Environment and Member of Parliament in Iceland and founder of the Icelandic Association of Women Entrepreneurs and a travel agency. This just proves how globalized the world really has become through technology, which reaches from the north to south pole and circles around the earth. The conference was filled with speakers from Germany, the U.S., Mexico, the United Kingdom, Spain, and France.

The real benefit for the audience came from the opportunity to mingle with senior managers who are

frontline in the effort to help companies successfully globalize. There were presentations on growing capital (Accenture), changing workplaces (AT&T), bias (Barbara Annis and Associates), and growing across industries and borders (MetLife), and a lot more. All critical topics were covered. Marie-Laure Soulie, Group Communications Director at Mazars, and Karyn Twaronite, Partner and Americas Inclusiveness Officer at Ernst & Young, presented Understanding and Managing Millennial Men Globally.

The annual summit tells women, "Go for it!" The best part is that the talented, experienced speakers offered real-world advice on making that happen.

Small Decisions are Big **Game** Changers in **Golf** and Business

Small decisions made during a game of golf can alter an entire competition and change an outcome. There is really no difference in the business world.

- By Vincent Pane



One brief act, small decision, or thoughtless response on the golf course can change the game from that point forward and alter the final outcome.

In fact, a game of golf could be described as a series of small decisions made one after another, and each decision determines how the rest of the game will go. Should the golfer “lay up” on a hole, pick the blade or mallet putter, or try a one-shot attempt to get out of the woods and back on the green?

Running a business is similar to playing golf in

that a series of decisions determines ultimate success or failure, and the types of hurdles to be crossed along the way. Winning in golf is the result of making one small decision at a time while anticipating the end result. The business owner is the “golfer” trying to win the next contract, the next big deal, the bigger market share or the higher profit margin. Each small decision can lead to success or take the business off course, requiring chipping out of the rough.

Everyone makes poor decisions at times, but during a golf game it is important to stay focused on each hole to determine the best approach.

Wrong small decisions on the course can quickly lead to problems. For example, each green has unique characteristics, and the path to the cup must be assessed. Simply walking up to the ball and putting with abandon often leads to the golf ball ending up on either side of or short of the cup.

The Four-Putt Meeting

Though “gut feelings” are good, they can lead to instantaneous decisions that seem small at the moment but completely change the game from that point on.

There is a reason four-putts in four feet happen. The golfer made what seemed like a small decision

to try the easy putt without scoping out the path from ball to cup. It was such a short distance that nothing could possibly go wrong, could it?

In business, failing to prepare for a client meeting can easily turn into a four-putt in a short period of time. In this scenario, the businessman arrives at the meeting believing that an easy sale is in the making and does not bother to prepare. The client asks a few questions and discovers the business man has taken the sale for granted and the meeting ends with an, “I’ll get back to you.”

When the first putt fails, it will take multiple attempts to win the client over. A better approach is to assess the customer’s needs, prepare correctly for the first “putt” and reach the cup the first time.

Here is another way golf and business have in common. A good golfer looks ahead and assesses blind spots.

A common mistake golfers make on blind shots is deciding to aim at objects on the horizon in the belief that will put the ball where they are looking. This approach does not accommodate the normal shot shape of the golfer. What happens if the golfer plays a slice or a fade while aiming at the end goal? In the business world, end goals are often missed because the player chose to ignore the potential “slice” that could

send negotiations into an orbit that was not anticipated. Preparation and anticipation are two key principles in golf and business.

Improper Drops Lead to Costly Penalties

What about the “throw”? Golfers have been known to throw golf clubs, golf balls and golf bags in fits of frustration. A moment of aggression on the golf course can lead to extreme anxiety and make it difficult to continue playing with any kind of professional demeanor.

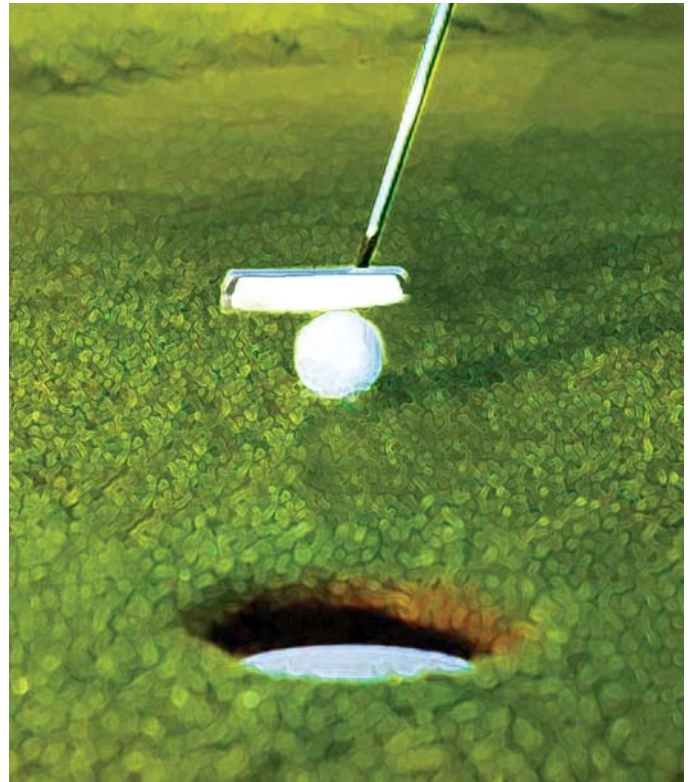
During competitions, this kind of behavior leads to penalties that can cost the game. More troublesome is that teammates and

competitors have likely developed a poor impression of the golfer that may or may not be accurate but will influence future interactions.

Though business people normally do not throw objects across the office, they do throw things like annoyed looks and thoughtless comments at co-workers, subordinates and even customers. One flash of impatience or maybe anger can create the wrong lasting impression. Why?

The answer is easy: The person is considered unpredictable. The golfer will begin having trouble finding partners, and customers will avoid a business.

How about the golfer who makes a quick decision to do



an improper drop? Chances are that most improper drops are not the end result of planning. They are small decisions made under real or imagined pressure to win.

In 2012, a golf player was participating in the CME Group Titleholders match. After a drive that sent the golf ball into thick bushes, she tried to muscle the ball out but ended up with an unplayable lie. At that point, the golfer decided to take a penalty and a drop, but the drop was not done according to the rules. A television viewer caught the violation and reported the improper drop, leading to another penalty being assessed.

When asked about the improper drop in which the arm dropping the ball was not extended 90 degrees, she said that she was not trying to cheat, did not give any thought to the drop at the time, and instinctively picked up the ball and made the drop.

One small decision made

on the spur of the moment can cost a golfer the championship and create suspicion in the minds of others. Making more than one poor instinctive decision will quickly lead to earning a reputation for being unable to follow the rules, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Every successful business person knows that years of effort to build a solid reputation can be destroyed with one or two small, thoughtless decisions.

Most recently there have been multiple stories about executives or managers sending tweets that could easily be misconstrued as demeaning to a particular group of people. In those cases, one small decision to hit “send” has cost people their jobs and businesses their customers.

Winning golf games and building successful businesses are based on one good decision at a time.



UPS works for woman-owned businesses. Every day thousands of woman-owned businesses rely on UPS. Our global reach, quality of service, cost-effective solutions and leadership in sustainable business practices help businesses thrive. It's an approach that's landed us at the top of major business recognitions and helped provide solutions that added nearly 20% to Mercedes Electric Supply's bottom line. Put the new logistics to work for you. sustainability.ups.com



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"HOW DOES DIVERSITY BRING ENERGY TO US ALL?"

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