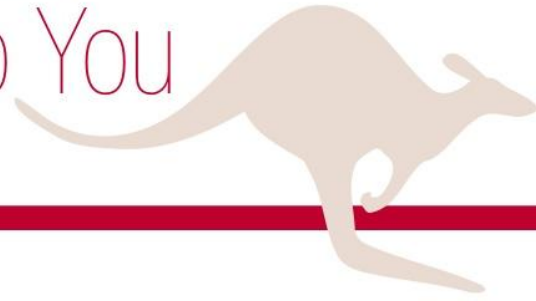


From Roo to You



August, 2010

Build or Buy: Developing Future Leaders

During 2008 and 2009 employers decreased training investment by 11% each year (Bersin and Associates LLC). At the same time, organizations eliminated significant portions of their workforce. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, during the 2nd quarter of 2009, 43% maintained staffing levels with 38% cutting jobs. Compared to the 2nd quarter of 2010, when 48% of companies kept staffing levels flat and only 15% conducted layoffs, things are looking a bit more optimistic. 55% of those layoffs were of managerial and professional talent (SHRM Labor Market Outlook July – September 2010).

While initial reductions may have allowed companies to eliminate lower performing employees, many organizations experienced multiple reductions and found themselves releasing good talent that they had invested time and dollars developing. What does this mean for your organization's bench strength and leadership pipeline? How has it impacted your ability to acquire and develop future leaders? Should organizations "buy" talent, perhaps at a discount, since the unemployment rate is expected to remain around 10% throughout 2010, or should they invest in their core workforce and "build" the future leader pipeline?

As individuals, how are you keeping your skills current and fresh to remain employable in general or to become indispensable with your current employer? If your company doesn't have tuition reimbursement or decent training budgets, how will you continue to grow? As an employer, how can you develop tomorrow's leaders without breaking the bank, and how will you measure a return on your training investment?

We hope that this month's issue is helpful in identifying low cost methods for investing in yourself, and your workforce. As always, we welcome your input, insights and stories.



From Roo to You



Velcro Shoes

Many professionals have earned bachelor's degrees or MBAs. Others have become certified through APICS, ASQ, SHRM or any other number of organizations. Coming from a family of educators, I am a huge proponent of education and lifelong learning. At the same time, you can't learn everything from a book or passing a test.

Leadership requires more than "book learning". As you move up the management ranks, what you know becomes less important than how you communicate, influence and lead. I have seen many organizations that have promoted technical experts into management positions, or promoted the top sales person into a sales management role only to have them fail. The promoted employee isn't always well suited for a management role, which requires strong skills in time management, communication and influencing. The promoted employee is miserable, as are the former co-workers now reporting to the new manager.

A colleague of mine called this the "**Velcro shoes**" syndrome. You have a brilliant chemist who does amazing R&D work, but he can't manage resources or have a meaningful conversation. A Purchasing Manager knows a lot, but is socially awkward. They can solve theoretical problems but don't possess the "street smarts" to do the simple things - like tying their shoes.

For You: Developing Yourself

If you have an opportunity to go back to school through your employer or a displaced worker program, do it today! If your company will pay for job training in management or other skills, ask for it today. If you don't have these options available to you, below are a few ideas for building your resume and skill set by investing your time, rather than your dollars:

- Volunteer to chair a project team or committee at work. If the project has a good sponsor, you can learn a lot from this person. If the project doesn't have a strong sponsor, find someone to share your ideas with.
- Run for city council or participate in one of the city commissions. This looks good on a resume and will provide you with a whole new way of viewing how work gets done (or doesn't).
- Offer your expertise (on a limited basis) to a non-profit or community organization. You could build new skills and possibly even get paid for it.
- Community education courses are often low-cost, low time commitment ways to build new skills. While most offer personal development courses, computer and skill-building courses are also offered.
- Read voraciously – balance business, fiction, non-fiction and the classics. No one can read business books all day long and remain an interesting and dynamic dinner partner.
- Work with your boss to identify new assignments or projects that will broaden your skills. This

From Roo to You



benefits the company and is a low-risk way for you and your boss to get more comfortable with more responsibilities.

- Identify a mentor inside or outside the organization to talk through concerns and development opportunities. This needs to be a person who will hold you accountable and tell you the truth – especially when you don't want to hear it.
- Coach your child's sports team – you will develop good resource and conflict management skills working with all those parents who want their kid to make the A team.
- Teach or mentor a less experienced coworkers – I learn something every time I teach something. You might even learn a little patience along the way.

For Your Organization: Building the bench

Whether you build your talent, buy it, or do a combination of both, training and development require some investment of money, and a significant investment of time.

You've spent dollars recruiting a new manager; now focus on helping them to be successful. Help him / her navigate the unwritten rules of the organization and shorten time to productivity. The options to aid this effort are endless:

If you bought the talent:

- Partner the new manager with a successful manager in another department to "learn the ropes"
- Allow the manager sufficient time to get to know his staff before implementing radical changes
- Focus initially on what the manager needs to know to establish credibility within her department, before focusing on broader cross-company projects.
- Meet regularly with the new manager to discuss projects, answer questions and provide feedback on progress. Gradually incorporate information about how the department fits in with other groups, contributes to organizational goals, etc.
- Schedule HR and the new manager time to get to know each other and how employee issues are addressed in the organization – hiring, recognition, performance management, discipline, etc. If possible, create a Supervisor's Handbook, to guide supervisors step-by-step through common HR scenarios.
- If the person has never been a supervisor before, consider enrolling him in a supervision course at the community college or nearby employers association.

If you have built the talent:

- Make sure the new manager clearly understands the expectations of a manager, and how she

From Roo to You



needs to relate to her employees that may have been former coworkers. This is a difficult adjustment for some.

- Touch base regularly to answer questions, discuss progress and coach the new manager.
- Check in with the team to make sure they understand the new manager's role and address any questions or concerns.
- Partner the new manager with a seasoned manager.
- Offer the internally promoted manager the same training opportunities you would offer to an external hire (supervisory training, etc.)

Regardless of whether you buy or build your bench, there are many no-cost or low cost options to develop this talent. Consider the following:

- Form a Toastmasters Club. Employees can meet over the lunch hour to refine their public speaking skills.
- Form a business book club. Identify a high performing employee to facilitate the group, discussing key themes and their application in your workplace.
- Assign employees at all levels to cross-functional projects – the scope and impact of the project may vary based on the employee's skill level.
- Assign future leaders to lead key corporate initiatives or projects. Support them as an active project sponsor – assist the project lead and team with developing project charters, milestones, deliverables, etc. Provide these project leaders or team members the opportunity to speak or provide updates on the project during company events or meetings.
- Develop an "internal internship" program. Provide employees the opportunity to work on projects for other departments. This broadens their skills and understanding of the business while help another department move forward with key projects or activities.
- Forward industry publications or articles that will improve their knowledge of the business and stretch their thinking.
- Consider leadership or 360 assessments to target areas of strengths and development opportunities; create an individual development plan to expand skills, and work the plan. Be sure to follow up regularly (monthly or quarterly) to ensure employees are making progress on the plan and to address any obstacles to success. A plan not executed is a waste of time and effort.
- Most importantly, keep staff engaged. As leaders we must engage both the heart and the mind. Make time to listen, guide and provide challenging assignments.

For additional strategies to develop your leaders without breaking the bank, ask us about GoShareOn Corporate Resources assessments and offerings (www.goshareon.com), delivery of regular "lunch and learn" sessions for managers or high potential employees or Roo Solutions talent development services.