



Leadership: Are You Leaving Your Legacy to Pigs or Chickens?

A chicken and a pig were brainstorming...

Chicken: Let's start a restaurant!

Pig: What would we call it?

Chicken: Ham-n-Eggs!

Pig: No thanks. I'd be committed, but you'd only be involved.

-- Ken Schwaber

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25% of the nation's workforce will be eligible to retire within the next five years, and over the next decade that number jumps to 43%. (1)

If you are one of those committed to your professional legacy, whether you are a business owner or a manager, you want your work to have lasting meaning. You are looking to pass the baton to someone who can effectively continue the race: those who are committed, not merely involved.

Technical proficiency is not sufficient to sustaining a vision. The biggest challenge to management succession is the leap from technical proficiency to leadership ability. Research shows that the most difficult career transition for employees is from the role of seasoned professional to supervisor/manager. (2)

It has also been found that when less-experienced workers are promoted into leadership positions *they are failing one-third of the time*, largely because of inadequate training in how to handle conflicting agendas and ambiguities within higher levels of the organization. This occurs because few organizations have sufficient leadership to support their most pressing needs. (3)

It Takes Time to Grow a Leader

To avoid this leadership gap you need to initiate "Succession Planning." This long-term process of identifying and grooming the leaders who will inherit your legacy is important whether you lead your own business or a large corporation or department.

Boise State had found it takes a long time to develop the best talent: (4)

- Team Lead (development time < 1 year)
- Supervisor (development time 5 years)
- Manager (development time 10 years)
- Executive (development time 15 years)

Where to Begin

If you don't already have a professional development program, we recommend that you consider the following: (4)

- When do you anticipate the departure of your CEO, Director, VPs, Managers, Supervisors?
- What is the average employment duration of each of these positions?
- How long did it take to find and develop these individuals?
- What are the costs and consequences of not developing replacements in time, or replacing on-the-fly?
- What are the costs of lost continuity of leadership?
- What programs do you have in place right now to generate replacements for these professionals?
- What programs are lacking-- that is, what are recurrent problems that your existing leaders haven't been able to solve?
- Where can these missing programs be located? What is typical for pricing and delivery?
- How does the cost of development compare to the cost of lost leadership?
- Do you know what really motivates your people to remain with you?
- When was the last time someone asked what was important to your staff?

Start Now: Take an Inventory of Leadership Skills

Boise State has found that development can be accelerated through training in the following areas:

- Managing yourself
- Managing others
- Keeping your group aligned with the organization's values
- Replicating leadership and vision within your group

The scope of training should widen as candidates progress. Examples of this widening scope of training are Boise State's spectrum of leadership programs:

- Team Lead: "Prepare to Lead" 2-day introduction
- Supervisor: "Applied Leadership" 4-part program
- Manager: "The Strategic Experience" one-week residential program
- Executive: MBA / Executive MBA program

As the leader advances, each program expands perspectives and strengthens skills.

Leadership is the ability to generate capable followers. Don't leave your legacy to marginally-involved "chickens." Now is the time to exercise your own leadership in developing your committed people.

Sources:

1) Cited in "Scant Planning for Mid-Manager Retirements," *Workforce Management*, <http://www.workforce.com/section/00/article/25/22/70.html>, accessed December 2007.

2) "Senior Managers Absent From Training Table," by Michael Laff, "T+ D" magazine July 2007.

3) "Leadership Blues," by Josephine Rossi, "T+ D" magazine August 2007.

4) Dr. Tony Hain of Kettering University, a noted expert on training and organizational development, contribution here was adapted from his participation in BSU's Program for Management Development in 2001. This program, now known as "The Strategic Experience," has been offered for over 25 years.