

CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

A Note From Dave

If you think about some of your greatest successes as a leader, chances are you'll remember this: You probably didn't do it alone. Behind the greatest leaders are some of the greatest teams. Everyone has strengths that, when combined, create a very powerful entity.

When assembling the team that will drive your current initiatives, you certainly look for individuals with exceptional talents in each facet, enabling the best chance to excel in all of its challenges.

The same should hold true if you're currently in transition and just embarking on a job search. Again, building a team of individuals with various strengths will help you achieve your goal of landing the job you want.

Of course, it begins with networking and building that reliable circle of friends and colleagues. Career coaches and résumé writing experts can help fine-tune your entire personal marketing plan. And don't forget about resources found under the Career Center tab, such as our [Branding Strategy](#), [Interviewing Success](#), [Onboarding Central](#) and [Recruiter Connections](#) areas on our website, which can help you navigate your search and career.

But as I stress during my weekly [Six-Figure Hotline](#) calls with our members, the only person who is going to find you a job is you. At the same time, don't feel like you can't, or shouldn't, ask for help, and one of the major benefits of your membership is that there is always someone here to help either by phone or email.

Sincerely,



Dave Opton
ExecuNet Founder & CEO
www.execunet.com/davesblog



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KEY EXECUTIVE MARKETPLACE INDICATORS

80% | recruiters who say candidate's prospects improve with positive online presence

51% | executives who worked to become more visible online in 2009

45% | corporate leaders who prepared to voluntarily leave their organizations in 2009

40% | increase in ExecuNet members who have landed new roles in June over May

Career-Enhancing Programs

July-September 2010

Hosted by Dave Opton, founder and CEO, ExecuNet

INCLUDED IN YOUR EXECUNET MEMBERSHIP

7/28 — Six-Figure Hotline

Dave Opton

Join Dave Opton, CEO and founder of ExecuNet, for an interactive discussion about executive career issues that are important to you.

Private Equity 101: Exploring Career Options Within P.E. Firms

Now Available On Demand Mike Lorelli

Rewarding career opportunities exist within private equity firms. Learn how to position yourself as a private equity portfolio company executive.

7/29 — Looking for a Job When You Have a Job

Tony Beshara

Looking for a new job when you already have one can be a challenge. Discover how to effectively manage both responsibilities as you continue to work toward achieving your career goals.

12 Tips For a Sizzlin' Summer Search

Now Available On Demand Karen Armon

Don't take a vacation from your job search. Learn effective search strategies you should implement this summer season.

8/2 — Winning Interviews: Converse, Connect, Convince

Judy Rosemarin

Learn how to become an effective interviewer. Discover tips that will help put both you and the interviewer at ease, and gain the confidence you need to move the process along.

MOJO with Marshall Goldsmith

Now Available On Demand

Join author Marshall Goldsmith as he uncovers the four keys to finding your MOJO and how you can use it to gain a competitive edge in your business and career.

Networking Meetings in Your Area

July/August/September 2010
Hosted by ExecuNet Facilitators

7/28 — **Detroit Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Ruthann Liagre

7/29 — **Dallas** — Bob Hueglin

7/30 — **St. Louis** — Ken Coleman & Randy Hove

8/3 — **Ft. Lauderdale** — Jeannette Kraar

8/3 — **Greensboro** — John O'Connor

8/3 — **Miami** — Jeannette Kraar

8/4 — **Chicago** — Gail Sussman Miller

8/4 — **Philadelphia Sr.** — Mitch Wienick & Ed Kelleher

8/4 — **Cincinnati** — Jennifer McClure

8/5 — **Sarasota** — Susan Mell

8/5 — **Southern Wisconsin** — Clara Hurd Nydam

8/5 — **San Diego/Carlsbad** — Mark James

8/10 — **Phoenix** — Fred Coon

8/11 — **New York City** — Judy Rosemarin

8/11 — **Orlando** — Chuck Csizmar

8/11 — **Stamford** — Linda Van Valkenburgh

8/11 — **Cleveland Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Rick Taylor

8/11 — **New York City Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Judy Rosemarin

8/12 — **Atlanta** — J. Patrick Haly

8/13 — **Tampa Bay** — Gina Potito & Patricia Deering

8/14 — **Melbourne** — Jeannette Kraar

8/17 — **Lexington** — Thom Crimans & Cathy Fyock

8/17 — **Cleveland** — Rick Taylor

8/18 — **Chicago** — Gail Sussman Miller

8/18 — **Charlotte** — Merton Marsh & Michael Hall

8/18 — **Portland** — Jean Erickson Walker

8/18 — **Raleigh/Durham** — Stuart Levine

8/19 — **Palo Alto** — Bobbie LaPorte

8/19 — **Columbia-Maryland** — Doug Lemmonds

8/19 — **Louisville** — Thom Crimans & Cathy Fyock

8/19 — **Pittsburgh/Cranberry Township** — Donna Korenich

8/19 — **Houston** — Yolanda Brown

8/19 — **Indianapolis** — Ramona Camarata

8/25 — **Stamford Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Linda Van Valkenburgh

8/25 — **Denver** — Karen Armon

8/26 — **Atlanta Sr. Executive Roundtable** — J. Patrick Haly

8/26 — **Dallas** — Bob Hueglin

8/26 — **Columbus** — Janine Moon

8/27 — **St. Louis** — Ken Coleman & Randy Hove

9/1 — **New York City** — Judy Rosemarin

9/1 — **Chicago** — Gail Sussman Miller

9/1 — **Cincinnati** — Jennifer McClure

9/1 — **New York City Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Judy Rosemarin

9/2 — **Sarasota** — Susan Mell

9/2 — **Southern Wisconsin** — Clara Hurd Nydam

9/7 — **Ft. Lauderdale** — Jeannette Kraar

9/7 — **Miami** — Jeannette Kraar

Reserve your space! Call Member Services at 800-637-3126 or visit ExecuNet.com

Executive Toolbox

Leadership During a Recession: Building Momentum for a Better City

By Roy H. Williams

In the early 1990s, Oklahoma City was in what can only be described as a depression. The real estate, construction, financial and energy industries had collapsed, and we were desperate to bring economic activity back to our dying economy. As project after project was lost by Oklahoma City in favor of more “desirable” places to locate, we knew something had to change.

A Wide Range of Support

Our mayor at the time, Ron Norick, was not content to sit and wait for the business to come to us. After intense research and planning, he put together a forward-thinking effort that asked citizens to pass a five-year, one-cent sales tax to fund nine major metropolitan projects. Projects included a mile-long downtown canal, new public library and new sports arena, among others. Using a sales tax meant these projects would be fully funded upon completion, incurring no debt for our city. After a hard-fought campaign (and to the shock of many), voters agreed and voted yes for these “Metropolitan Area Projects.” Oklahoma City was never the same, and the projects have spurred more than \$5 billion in additional investments.

Known locally as just “MAPS,” these projects had such an impact on our city that voters agreed to a second MAPS project, MAPS for Kids, which renovated or replaced every school building in the city’s public school district. Voters then agreed to extend the tax to renovate the Ford Center Arena, which is now home to the NBA’s Oklahoma City Thunder, a team our city is proud to rally behind. Most recently, in December 2009, Oklahoma City leadership brought another comprehensive improvements package to voters, and Oklahoma City voters responded favorably, passing MAPS 3 with 54 percent of the vote.

With a projected cost of \$777 million, MAPS 3 will build a new 70-acre, world-class downtown park, new convention center, downtown modern transit, miles of biking and walking trails, improvements to our river and fairgrounds and several senior health and wellness centers. Oklahoma City is a dramatically different city today than it was in the early 1990s, and this new program will bring even more dramatic changes.

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It took a history of successful collaboration for us to get to this point. There were times it wasn’t easy, but at the end of the day we now have a thriving economy and citizens who are proud to call this city home.

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But passing these initiatives, was not easy, and was not without opposition. It took an aligned and focused elected and business leadership and a lot of hard work. Once the City Council called the election, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber conducted a more than \$2 million campaign for its passage.

So how did we galvanize support for MAPS 3 and win the public vote in a time of recession?

Lessons Learned

Most importantly, it took leadership. Our current mayor, Mick Cornett, along with other public and private sector leaders, worked together and put the needs of the city above their personal interests and

goals. This led to decisions that will transform our city. Here are the greatest lessons we learned:

- **Deliver exactly what you promise.** In previous MAPS campaigns, we built public trust by spending the money exactly how we said we would. Residents were asked to pay for specific projects, and those projects are exactly what we delivered.
- **Be transparent.** Make sure the public is completely engaged in the process.
- **Mobilize your publics.** Nearly all of the projects had their own special interest groups. We worked hard to engage and mobilize these groups and used them as our advocates.
- **Think outside of the box.** Rather than using only traditional media as we had done in previous campaigns, such as billboards and newspaper ads, we ran an intense social media campaign as well. We used Facebook, Twitter and other social media to reach our target audiences, particularly our young professionals.
- **Be willing to work hard...really hard.** This campaign took tremendous commitment and work in the trenches. Campaigns aren’t normally won by a landslide, so each vote counts. It is crucial to have public and private leadership up-front, leading the way. All of our city leaders worked together, and were sure not to take on a major initiative without engaging others.

The type of leadership we have in Oklahoma City is unique. It took a history of successful collaboration for us to get to this point. There were times it wasn’t easy, but at the end of the day we now have a thriving economy and citizens who are proud to call this city home. ■

Roy H. Williams is president and CEO of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. He can be contacted at okchamber.com

Should You Take a Risk and Innovate?

By Marji McClure

During these challenging economic times, most executives want to avoid “rocking the boat” by taking a risk — organizationally or personally. The feeling is that this environment of uncertainty doesn’t promote any level of risk-taking, and that “status quo” is the better plan since the overall business environment is so uncertain.

“After any setback or recession, executives are more cautious. But it’s an emotional response,” says Wayne Rogers, serial entrepreneur, author of the upcoming book, *Make Your Own Rules: A Renegade Guide to Unconventional Success*, and actor best known for a starring role on the classic television show, *M*A*S*H*.

Put emotions aside and get back to business. In reality, now is the best time to take a risk, especially an innovative one. If successful, it could be exactly what an organization needs to emerge from the recession in a better position than at the downturn’s inception, and it could position the risk-taker as a game-changing innovator, someone who knows how to lead through change.

Opinion in the executive ranks is still mixed on whether taking larger risks right now is a good idea. According to results of the PricewaterhouseCoopers’ Private Company Trendsetter Barometer released in June, only 48 percent of the executives surveyed felt they need to take increased risks to yield growth. At the same time, 87 percent said they were already taking enough risks.

How do you know when you should take a risk, and where risk can make the most sense for your organization and your career? The answer can vary depending on the type of company you lead, the industry in which you participate and your overall comfort level with risk.

Aligning Goals to Risk

As executives determine the viability of a risk, they must also understand how to best align their own goals with those objectives of their organization to increase

the chances that the risk will produce a positive outcome. It’s also important to know if an organization’s culture encourages or discourages risk.

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“At the corporate level, creating and fostering innovation is expected when it is part of the culture and the values of the corporation. However, it’s very risky if it is not [part of the culture and values] because you may be viewed as someone who is interested in things that are outside of the company’s business model and thus unfocused and culturally unfit,” says an ExecuNet member from the power industry who discussed risk and innovation in a recent Operations Roundtable discussion. “At the local level, it is less risky if you focus on unique solutions to technical, commercial and process problems. This may, in fact, work to your advantage in differentiating yourself from others and help you promote your career.”

Understanding exactly where you want to take your organization — the specific solutions to its problems — can make building support for a risk a bit easier. Jill Morin, author of *Better Make*

It Real: Creating Authenticity in an Increasingly Fake World, says a clear vision for the organization can provide a leader with the direction necessary to take the right risks. She suggests becoming the champion for that vision while others “drive the process.” She also stresses the importance of encouraging others to share their insights. “Without diverse voices and viewpoints, innovation isn’t possible. Engage everyone, including the doubters and naysayers, to raise issues and share opinions without hesitation and fear. You will not only learn a lot, but also open the doors to true creativity and collaboration.”

“Employees should base the degree of risk that they are willing to take partly on how impactful the risk may be on forwarding the strategies or goals of the organization,” explains Bill Treasurer, author of *Right Risk: Ten Powerful Principles for Taking Giant Leaps with Your Life*. “You’ll have more latitude to take risks without permission to the extent that those risk areas are widely known to be important to the business.”

Getting Organizational Support

Executives should enlist the support of their bosses and let them know about a risk they want to take. “Often they can provide the critical guidance or support to help increase the probability of a successful risk,” adds Treasurer. “Plus, by including them, you lower the political risk to yourself in the event you fail.” That support can be critical.

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The 5Ps: How to Determine When to Take a Risk

In his book, *Right Risk: Ten Powerful Principles for Taking Giant Leaps with Your Life*, author Bill Treasurer suggests using criteria called “The 5Ps” to determine the viability of a risk:

Passion: Right risks are risks we care about intensely.

Purpose: A right risk is taken out of a deep sense of purpose.

Principle: Right risks are governed by a set of values that are both essential and virtuous.

Prerogative: Right risks involve the exercise of free choice.

Profit: A right risk should have a substantial upside.

“Too many people make the mistake of only focusing on ‘gain vs. loss’ when evaluating a risk,” says Treasurer, also the CEO of Giant Leap Consulting. “The smart leader evaluates that element (profit) last.”

Innovate

Continued from page 4

“Established organizations can be hard on innovators, especially in these times, when resources are tight,” says Chris Trimble, co-author of *The Other Side of Innovation*. “Aspiring innovators should remember that the large organizations they work for were not built for innovation, they were built for ongoing operations. Innovation and ongoing operations are always in conflict.”

“Unless you have committed high-level support, you should limit your initiatives to what you can get done with the resources you control directly,” adds Trimble, who also serves on the faculty at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College.

Tom Foth, senior research fellow for Connecticut-based Pitney Bowes, Concept Studio & Employee Innovation Program, notes that wrong risks are taken when several factors, including stakeholder buy-in, are not considered.

“Having fallen prey to this on one occasion in my career, I am particularly sensitive to this,” says Foth. “For any idea, it is important to consider all of the stakeholders and make certain they understand the value proposition being articulated and how it either benefits them directly or the organization as a whole. Stakeholder buy-in is best done as one-on-one exercises, when possible.”

Leading with Creativity and Necessity

Sometimes, necessity will be enough of an impetus to take a big risk. Rogers tells the story of a vineyard he started in California in 1972. The land was wet, and more than 200,000 cuttings couldn't be planted because the equipment would sink into the wet land. Rogers found an expert in the field who suggested planting each cutting in milk cartons. Eventually, the potted plants, and not cuttings, were planted in the vineyard land and the plants had a 92 percent success rate; traditional cuttings would only have a 75 percent rate. “I had an instant vineyard,” recalls Rogers. “That is now how you plant vineyards. You buy a potted

Expert Resources:

- Tom Foth, Pitney Bowes (pb.com)
- Jill Morin, Kahler Slater (KahlerSlater.com)
- Wayne Rogers
- Bill Treasurer, Giant Leap Consulting (GiantLeapConsulting.com)
- Chris Trimble, Dartmouth College (Dartmouth.edu)

plant...that became the way to do it. But I didn't have a choice. I had to think creatively.”

Adding Risk and Creativity to the Job Search

The same risk/reward equation executives need to assess when contemplating a business decision can be used during the job search as well, when executives may feel the need to take a risk in an activity in which they are typically very cautious. In today's extremely competitive job market, executives must do what they can to separate themselves from the competition and demonstrate to hiring managers how they are the ideal candidate for the job. In the news, there are reports of individuals who have conducted non-traditional marketing strategies — such as renting billboard space or walking around with a sandwich board — to garner interest and attention from a wide range of hiring professionals.

But executives need to temper similar thoughts of creativity in this process, especially if they seek employment in a non-creative field. “To stand out, you have to amplify your voice — creatively, but professionally,” advises Treasurer. Take risks to show you are clever, not desperate. Purchasing billboard space is clever. Wearing a billboard is desperate.”

Finding Risks and Rewards in Career Planning

A certain amount of risk is necessary when planning your career, especially when you're considering a career transition (to a new industry) or a complete career reinvention. If you're going to make any type of change in your career strategy, you need to be able to take a risk in order to find something new — and not just land the same job you previously held at a different company.

“I think that risks and rewards change for executives at different points in their

careers,” says Foth. “Having switched industries during my career, the questions I've always asked myself are: Have I sufficiently developed skills in previous jobs to adequately do the core job? How much will I need to learn to excel in the peripheral aspects of the job? Am I interested in what I will need to learn? Will what I need to learn to better equip me for future opportunities?”

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Risk shouldn't be about compensation. It should be about destination.

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Executives who take risk must be committed to it and follow through. They must want to change and fully embrace that change. “I have seen executives move from one industry to another and not be willing to make the effort to fully learn the new industry” adds Foth. “In every case, these executives seem to miss success. I think that is because, without industry engagement, there can't really be any large rewards. In my own career, my deep engagement in the industry has left me with experiences that have [provided] core insights that I have applied in new industries.”

Your approach to risk as you plan your next steps will certainly determine where and how you eventually land. Says Treasurer: “The question people should focus on isn't ‘What will this risk GET me?’ but ‘Where will this risk TAKE me?’ Risk shouldn't be about compensation. It should be about destination. If the risk isn't perfectly aligned with what you want, but it will clearly move you down the path of getting what you want, then it is likely a ‘right risk.’” ■

Your Career Advisor

Valuing Values: How to Drive Productivity

By Cliff Hakim and Maureen Wrinn

Henry Ford's core value of *improving life* was central to his organization's success. Ford Motor Company improved people's lives in the 1920s and 1930s as he put innovation to work, transformed personal transportation and sold more than 15 million automobiles. Ford's focus on values and his innovation during his time, created a culture of value through values.

Today, the values that drive us can have that same essential ingredient that Ford tapped into, especially creating greater value from a focus on and implementation of core values. Personal values drive leaders' actions, whether conscious or unconscious. Those leadership actions drive organizational success on multiple levels from relationships to strategy and morale — and ultimately create value at the bottom line that can lead to greater productivity and deeper relationships with customers or clients.

In the pursuit of better understanding of how core values benefit organizational success *and* create value, we asked leaders of non-profit and for-profit enterprises three questions:

- What are your personal core values?
- How do your core values add value to your role as a leader?
- How does the alignment of your behavior with your values build value in your organization?

Alignment is Key

Russ Campanello is the senior vice president of human resources at Phase Forward, a provider of integrated data management solutions for clinical trials and drug safety based in Waltham, Mass. Campanello's leadership is built on the foundation of honesty and integrity — values absolutely vital to ensuring the business' success and continued relationships with clients.

Campanello believes “the expression of core values animates the soul of the organization. When our actions align with our values, we express what is meaningful

and productive in our culture.” In other words, the core values of the organization are meaningful drivers of productivity, thus adding value to his leadership style and the organization's success.

“My top core value is honesty,” he says. “Honesty is essential to learning, and we encourage learning at every level — even learning from mistakes. Often employees admit a mistake they have made before negative effects brew. They know I'll listen, not reprimand, and that together we can figure out what to do.” The important thing here is honesty *without reprimand*, the essential condition for values alignment and boost to morale and productivity.

Morale Matters

Bill Scudder, chief information officer at Sonus Networks in Westford, Mass., focuses on morale as the booster for success. Scudder's leadership role is to cut across party lines and be impartial. “I listen to many people in different departments before I make a decision on how to use resources or focus our direction.” This impartiality and willingness to listen are critical factors in all parties feeling they have a voice in the organization and input on decisions. “My value for fairness,” Scudder says, “shows respect for others and helps drive the whole business.”

When Scudder fields questions from the Sonus global sales force, he thinks about how his answers will not only affect their job, but how each salesperson will affect others with their knowledge. They asked, “What do you think the sales force thinks of you?” He replied, “They trust my good judgment.” Scudder sees that his “good judgment” is absorbed into the sales-force values stream and will then flow into the customer experience.

Deepen Relationships

Bruce Green, manager of leadership development at Boston Scientific in Natick, Mass. believes that the value of respect deepens relationships at all levels and in all actions. “When working with

our international colleagues, employees need to be very mindful not to come from a US-centric perspective, because that can be seen as disrespectful,” says Green. For example, Green adjusted his schedule to suit the needs of his Belgian colleague. He noticed that she, in turn, treated others with similar gestures of fairness. Bruce continued, “When people feel respected they want to contribute more to the organization. My colleague from Belgium, for example, feels freer to call me with an idea and to liberally share information with others which can affect the quality of our programs and achievement of our goals.”

Deb Hicks, associate dean and chief human resource officer for Harvard Medical School in Boston, relates her values work to the ongoing conversation about how values live in the culture, create energy, and shape the conditions for meaningful work and enhanced productivity. “Having a conversation moves people beyond right or wrong; it moves them forward toward win/win. People's points of view are heard, and they feel that they count as part of the process and solution.” Hicks encourages managers to have conversations with employees about what employees are thinking and what they need to be successful through transition, such as during a department reorganization.

Questions for action

As demonstrated by these leaders, values ripple from within us to others in the organization and into the larger world. To be conscious of values is a powerful leadership driver, and they tie directly into organizational success. Ask yourself the same questions that we posed to the leaders in this article and take note of what you uncover. ■

Cliff Hakim and Maureen Wrinn are company stewards of The Values Tree, Inc., a web-based discovery tool to clarify and utilize personal or organizational core values for growth and success. They can be contacted at TheValuesTree.com

Insider Insight

Managers vs. Leaders — What's the Difference?

By Herb Greenberg

How can you recognize when a manager has real leadership potential? What makes a manager different from a leader? In a nutshell, managers do things right, while leaders do the right things. In other words, managers are implementers and leaders are initiators.

There is, however, an overlap. In some ways, it can be easier to pinpoint what a manager does. We can list things like financial analysis or market planning or human resources management for that matter. But what draws the line between a manager and a leader?

The Differentiation

Overall, leaders create visions. Especially during challenging economic times, they are inspiring. They do not merely provide direction, but create the music, orchestrate the resources and create environments where new achievements are realized. While managers and leaders share many similar qualities, the performance of a manager carries far fewer risks than the performance of a leader.

In a recent Caliper study, more than 300 presidents and chief executive officers told us what they considered to be the most important — and the most difficult — aspects of being a leader. Among the choices we asked them to rank were:

- Creating the right vision
- Getting people to embrace that vision
- Maintaining momentum (motivating, influencing and persuading others)
- Managing change (strategic planning, problem solving)
- Surrounding oneself with the right people
- Developing staff (coaching, managing performance, transforming teams)
- Delegating authority

“Surrounding oneself with the right people” was selected 41 percent of the time, second only to “creating the right

vision” as one of the most critical parts of leadership. “Surrounding oneself with the right people” was also selected as one of the three most difficult aspects of being an effective leader — just behind “maintaining momentum” and “developing staff.”

These chief executives said there are three main factors that keep most managers from becoming leaders: not understanding others well enough, not solving problems quickly enough and not taking necessary risks.

Employee Engagement in a Tough Economy

Especially in a challenging economy, leaders and managers are being challenged now more than ever before. The challenge is ensuring that their employees, especially top performers, are engaged and willing to help achieve business success.

As a leader in this tough economy, there is only one thing that cannot be duplicated by your competitors...and that's your people. They are the ones who set you apart from the competition, and they are the ones who will pull you through challenging times. Our studies indicate that only 26 percent of leaders today are creating an engaging environment. How can that be? What can we do about it? There is no easy answer. However, now is the time to strengthen your organization, so that it is in a better place when the economy turns.

Leadership and Employee Development Programs

Leadership development should be at the forefront of everyone's minds, especially in the unpredictable economy that we live in. Companies worldwide are taking the initiative to develop their leaders to ensure they have the vision and the success to take their company through these tough times and out on the other side.

How do leaders effectively do more with less? The answer isn't cut and dry; however, it is something that can be

done. Leadership development programs can help good leaders become great, and help your company identify who has the potential to become a manager or leader down the road. So where do you start? You want to coach your leaders, and you want them to be effective. So what's next? Consider the following:

- **Look at your business.** What does your business need? What's the change that you need to see in your team, and how are you going to measure that?
- **Don't start with the program.** Start with the solution. What do you need to do as a business? Find ways to create a program around your needs, with the help of a coach.
- **Look at ways in which you can get your people to learn and do at the same time.** Action learning places leaders in a position where they are working together to achieve a real company goal in real time.

Leadership development can come in the form of coaching, or it may be a formal program. However, it's usually a combination of the two. But the shape of the development program will be determined by the business need. Start by asking yourself: “What's the change that I need to see in my team? Why is that important to the business? How are we going to measure success?” Once you've got that nailed down, then it's easier to see what would be appropriate — whether it's a coaching engagement, team building session or a developmental tool, or any combination of those. And following through will bring the improved efficiency and productivity that will enable your company to experience the return on the investment first-hand. ■

Herb Greenberg, PhD is the founder and chief executive officer of Caliper, an international management consulting firm. He can be contacted at 609-524-1200 or info@calipercorp.com

From the Roundtables

Dealing with Acquisition Transitions

ExecuNet's Roundtables are an online community area where members can meet and help one another network their way into their next assignment or share information and experiences. [Access the Roundtables under "Make Connections" on the ExecuNet member homepage.] In this excerpt from a recent General Management Roundtable conversation, members discuss how to deal with transition issues related to acquisitions. [Some content has been edited.]

ExecuNet member LG: I am very interested in learning how others have coped with multiple back-to-back acquisitions where your company has purchased several companies, and you had to assimilate them into your organization. My company has purchased a few small- and mid-size companies, and the employees are upset and angry at past management for selling. Several haven't received merit increases for years. Many do not like the "corporate" environment and long for things to be the way they were in the past.

How do you cope in a situation like this, and what are the first steps you take?

ExecuNet member SM: I was involved in several major acquisitions and had responsibilities for the integration of new companies or single businesses. Things will change for the acquired companies, and such a message should be crystal clear.

Integrating a new company into an existing one requires a top-down systematic and sustained effort until the change is institutionalized. This may take a year or more depending on how well the process is executed. There are several elements to an integration process, but

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Things will change for the acquired companies, and such a message should be crystal clear.

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two of these steps are most significant:

What is going to change and what is going to remain the same should be clearly defined and communicated repeatedly throughout the organization. Change agents from the acquired company are crucial for success.

Establish a process of accountability and follow through to ensure that members of the acquired organization will not fall back into the old ways of doing business.

If this process is led and managed well, you should be able to retain most employees. A small percentage of the employees will leave, or the company

may decide to sever simply because they will not culturally fit.

ExecuNet member BW: I have been involved in five mergers and acquisitions and was responsible for assimilating the operational divisions in all five. We were both purchased and later the purchaser. With plenty of false starts and a few step failures, I found that building a cultural foundation — a clear vision, mission and value set is critical. Getting very clear on the purpose of the merger (mission), the expectations (vision) and how you will work together (values) cannot be underestimated or be a one-time event. In fact, from the CEO down to the front line, everyone has to be involved. Holding “brown bags,” “breakfast with the boss,” intranet discussions (company blog), etc. enhance the communications.

People believe there is a motive behind the actions that leadership is not telling them (cutting costs and their jobs). This generates fear. So constant communication, being open and inviting comments is important. It may take a year or two years, but alleviating their fears is your goal. I have found what I'll call the three group rule: 1) are ready to jump in and make it work, 2) will sit back and go along with a wait and see attitude and 3) will be passive aggressive and dig in against change. Working the first two groups is where I focused, and it was rewarding and energizing. ■

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