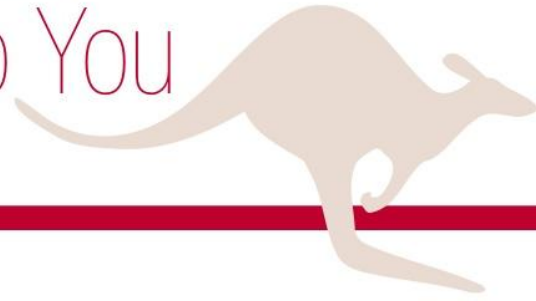


From **ROO** to You



October, 2011

Leave Your Guitar at Home

Authenticity beats showmanship

This month I had the privilege of participating in two great Twin Cities events that reinforced our collective desire for authenticity in our leaders and distaste for pure showmanship. I emerged with two very important lessons relevant to leaders:

Authenticity first, packaging second

I recently helped plan an event on the topic of Connecting Employer Needs with GenY Talent, sponsored by the Metro North Chamber of Commerce. Employers wanted to discover how to better connect with the emerging workforce – to learn what is important to them, and to share with them the employer’s perspective on important soft skills to bring to the workplace. It was a day of enlightenment and aha’s for everyone attending. While many of us assumed we would need **blogs, provocative twitter posts and Facebook campaigns** to attract the attention of Gen Y and Millennials, the students resoundingly told us not to bother. They crave authenticity. They know when they are being sold to, and they reject it. The same is true in our workplaces. Employees are savvy – they know when they are experiencing corporate “spin” and your credibility will be damaged.

Leave Your Guitar At Home

The second was a WCA Foundation meeting to review grant proposals. This is typically a low-tech affair. This time we became a bit irritated with a potential grantee taking extra time to bring in props, set up projectors, etc. We found ourselves quite a bit behind schedule and more focused on the time than the good work the organization is trying to do. Barbara, quite a proper and reserved lady, later recalled an occasion several years ago when a potential grantee put on a musical production to tell the story of their nonprofit. She was beside herself telling this story – **“I should have told him to leave his guitar at home!”** she said. Keep in mind that sometimes the glitz and glamour you incorporate to add sizzle actually detracts from your message. People need to hear your story, not become distracted by your polish.