

## Raising the Stakes on Management Development

*From the Desk of the President*

By **Suzanne Miklos, Ph.D.**



As the economy recovers, organizations are thinking out into the future once again. We've all been working furiously to adjust and align to demographic changes and changing economic conditions in the region at times to the detriment of strategic development of people.

So many of our corporate clients are under-resourced and overwhelmed, yet the need to refocus on infrastructure building activity has resurfaced. Re-tooling, re-energizing or building development programs is on people's minds sometimes because senior leadership recognizes an imperative to protect knowledge capital sometimes because boards have noticed the graying of their executive team and sometimes because the team has noticed its own graying.

Organizations are at risk of bogging themselves down by trying to move too quickly with too much sophistication into succession planning and assessment or development programs. In most cases, you can eat the elephant quicker by taking smaller bites. Overwhelming the organization by having complicated systems, too many meetings and massive numbers of people for whom to construct developmental plans can stall progress.

Because investment in this area has been reduced, managers' attention of developing potential has been redirected to getting operations handled. Yet, during the challenges of the last few years, talented capable managers and individual contributors have risen to the occasion and make notable contributions. Lessons born of tough experiences are often the best learned. Pay attention to those who rose to the challenge.

### **When re-invigorating management and leadership development, consider the following:**

- Rather than positioning this need as a negative, consider that you are putting some additional structure around a learning process that was driven in a real and valuable way to business conditions.
- Clearly articulate one or two top priorities that will support the board and CEO in their strategic succession planning discussions on the people side.
- Identify two steps that will move you in the direction of the long-term vision of your leadership development approach.
- Ensure all developmental assignments, projects or exercises contribute directly to achieving business results.
- Ask the senior leaders how you can make their lives easier. Do it.
- Don't have consultants do it all. Internal dialogues make the most difference.

## How Do You “Do” People Development: New Manager’s Toolkit

By Lou Forbringer, Ph.D.

When targeting a manager who is new to his/her role for development, it is critical to start that person on the right track toward establishing goals and objectives while developing productive relationships with his/her staff and manager. This person must focus on the management tasks most critical to success, know when and how to complete tasks for maximum effectiveness, and evaluate progress. The person who is in the best position to provide developmental guidance to the aforementioned new manager is the new manager’s boss. Unfortunately, without some type of guidance, good intentions go awry, opportunities are missed and the result is less than optimal. In this kind of situation, a structured format such as the “New manager’s Toolkit” helps everyone stay on course. The “New Manager’s Toolkit” contains the information and tools a new manager needs to succeed. It takes the guesswork out of what to do when. It condenses volumes of materials on management into:

- simple, easy to follow timelines and checklists;
- easy to use question prompts;
- a self assessment profile;
- preparation sheets to help the new manager get exactly the help he/she needs during new manager coaching sessions.

It is presented in a “checklist” format that helps prioritize critical management tasks in the most effective sequence at the times that will yield the best results. Furthermore, it is *customized* according to the new manager’s start date and provides a week-by-week outline of what to do when for up to the first year on the job. The contents include:



- manager’s Action Checklist for 30, 60 and 90 days, six months and one year.
- worksheets for:
  - day one preparations;
  - first all-staff meeting;
  - 1-on-1 meetings with staff members;
  - first meeting with boss;
  - 30 days meeting with boss;
  - 60-90 days meeting with boss;
  - one year meeting with boss.
- outlines for coaching meetings.
- documentation, feedback and self-assessment.

What does this have to do with helping the boss become better at developing people? That’s easy. It helps by providing a framework so that the boss can make his/her expectations known, by having predetermined times to discuss the new manager’s aspirations, hopes, skills and abilities, by having predetermined times to discuss new assignments and by having predetermined times to provide specific feedback (good and bad) on how the new manager is doing. Executing these fundamentals will go a long way to ensuring the proper development of your organization’s new managers. Contact us for more information on the “New Manager’s Toolkit.”

## Supervisor Coaching for Performance

By **Dave Oleski, Ph.D.**

As a supervisor an important part of your role is to manage performance. To successfully handle this role, we would like to introduce a performance management tool called the COACH model.

Coaching for performance provides several benefits. First, it develops performance expectations. Direct reports learn what is expected of them, how the task or assignment is to be done, when results are expected and in what form. Having clear performance expectations aligns the supervisor's efforts with those of the direct report. The end result is that everybody is on the same page and working toward common goals.

Another performance coaching benefit is that the supervisor can guide the performance. This is done by monitoring the progress and providing feedback along the way. Feedback is given to reinforce good behaviors and to change and modify those behaviors that are inappropriate. Yet, another benefit is that your associates' capabilities will be strengthened. By providing feedback and guiding their performance, they will learn new skills and existing abilities will be used more appropriately.

In the COACH model, you are reminded of five success factors:

- C – compliment and notice and reinforce what is already going well; building on the positive is powerful; the “C” also stands for concern, in that it is important to share any concerns you have with the performance of your direct reports.
- O – objective - the feedback should be clear, behavioral and specific, not about general characteristics;
- A – ask great questions, starting with why and how;
- C – collaborate - get commitment not compliance by letting people use their own strengths to overcome performance obstacles;
- H – help by being a supporter and a coach.

Feedback is most effective if you follow certain ground rules. To be effective the feedback should be immediate. You want to have little delay between the performance error and the feedback concerning it. Feedback should also be given as frequently as possible. Try to stay away from the “no news is good news” thinking. Remember, when an associate does not hear from you, he/she may automatically believe that they are on the right track and doing everything as expected. Furthermore, the feedback should be as specific as possible. Be concrete and make it clear and direct. It is easier if you deal with one issue at a time and be descriptive, not evaluative. What this means is, try to focus only on the behaviors, staying away from personality attacks and subjective types of statements.

# O.E. Strategies News

- Our staff has developed the capacity for customized on-line survey and reporting technology.
- Suzanne Miklos became certified in EQ-i (Emotional Intelligence) testing in 2004.
- O. E. Strategies will be presenting a validation of EQ-i for selection at the Society of Industrial Organizational Psychology (SIOP).
- Thanks to increased need for assessment and development, we have expanded our space and technology.