

The Deliverable:

News & Views for Winning in the Workplace

June 2009

The Green Way to Employee Engagement

By Karen Toole, Ed.D.,EMBA



Recently I attended a Performance Management and Succession Planning meeting where one of the topics addressed was retention. The discussion proceeded down the path of retention solutions in an environment where scarcity of resources exists. The panel discussed a variety of low cost actions they directed at high-potentials in their organizations such as increasing career discussions, mentoring programs, exposure opportunities with leadership and high visibility projects. As I was listening, something was nagging in my brain. These efforts have been around for some time and certainly I agree that high-potential focus is critical, but what about the other 99.99% of the population? What are we doing to ensure that during this stressful time we have an engaged workforce? Sometimes we get so hung up on the high-potentials that we forget we need to make sure that the rest of the population are engaged and committed to the role we need them to perform every day. What are we doing to ensure we are re-recruiting as many of the total associate base as we can, and how?

Let's face it, even in today's environment the associates, the high-potentials, and high-performers who we are so focused on know they can still move and have absolutely no qualms about doing so. I wouldn't be so quick to count out the steady performers in that group as well. While we may think that the economy may restrict movement for the high-potential & high-performers, I urge you to think again. This group of folks came into the workforce with no intention of staying in any one place for too long a time—especially once they believe that their needs are no longer being met. And what are those needs? I would suggest that for the Gen X and Y they are interested in the areas of self-actualization such as personal and professional development, praise for a job well done, opportunity to move forward in their career, fun, and to work where their personal values are synergistic with the company's values. It is the synergy between the values where I suggest there is a big cost-effective opportunity to re-recruit and an opportunity to engage the employee population—especially now when we need them committed the most.

Several years ago I was the HR Lead for White Barn Candle Company a subsidiary of Bath & Body Works headquartered in SoHo, New York City. It quickly came to my attention that there was no recycling in the office. Just let me mention, most, if not all, of the client group were in the Gen X/Y categories—brand managers, fragrance designers and such. This was not on the top of my list as I was getting grounded in a new job in a new industry. However here is the funny part, intuitively I was carrying my recyclables home several times a week, water bottles or cans to and from New Jersey. I am a recycler.

As the associates and I built relationships, and they noticed me hording my recyclables in my office, they became more vocal about wanting a recycling program in the office. Finally I acted. I recruited a couple of associates I knew were green die hards along with my facility manager and got moving. When we were ready to roll out the program we made a big event out of it. On the day of the roll-out, we decorated the lobby with "Green Themes" and, as associates came into work they were welcomed by one of the task force members...

> Continued at www.whprofessional.com/article_green_way.html

P.S. If you are interested in exploring a Green Fair at your organization please feel free to contact me or my colleague Karen K. Nathan, founder and CEO of Olivine LLC (olivineproducts.com).

Greetings! Welcome to the June edition of "The Deliverable: News & Views for Winning in the Workplace." Well, we can finally declare summer, which for me is a wonderful thing since I am an avid gardener. This year in my corner of the world, we have been having a lot of rain and as a result, my gardens have been flourishing - it is truly breathtaking.

Who I am informs this edition of the newsletter. I live on a farm, recycle/compost and am an avid and passionate gardener. You might say I try to live a green lifestyle.

A GREEN THEME is the focus for this month. Karen K. Nathan, founder and CEO of Olivine LLC, a company dedicated to taking the guesswork out of buying eco-friendly products provides a review of Daniel Goleman's book Ecological Intelligence. Staying with the theme, I discuss a topic that has been giving me pause for thought for quite some time—using "Green Living" as an engagement and/or retention tool among the increasing new workforce. The notion of moving beyond the way we have always thought of retention and engagement solutions to what other possibilities exist in this new and changing world and workforce.

I would welcome your thoughts on these topics as well as further dialogue. You can always reach us at info@whprofessional.com or whservices@ptd.net.

Karen Toole
WH Professional Services

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Book Nook: Gain Ecological Intelligence

Ecological Intelligence, Daniel Goleman (Broadway Books, 2009)

Reviewed by Karen Nathan



There is an increasing awareness among consumers and businesses alike of all things green. On a daily basis there is new information about a variety of environmental issues, including climate change, the merits of organic food, our growing addiction to petroleum, and overburdened landfills, to name just a few. It's enough to make the average person concerned with tasks of every day life feel overwhelmed.

Instead of feeling overwhelmed and maintaining the status quo, it's time to read a new book by renowned psychologist, science reporter and best selling author, Daniel Goleman. His recently published book is titled *Ecological Intelligence: How knowing the hidden impacts of what we buy can change everything*. Goleman explains that currently there is an informational asymmetry between manufacturers and the buying public about the real social, health, and environmental impacts of consumer goods. Goleman argues that

we need radical transparency, a principle that calls for unmasking the hidden costs of products at the point of purchase. According to Goleman, "Once we know the true impacts of our shopping choices, we can use that information to accelerate incremental changes for the better."

It must be noted that the message in *Ecological Intelligence* is not just for consumers. Goleman effectively demonstrates to the business community that a focus on sustainability does not subtract from the bottom line, but can actually add to it. The book offers the reader real world examples of companies that have gained competitive advantage by incorporating social, health, and environmental concerns to their usual way of doing business.

Karen K. Nathan is the founder and CEO of Olivine LLC (olivineproducts.com), a company dedicated to taking the guesswork out of buying eco-friendly products through Green Gatherings™ and personalized home or business consultations.

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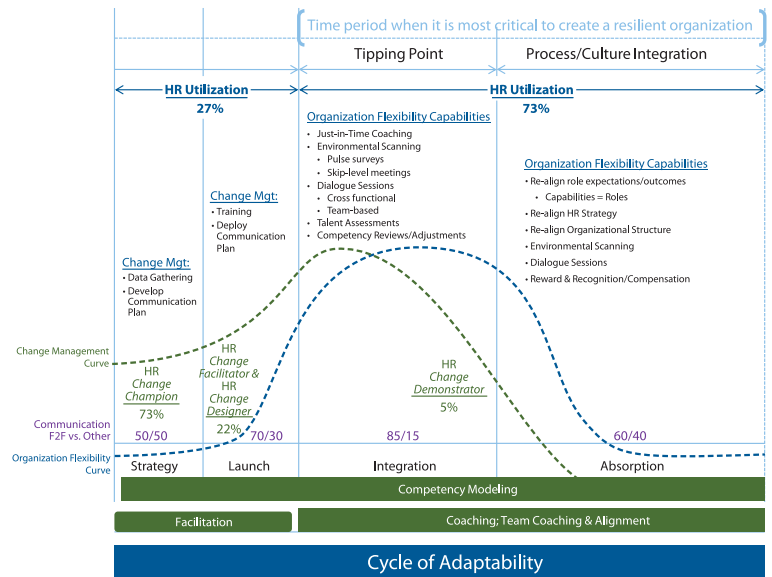
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