

## **Secrets of Leadership Success --Taking your Organization to New Heights**

Dr. David Weiss, (GSW), David Crisp (former Senior Vice-President of Hudson's Bay Co.) and Gail Voisin were interviewed on the above topic for article in the HR@Work Supplement in the winter publication of the Metroland Business News. (Feb/04)

In the business world, many successful leaders have relied on guidance from human resources professionals to help them on their journey of influence. This direction can come in many forms, but usually encompasses down-to earth advice about rising to the top. "Most leaders don't know what they're doing; they're just doing it," says Dave Crisp.... "They can be more effective with training in the critical components of common sense leadership, which I believe are motivation, vision, resilience, persistence and balance that creates momentum. It's the balance and momentum that most leaders miss."

Crisp points out that, "Effective leaders seek feedback and move forward with it, but some executives won't listen. We tend to discount views that don't fit with our self-image, and employees may suffer negative consequences as a result of presenting feedback. Leaders need to concentrate on looking for non-threatening ways to elicit valuable input." "From the best practices research we've conducted, leadership must be seen by executives as a source of sustainable competitive advantage that drives business results," says Dr. David Weiss.....He stresses leadership within a context of executive accountability. "Best practices companies have the executive team assume responsibility for ensuring leadership talent for the future. HR serves as the center for excellence to support this process."

Dr. Weiss adds that successful organizations are committed to a long-range approach in building leadership capacity. "HR must find hybrid approaches to leadership development that are not dependent on one vehicle such as e-learning. People learn in different ways." Claude Balthazard points out another critical aspect of leadership development today -- trust. Dr. Balthazard is a Principal of HR by Numbers, a small consulting firm focused on HR measurement. "Employees today sometimes see leaders as self-serving, rather than acting in the interest of the organization as a whole. This attitude erodes everything, as employees don't trust the decisions being made. Executives must go back to classic trustworthiness. The old expression that 'once you can fake genuineness, you've got it made' doesn't work. Employees are perceptive. HR can help senior management work with employee feedback, even when it's not what they would like."

"In research I have conducted, senior-level executives identified leadership development as one of the key areas of concern within their organization currently and in the future," says Gail Voisin, President of Executive Coaching. She focuses on coaching corporate executives to maximize their potential while achieving a balance of wellness in their lives. "Because of the fast pace at which business is going these days, succession planning often gets put on the back burner. As a result, many organizations are not developing enough leadership talent for the ongoing momentum of their organization. Without commitment to succession planning, often the strategic business plans may not be successfully completed."

Voisin points out that according to Dr. Reuven BarOn, who is an emotional intelligence expert, about 80 per cent of success in leadership relates to emotional IQ. "I combine business and wellness coaching that deals with leadership development and succession planning, as well as lifestyle management," Voisin says. "You can have a lot of money, but lack contentment. The key to maximizing performance is meeting the needs of the whole person."

Sounds like excellent advice. Keeping an open mind to feedback and guidance can open doors to unlimited success. (by Dorothea Helm)