

THE EFFECTIVE LEADER

ACCELERATING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The second in a series of articles on leadership challenges in the new millennium

By Richard Citrin and Michael Couch

ARE YOU AS A SENIOR LEADER READY FOR THE COMING TSUNAMI OF RETIRING BABY BOOMERS OR FOR THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR NEW LEADERS TO SUPPORT GROWTH?

If not, you aren't alone. A recent survey conducted by the University of North Carolina and the Human Capital institute found that 85 percent of leaders agreed that they urgently need to accelerate the development of their up-and-coming younger colleagues. This may come as a challenge to many organizations since the state of current leadership development programs is not inspiring. (Check out the 2011 Forbes Magazine article entitled "The Great Training Robbery: Why the \$60 Billion Investment in Leadership Development Is Not Working.")

Accelerating leadership development is possible. To do so requires a commitment and an approach that was not like typical development efforts.

Begin With the Business Strategy

To be relevant, any talent practice must be built from and directly linked to the organization's strategic plan. This assures that there is a clear business case for the additional investment required to create an impact. And yes, accelerating leadership development usually requires an additional investment in terms of time and resources. Done properly, the return on that investment is worth it.

Know What Success Looks Like

The other reason to begin with the strategy is that strategy can be translated into the competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) required for leadership success. Starting with strategy means that the success models will be future-focused; the competencies will be defined in terms of what is needed in the future, not what was important in the past. Development can be accelerated by knowing and focusing on the competencies that make a difference, not any and all skills.

Don't Focus Just on the Top

Focusing on developing talent in just the top positions is what got us into this situation in the first place. Accelerating development requires that you look at the capability and availability of talent at all levels. It is most beneficial to think of your organization as different pools of talent and to understand the capability of each of those pools.

Know Your Existing Talent

Accelerated development cannot happen without a robust and objective tool to assess the capability of the talent in different pools. And we're not talking about performance ratings done by lone managers. Our experience has shown that facilitated, multi-rater, and competency-based talent reviews are by far the most effective and valuable tool. These reviews create a common talent language and generate a wealth of valuable data on the overall capability of your company.

Invest Where the Risk is Lowest and Reward the Highest

Development can be accelerated by focusing the investment on the talent that will have the greatest chance for success and that will create more value for the organization. Not all talent is created equal, nor do all people have the same capacity for growth. Development that focuses on all leaders, no matter the need or ability, slows leadership development overall and wastes limited resources. That's why knowing your existing talent is an important component of the acceleration equation.

Make Development Intentional

Of all the factors that can accelerate development, intentional development is the most critical. Intentional development involves:

- Framing development in the context of the person's career and the business case so that the WIIFM is clear.
- Placing employees in challenging jobs, projects, or assignments and building development into the work, not bolting it on as something extra to do.
- Focusing development not just on skill gaps or weaknesses but also on enhancing existing strengths, addressing blind spots, compensating for skills that are tough to develop or toning down over-used competencies.
- Employing cohorts of learners that can support each other, create mutual accountability and act as an unbiased source of feedback.
- Using training or self-study as a small, but just-in-time component of the development process.
- Supporting development with expert coaching, supervisor feedback and mentoring.

The commitment is significant. The change in talent practices can be a challenge for some leaders. But the standard approach to developing leaders doesn't work. Improving the capability and capacity of your leadership pipeline can be accelerated to the point that any talent tsunami can be reduced to a mere ripple.

SOCIAL AUTHENTICATION

SOCIAL AUTHENTICATION HAS BECOME POPULAR BECAUSE PEOPLE WANT TO PROTECT THEIR ONLINE ACCOUNTS,

and juggling lots of long passwords is difficult. But many people think that using social authentication via Facebook, LinkedIn, Google or Twitter will share their passwords with other services that utilize this type of authentication. Good news: your passwords don't get shared.

Instead, the parties use tokens to ensure that you're the person you say you are when you log into your account. So you don't have to remember a new password, and you don't have to be concerned about your credentials being saved on yet another Internet server.

Let's say you want to sign up for a service via your Google account - I'll use my Confirmed Instant Scheduler as an example that would be similar to most other service providers.

You'll click the Google button on the ConfirmedApp.com sign-up page, which, if you're not logged into Google, calls a secure page from Google (not a page from Confirmed) that asks you to log into your Google account directly. Your login is passed directly and securely to Google (again, not to Confirmed) to verify that you have used the right login and tells Google that this is your first time accessing Confirmed with your Google account.

Google then displays to you the types of information from your Google account that Confirmed requests so it can provide your service (for instance, access to your calendar to display the data). If you accept sharing this type of info, Google then sends Confirmed



By David Radin,
Contributing Writer

a token, verifying that you have properly identified yourself to Google, and gives Confirmed access only to those items - and never shares your password.

The next time you try to access your new Confirmed account, it will determine whether it again needs to authenticate your identity or get data from Google; and a similar (although usually slightly shorter) process may happen again.

Since your new account doesn't have your login credentials - only a token from your social network saying you are who you are - you are not adding to your security risk.

Some service providers allow you to login locally with a username and password that you create specific to that service provider or to use social authentication. You choose one or the other based on whether you want to remember a new set of credentials or use your social network to authenticate your identity as described above.

David Radin helps companies and individuals succeed via consulting, training and productivity tools.