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December 2007 Volume 1, Issue 12

Annual Subscription Rate: \$50.00



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Edited by James A. Hazen, Ph.D.

Where Did All the Leaders Go?

The value of using a plan to accomplish an important task cannot be overstated. Builders need them, teachers need them, doctors need them. So do universities, hospitals, and nonprofit agencies. Even moms and dads need a plan, however informal it may be.

Given all the planning we see going on around us, it's perplexing that some organizations don't seem to think about succession plans for replacing key leaders until way past time to act. They act as if there is a perfect time and they will know it when they see it. And one day they look up, and anyone who could lead the company is gone. Key leaders get sick, die, retire, or depart for greener pastures. Changes are as inevitable in the CEO's office as anywhere else, but people often ignore this fact of life because the prospect of replacing a key figure is overwhelming and/or makes us uncomfortable.



A recent article in Workforce Management mentions a survey in which 69 percent of companies in North America polled believe they will see a lack of top talent and only 6 percent feel confident they can make the right decisions for the future. This concern stretches across the globe. Organizations surveyed in other countries feel equally glum about the future of leadership.

This lack of attention promises dire consequences for an organization's profitability, but let's put that aside for a moment. The biggest challenge to an organization that fails to plan for the inevitable leadership brain drain is survival. A company that lets decades of experience walk out the door without a plan in place to stop the bleeding will bleed to death.

The story doesn't have to unfold this way, despite impending baby boomer retirements and the changing nature of doing business. One of the essential truths of commerce is that the right people make things happen. If that sounds simple, it is. We just have to find the right people.

Here are some ideas that top companies are using to keep corporate knowledge from walking out the door.

1. **Think about the key team member's retirement years in advance of when it might occur.** Have a conversation with this team member about the future. Ask her thoughts on who might be a replacement if she becomes sick or disabled for an extended period. This conversation can be an ongoing one, and does not have to be uncomfortable or threatening if we position it as a part of a purposeful business plan to ensure the company's health.
2. **Once you have a potential time frame in mind, set deadlines for each step: recruiting, training, transition.** Some companies begin planning five to 10 years in advance of a leader's retirement. Assessments can help by revealing interests, tendencies, skills and competencies.

(Continued on page 2)

3. Organizations sometimes appoint an intermediary to help recruit as well as conduct or participate in interviews – perhaps someone from the board of directors. This kind of third-party representation can aid in negotiations, asking and answering hard questions, and just taking the pressure off the potential replacement and the departing executive.

4. Talk vision early. The potential new executive has to share the organization's vision, while not being afraid to try new things to move it forward. If possible, offer the incoming leader time to experience the company before he or she takes the reins – at retreats, trade fair booths and corporate meetings.

5. Build in a transition period that includes incoming and outgoing leaders sharing time. This period of imparting and absorbing company history and culture is vital to smooth change.

One of the most important things we can do before all the important team members disappear is to have in place plans to attract and retain talent.

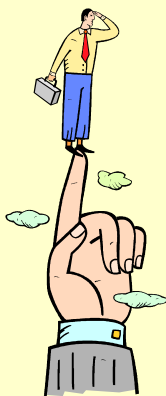
Although many top leaders come from outside the organization, competition for executive riches is intense. Our best bet is to grow our own, and to do it before we look up and wonder where everyone went.



Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.

-- Henry Ford, automaker

What to do Before Your Key Talent Leaves



1. Identify expected key vacancies as far in advance as possible. Some companies do this years before a key leader retires.
2. Explore the skills/competencies needed for each expected vacancy.
3. Work on retention so that the top performers stay on board.
4. Develop a recruitment and assessment process.
5. Have the CEO inform key clients about the plan so that they don't desert when he or she leaves.
6. Set a target date for a leader's departure and have him/her begin shifting responsibilities beforehand so that he or she is there for the transition.
7. Prepare employees to expect questions from the new leader(s).
8. Have the incoming executive prepare an assessment of the company and an action plan listing his priorities and how he plans to address them.
9. Prepare an orientation book for the new team member that includes the company's history and culture, as well as biographies of key players.
10. For a family business, involved an estate planner well before the leader departs.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Matt Riley, Director of Human Resources, believes in setting the example in using assessments. He reviews his own use of StepOneSurveyII™ and ProfileXT™.

Q. Why did Bruegger's Bagels begin using Profiles assessments?

A. We wanted to be different from our competition and reverse turnover. Many in our industry believe high turnover in the Quick Casual restaurant market is a part of doing business. But the financial burden of turning over our general and assistant managers inhibited both our financial and team-building goals. Area managers and market directors found they were spending a large amount of time recruiting for vacant positions as well as supporting each of the bakery locations they managed by filling in for missing managers. Turnover also affected teams in every bakery and gave us fewer opportunities to build consistency and teamwork. The turnover at management levels contributed to higher rates of turnover in hourly positions. Higher turnover means less confidence in teamwork and consistency. This inconsistency affects every aspect of our operation, from sandwich makers to regional trainers to our vice president of operations.

Q. How did the company try to solve the problem before turning to Profiles?

A. We tried to hire candidates that were better suited to our concept. We also developed materials that we still utilize today to assist hiring managers in the basic steps of recruiting and hiring. These materials work adequately for sharing hiring skills and work very well when managers have the context of a specific candidate's behaviors and match to a position. We decided to look for assistance from external tools that could give us information about the candidates and what our business and its culture demanded in the face of growth and organizational improvement. Bruegger's had worked briefly with Profiles in 2002. At the time, we did not have the capacity to integrate it into our business well, so we set it aside until we could implement it with success.

Q. What assessments do you use?

A. We use the Step One Survey II and the ProfileXT. We use both of them for assistant and general managers. We use the PXT for

candidates in our corporate offices. We use the SOS II after we receive a candidate's resume and have a brief phone conversation to establish his or her interest in the company and the positions for which we are hiring.

When we receive reports from the SOS II, we evaluate the candidate's scores and if he meets our criteria for management positions, we conduct a follow-up interview using the report's interview questions. Based on the candidate's desires and answers, we send them the PXT.

Q. How smoothly has the process worked for you?

A. We had a good initial experience with Profiles, so it was our first choice. We looked at other concepts that focused primarily on data collection, but they were not as reliable or valid as the SOS II or the PXT. We operate more than 150 bakeries in 14 markets, so we needed a solution that all of our markets would accept and that we could point to as a standard of excellence to all of our managers.

Q. What were the attributes you found most attractive?

A. Support from the Partner and Client Service Executive, education about the product, training on the product and its applications, reliability, validity, consistency in the quality of the interaction with all points of contact – all of which have been excellent with Profiles.

Q. What special training did you give managers?

A. Bruegger's wrote a hiring process that we distributed to all hiring managers that established how we wanted to use the assessments and what our benchmarks are for job matches. Each hiring manager called our internal Profiles trainer to review each candidate's reports to become familiar with how to read the reports. This was essential to having Bruegger's culture embrace assessments as a positive tool for hiring and creating great teams as opposed to an elimination or exclusion tool. We call it "using the information for good and not for evil." We emphasized that there are no wrong answers or people, just people who are better suited to Bruegger's. Hiring managers who wanted to take the PXT were walked through their reports with our internal Profiles trainer.

Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.--

Albert Schweitzer, philosopher, physician and humanitarian

Q. What are your plans for the future?

A. We want to continue to use these assessments and expand them to all of our corporate positions. We also want to re-evaluate our patterns and see how we can encourage the growth of the company by making changes in our job patterns. The next step is to continue giving the PXT to current managers and corporate employees and spend time with each of them on their individual results. This ties into Bruegger's ability to create development plans for employees and help them succeed in their jobs.



Q. What advice would you give someone unfamiliar with assessments?

A. Establish why you want to use assessments. Learn about how they can work in a good trial that is well evaluated. When you decide to launch a program, be consistent about the explanation of why you are using assessments. There can be a lot of uncertainty and fear about "tests." Commit to seeing it through. This doesn't work nearly as well if it is not applied consistently. Create internal advocates for the use of assessments. Review your own use and continue learning about and improving your own awareness of your patterns.

Managing a Crisis: Problems and Solutions to a Looming Worker Shortage

The local diner is a place in Anytown, USA where small business owners Joe, Sam and Jim meet to have coffee and talk business once a week. In a recent discussion comparing issues they became aware of a crisis they may be facing in their businesses.

Joe mentioned that he's been having trouble finding good techs. Sam said he's been experiencing the same thing. "If they have the technical skills, they don't know what hard work and loyalty are." "Yeah," Jim chimed in, "They want fast promotions but they miss a lot of work and I end up firing them." Their employee turnover became more of a concern as they spoke when they all realized that most of their best workers were approaching mid 50's or better and might be retiring in the not too distant future.

The guys are not alone; management of a looming skills crisis in the US is becoming a topic of conversation and concern all over.

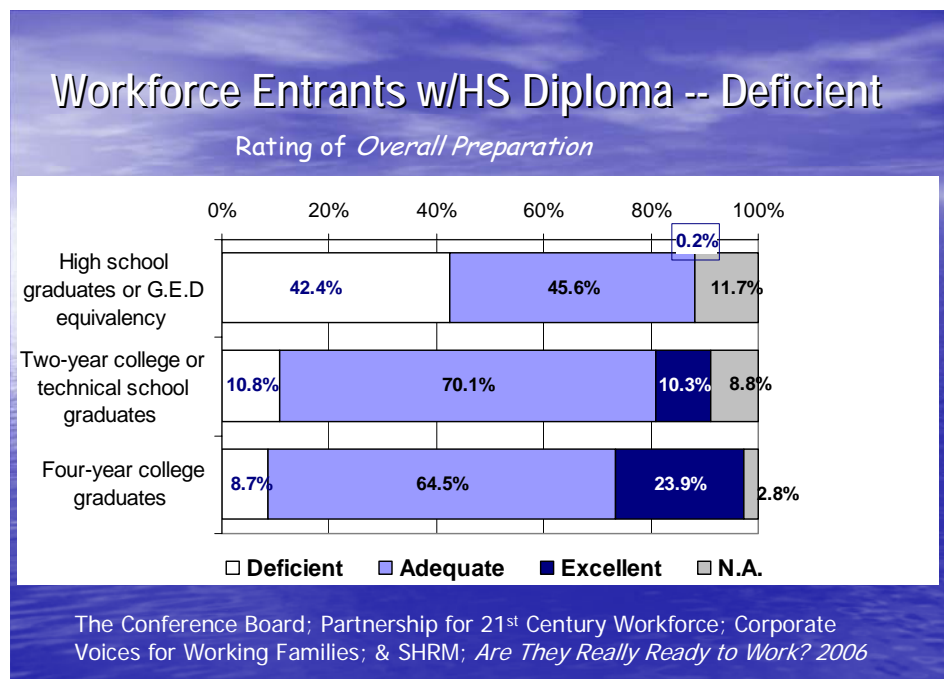
How can a business owner ensure skilled future workers? There is a current lack of skills in the workplace now.

The Facts:

- 1 out of 5 HR professionals say all of their employees have the competencies they need
- 54 percent say some of their workers have the competencies they need
- 8 percent say almost none of their workers have the right competencies

(Source: SHRM 2005 Future of the Labor Force Study)

In addition gaps, like some of the ones the guys saw have been identified in young people who are graduating from high school, 2 and 4 year college programs nationally.



Even greater problems may occur as Baby Boomers retire since the following generation (sometimes called the Gen-Xers) is smaller and fewer immigrants are available to do some of the jobs as was true in the past.

- 82 million Baby Boomers will retire
- 45 million Gen Xers are available to replace them
- Fewer International Workers are available:
 - Visa challenges
 - On-line education
 - More opportunities for workers in home countries

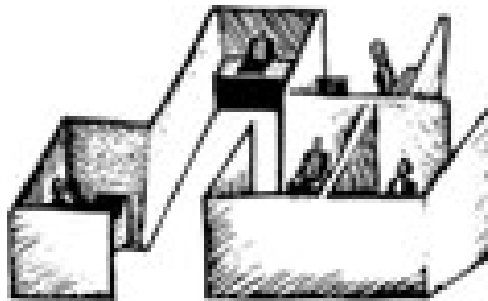
Graduation rates for high school students in some of the larger metropolitan areas are not good. Public Schools in some areas have 40% dropout rate for African American students and 29% for white students. As many as 12% of youth ages 16-24 are not in any form of training nor are they employed.

With this kind of problem facing them, what can the guys do to impact the future workforce?

There are ways that employers can work with organizations and schools to help make sure that skilled workers are there when they are needed

Getting involved with organizations in their area that have programs, like Junior Achievement, or organizations that develop the career potential of at-risk youth, through career preparation services like job readiness training, job shadowing, job tours, and can help connect what kids need to succeed with what the business owners want.

By providing critical career exposure experiences for kids, they might also help prevent some kids from dropping out of school. In addition to learning about how paying jobs, it is “free” advertising for the business that goes beyond just buying an ad in the football community see them as good



ing for the business that goes beyond program, each year. Parents and the guys.

Every state has a State One-Stop Job service program mandated by the Federal Government. These places give one-on-one help for young people and other job seekers and can work with business owners to find good candidates and the service is paid for with tax dollars so there is no additional cost!

Most schools are beginning to address careers as part of at least high school studies. By working with the schools as volunteers, classroom speakers, and even volunteer committee and board jobs, the schools and students will learn about what it takes to work at the guys’ businesses.

The ultimate success of any region and our country and our future workforce is dependent on employers, educators, government and agencies working together to develop qualified future employees. The future workforce is the responsibility of all members of the community. By getting involved and asking how they can help, the guys are investing in their own future business!

Phyllis Hartman
AutomotiveHR Consultant

I suppose that leadership at one time meant muscle; but today it means getting along with people.

-- Indira Gandhi, prime minister of India

STRATEGIES FOR WINNING: Buried Treasure*

Who Knows What's Hidden Right Under Your Nose?

In the 1970s, the Dallas Cowboys football team adopted the philosophy of drafting the best athletes they could find, some of whom did not have any college football experience. In the process, they found genuine talent that everyone else in the National Football League had overlooked. However, in the long run, the Cowboys decided it was more productive to focus on drafting football players who had already proven themselves on the football field.

We see that many businesses have designed their selection process in a similar manner: they almost always hire good people, but they make the mistake of placing some of these people in positions for which they are ill suited. Perhaps you've heard someone say, "He looked good in uniform, but he couldn't play." That's a way of saying that an employee appeared to have all the attributes for success in a particular job, but didn't perform up to expectations. Everyone has hired and promoted people who turned out to be disappointments. The number of times we have heard about top salespeople who became lousy sales managers is painful. That mistake occurs because neither the company nor the employee has a clear understanding of what it takes to become an outstanding sales manager. Oh, for sure, the company has a job description in a file somewhere that the sales manager could dust off and read if he or she wanted to, but traditional job descriptions are inadequate today.

A complete job description goes beyond listing the duties that go with a job title. A complete job description has to describe the attributes of the person who will perform the job in an extraordinary manner because he or she has the right brain power, the right behavioral traits, and the right occupational interests for the job.

A Personal Story from Bud Haney

We all subscribe to the idea that our people are among our greatest assets, recognizing that those organizations that stand head and shoulders above our peers and competitors in business tend to have superior people policies and, on the face of it, superior people. Accordingly, many of us spend a

huge amount of time chasing the rainbow, at the end of which we know we'll find a pot full of those perfect people that our industry leaders seem to have, instead of focusing upon identifying the best in those who already make up our teams. And therein lies the secret of those organizations with people-based competitive advantage – it's not just that they

identify and recruit great people (and, of course, that does help), but that they work with those people that they have to make them great, to find just what attributes they uniquely possess that can be developed and employed effectively within the organization, to build the sort of serious competitive advantage that only good people can confer.

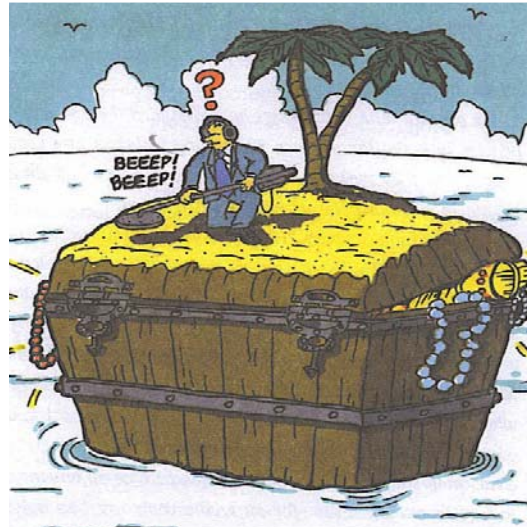
Find the pattern in this series of numbers: 8, 11, 15, 5, 14, 1, 7, 6, 10, 13, 3, 12, 2 Take a moment to look it over, and then, if you're stumped, go quickly to the bottom of this

chapter for the answer. Then, read on.

So what? Well, the simple point is that sometimes looking at the familiar in an entirely different way can produce results that we scarcely expect. Your people are like that – you assume that because you've worked with them for a while, you know what they are, and what they're capable of. That's truly only up to a point. To uncover genuine hidden potential requires a shift in the way you evaluate your people. Take the following actions to get started.

Uncover Your Team's Career Goals, Aspirations, Likes/Dislikes and Strengths/Weaknesses

You can't begin this process without knowing a lot about each and every member of your team. Start by talking with them regularly. Find out what they like to do. Research published in a 1999 *Harvard Business Review* demonstrated that people excel at jobs that interest them deeply more than at jobs that their education, skills or experience might suggest fit them perfectly. Find out what your people enjoy doing, what career plans each has, and where they aspire to go in your business or in life in general. Don't confine yourself to informal chats. Use more formal means like the Profiles Checkpoint 360^o™ (see www.profilesinternational.com) and psychometric assessments like the ProfileXT™ to determine the particular strengths of your key assets.



The authors of the HBR research cited above put it perfectly: *"...the best way to keep your stars is to know them better than they know themselves – and then use that information to customize the career of their dreams."*

Make Better Use of Strengths

When you have a good appreciation of the particular strengths of each member of your team, start to look for new ways in which to apply them.

Brainstorm on how you can apply these strengths in new or imaginative ways to enhance the roles of each of your people and to address problems that you haven't previously been able to address. In one successful example we observed recently in the IT industry, a talented project manager was put into the role of sales manager – not because she knew an awful lot about sales or had a gleaming sales record – quite the contrary – but because she was particularly good at organizing campaigns, marshalling resources, motivating her team to action, and seeing initiatives through to the end. Take off the blinders when it comes to applying strengths in new ways.

Turn Weaknesses into Strengths

In the movie *Enemy of the State*, Gene Hackman tells Will Smith, "...in guerrilla warfare you gotta turn your strengths into weaknesses...if they're big and you're small, then you're fast and they're slow... you've got to work with what you've got." You've got to do the same with your people. Look at what you currently perceive as shortcomings, and then look at situations where those attributes could be positive. After all, most weaknesses are just overused strengths.

For example, a customer service representative who's just too assertive to "put up and shut up" with angry customers may actually make a very successful salesperson, capable of overcoming objections not easily overcome by others. Consider the marketing executive who comes up with killer campaigns but just can't seem to follow them through to the end. Focus that person solely on developing the creative campaigns, and assign project management and completion to someone better suited. Look at every shortcoming you currently perceive in your team members, determine

where
a



weakness might become a strength, and figure out how you can capitalize upon it. You'll be amazed at the results.

Feedback, Feedback, Feedback

In a recent study, 25 percent of employees said lack of feedback from management about their performance was one of the main reasons for changing jobs. Make it a formal objective to provide positive feedback on a job well done to every one of your people at least weekly. This requires you and your management team to actively seek opportunities to provide feedback. Not only does this increase the interest level in the job being done (we all like to be recognized), but it helps to reinforce positive behavior and performance at the expense of more negative alternatives. Also, experience shows that when you provide feedback to the team, they'll provide feedback to you.

If you've been searching for a competitive advantage, then the answer may be just under your nose. Before you start exploring more exotic sources, look at the people who are driving your company right now. You'll find untold treasure buried behind those familiar faces you see every day.

Pattern in the numbers?

If you are familiar with numbers and number-series puzzles, you are probably naturally inclined to calculate the mathematical relationship between 8 and 11, and then between 11 and 15, and so on until you can speculate as to the mathematical progression – and there is none! The numbers are arranged alphabetically!

Your people are so familiar to you, but if you look at them a little differently, you can learn an awful lot more about what can make them great for you and your organization.

****From the book 40 STRATEGIES FOR WINNING IN BUSINESS by Bud Haney and Jim Sirbasku.***

©

A winner is someone who recognizes his God-given talents, works his tail off to develop them into skills, and uses these skills to accomplish his goals.

-- Larry Bird, basketball legend



Making a List; Checking it Twice: Performance Reviews are Comin' to Town

As the calendar year is coming to an end, and a new year is about to begin, management should be preparing for performance reviews. This should be seen as an opportunity to personally engage with and motivate each of your employees! Be prepared to lead a productive review. Check out our Motivation and Personal Development Courses. <http://www.automotivehr.com/Courses/SkillSoft/subscription/pd.htm>

Here is a sample of some of the new releases in 2007:

Q3 2007 Business & Professional Skills Top 10 e-Learning List
Analyze Your Use of Time
The Basics of Listening
Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)
Communicating as a Leader
The Manager as Coach and Counselor
Communication Skills for the Workplace
Accounting Fundamentals
Listening for Higher Purposes
What is Sexual Harassment?
Communication Skills for Leadership

Q3 2007 Computer Skills Top 10 e-Learning List
Excel 2003: 1 Getting Started
Excel 2000 MOS: 1 Working with Cells
Excel 2003: 2 Creating a Spreadsheet
Computer Basics: Using Your PC
PowerPoint 2003: 1 Introduction to PowerPoint
Word 2000 MOS: 1 Managing Documents
Access 2003: 1 Introduction to Access
Excel 2003: 3 Formatting Data
Excel 2003: 4 Editing and Printing Worksheets
Project 2003: 1 Learning the Basics

Q3 2007 Telephone Doctor® Top 5 e-Learning List
Basic Basic Telephone Skills
The Service Mentality
Determining Caller Needs I
Five Forbidden Phrases
How to Handle the Irate Caller



Good is the enemy of great.

-- Jim Collins, author, consultant, professor

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