

TJ talks to Steven
J Spear about the
learning capabilities
of high-performing
organisations



**Run,
rabbit, run**

ENGAGEMENT | CRITICAL CHALLENGES FOR L&D | INNOVATION

Harrison Monarth discusses cultivating executive presence in America's businesses

Great leaders are legendary. That's why, despite millions of leaders working every day in their organisations, we only know the names of the great ones. And relatively speaking, they are few. America has seen many of her more prolific business leaders fall from grace during the economic collapse, due in no small part to a conspicuous absence of the key attributes that make great leaders, well, great.

In light of the upcoming release of my new book *Executive Presence: The Art of Commanding Respect like a CEO*, I decided to ask US management psychologist Jennifer Churchill MBA PhD, of Opus Leadership Group, a few questions on the status of leadership talent development in the United States today.

HM: Jennifer, you consult to senior management on creating and sustaining a talent retention environment, as you call it. Should organisations always look within their corporate ranks first to find leadership talent or is there a case for bringing it in from the outside, perhaps to introduce a necessary cultural shift or bring a fresh perspective to a company's overall leadership styles?

JC: Organisations should look internally and externally for the right talent for their leadership positions, in the sense that the right talent they may need to meet their strategic goals may not be the talent they currently possess or their current talent may better suited in different roles. Boards and leaders must conduct a talent gap analysis to understand which skills will be needed to both ensure the organisation is successful while facing current economic challenges and plan for talent advantage in the recovery.

HM: What particular challenges do you face in your work with clients in light of the Baby Boomer exodus and the increasing number of Millennials entering the workplace?

JC: The largest challenge is the leaders' lack of concern that there is an impending talent shortage when the Baby Boomers retire and leave the workforce. This can seem like a paradox, considering the current unemployment rate, however the number of functions has not decreased: the

reality is that employees are being asked to do more than one, or even, two jobs. And the number of jobs will increase as new businesses grow and organisations refill their functions with appropriate human capital.

The talent at all levels of the organisation needs to be assessed and developed now for companies to plan for moving high potentials to higher levels in their organisation when the Baby Boomer exodus occurs. Leaders need to become more proactive and address the reality

HM: What role should L&D professionals play in developing leaders?

JC: They should play a strong but equal role with senior leaders in developing the leadership bench for the future. Buy-in must exist at the top for development, learning and change to occur otherwise true cultural change is short-term and does not pervade the entire organisation.

HM: What issues are you most often asked to work on with executives?

JC: The most common request is to assess and develop the senior management team and the high potentials within the organisation. This typically exists within the context of a strategic initiative, eg succession planning, team development, individual leader development, management due diligence and, at times, a faltering executive.

HM: What does the future of leadership development look like in the United States? Are there trends or developments you see coming that will change how you work with clients?

JC: The future of leadership development will increase in importance and relevance for the US as the rest of the world increases its competitive advantage against our organisations in the market place. The US leader needs to increase his awareness and ability to be a global leader.

The largest trend I see that will change how I work with my clients is the increased pace and execution that will be required of leaders. With this accelerated need to execute and respond, increased self-awareness of their humanness and psychological resiliency will need to be at the forefront of their development to prevent derailment.

HM: Enlightening. Thanks for giving our readers in the UK a glimpse into the realities of current leadership and talent development here in the US.

And there you have it, straight from the horse's mouth, as we say in America.

Until next month, cheers from across the pond! ■



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