

The Deliverable:

News & Views for Winning in the Workplace

May 2009

Leading Through a Sea of Change

By John Wood, PhD



Inspired leadership is more critical now than ever. It should be painfully apparent to all of us that dynamic leaders in touch with the values and spirit of the people they serve are needed at all levels of the public and private sectors.

We are going through a sea change in this country, not just in our financial institutions, but a change in how we think of ourselves, what we believe, how we will survive and what the future holds for our children.

Change always shifts priorities in a society and an organization. Whether imposed from the outside or chosen from the inside, the needs of group members will change, as we have seen in the last year. People's priorities and what they expect for themselves and their leaders have shifted dramatically. The emotional value of our homes, what we want from work, how we spend our money, our image of ourselves as breadwinners and parents - all these are shifting.

Since change is a given and fully upon us, the question is how effectively will we adapt to it? Flexibility in our society and in our institutions is critical. This is not the time for rigidity and adherence to the practices and behaviors that led us into this crisis.

One of the most important functions of any leader is how he or she will navigate through this monumental sea change.

If you see yourself as a leader in any way, observe how the individuals you work and live with adapt when the environment changes. Watch how relationships shift when change is imposed on them. Become a student of how your organization adapts to change.

Here are several things leaders in our organizations can do:

Let go of the past. We cannot change what has happened.

Open your eyes. Take a new look at the people who work with you and see the value, creativity and possibilities they hold. Stay alert to what your people need as their life changes.

Include others. Don't try to steer your ship through this storm hanging on to the tiller by yourself. There is power in numbers and participation.

Don't give in to fear. Fear is only a prediction of what may happen and it paralyzes you and your creativity.

Be bold. Big challenges call for heroic responses. Can you be a hero(ine)?

Finally, do not give up on training. Collective learning should be one of your top priorities as you navigate this period in our history.

Just as species that fail to adapt to a changed environment perish, so will we, and our institutions, if we don't respond to what's in front of us with power, grace and compassion.

John Wood is an organizational consultant and author of six books on human behavior. He has been a consultant and workshop leader for 35 years, throughout this country and in seven European nations. He recently completed a ten-year assignment as the Director of Learning & Leadership for a Seattle area corporation. He can be reached at www.lovingpower.com or jotwood@embarqmail.com.

Greetings, I am so excited to bring you this issue of *News and Views for Winning in the Workplace*. We have added a section called **Colleagues Corner** to bring you the most relevant workplace resources possible. In this issue, Mary Oleksiuk, VP-Global HR for Alberto Culver, is sharing a tried and true best practice for employee engagement. Given the challenging environment it is certainly timely to hear from an HR Leader about how she keeps her employees engaged - thanks Mary.

Do you know that HR controls close to 75% of the areas that can position an organization to improve its position in the marketplace today and re-bounce tomorrow? In reading a current Deloitte article, the levers for HR to focus its energies on are Business Process Redesign, Infrastructure Rationalization, Service Delivery Model and Organization Alignment/Business Model Redesign. Interested in learning more? You can find the link to the article on my homepage. If you would like to be a Colleague Corner contributor or have comments please drop me a note. Talk to you next month.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Toole".

Karen Toole
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Employee Engagement Comes in All Shapes and Sizes

By Mary Oleksiuk
VP-Global HR for Alberto Culver



Good Morning!

Sometimes when you see a best practice, you just can't get it out of your head, and it becomes important to try to emulate it. I had the pleasure of working with CEO Jeff Katz at Orbitz. Jeff made it his mission to communicate to all employees in a weekly Good Morning message. Every Friday morning he would make the time to send an email sharing his thoughts and information on the business, on external trends, on culture or whatever was important that week. He made every one of his notes feel like he was directly communicating with each of us individually.

I took Jeff's best practice and modified it - decided that sending Good Morning messages first thing every Monday to all employees globally would be an opportunity to show Human Resources leadership, set the tone from the top, reach out and engage employees weekly. Most companies and leaders are great at coming up with new ideas and initiatives on employee engagement. Most companies and leaders are not so great at keeping the momentum on their new ideas and initiatives.

I have been doing Good Morning messages for over three years. I learn every Monday that engaging with employees in a way that touches each and every one of them is a key part of my Human Resources leadership model. Every Monday, I send my Good Morning message, and every Monday I get some sort of response - emails, phone calls, drive-bys and I know that HR is making a difference. HR wants a seat at the strategic table, HR needs to show that we are relevant to running the business, but most importantly, HR also needs to use multiple ways to connect with employees in a meaningful way, especially in these fast changing unprecedented times. Not every Good Morning topic appeals to everyone, not every topic draws the same amount of feedback, but that keeps me on my toes every week. But if for some reason, my Good Morning message does not come out super early on Monday - someone always reaches out and asks "Are you ok?", "Will there be a Good Morning today?" or my favorite question "don't you have something to share with us this week?"

So as a leader... Stop... Pause... Reflect... What is your Good Morning?

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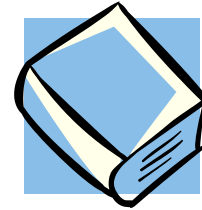
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Book Nook: Can You Use Some Practical Intelligence?



Practical Intelligence by Karl Albrecht (2007)

We have all experienced the following scenario: an associate who is a high-performer missed nomination into the hi-potential program last year. H/She has integrated all the feedback provided from last year's talent calibration to heart and performed outstandingly this year. You just cannot wait for the next talent calibration session to be able to nominate and get h/she in this prestigious program. However, just before the session, a major blow-up happens: you lose a key account to a competitor. This was the same reason that last year prevented your person from becoming tagged as hi-potential - an inability to think "practically" about all the options, the customer desires and the competition.

Practical Intelligence is eye opening in terms of being able to finally say "aha" in those many instances when you just can't articulate what was a de-railer or a missing capability in someone becoming a great leader. In essence, the book lays out 4 mega skills describing the ability to think of the many possibilities and also reign in the critical few, think and move between the abstract and conceptual levels; be able to brainstorm and apply logic to the same ideas.

WH professional Services, LLC integrates these concepts in its leadership framework. If you have someone who made need coaching in one or more of these areas give us a call. In the meantime, check out the book, I think you will find it very useful.

