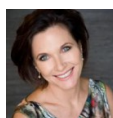


Trending Now in IT
2016 IT Service Provider Benchmarks



GET EBOOK

Autotask



Margie Warrell Contributor

Empowering braver leaders to play a bigger game.

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

LEADERSHIP 4/14/2015 @ 7:00AM | 5,496 views

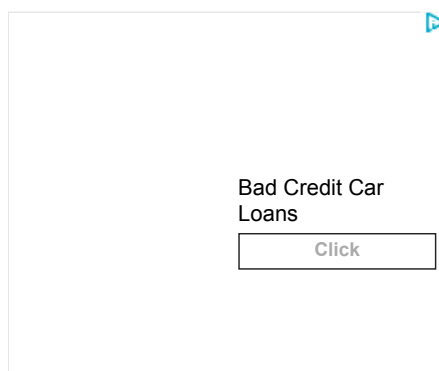
Building Tomorrow's Leaders Needs A Fresh Approach To Leadership

Today's leaders are facing challenges their forebears never had. Not only are they confronted with ongoing economic uncertainty and geo-political instability, they must also navigate an increasingly complex global marketplace with a growing millennial workforce that demands a whole new style of leadership. [It's a whole brave new world for today's leaders, which is why there's no time to waste developing tomorrow's](#) .

As organizations have grown flatter and middle management thinner, the decision-making has been pushed down. Drawing out and developing the leadership skills of those who would have otherwise not been given leadership responsibility has become the new mission critical. Here are four ways to optimize it.

Provide a compelling vision

We all want to believe that what we do matters, but today's new generation of workers not only want it, they insist on it. When an organization's leaders are unable to clearly communicate how their employees' activities contribute to something bigger than their paycheck, that organization will incur the steep cost of disengagement and employee turnover. It's no longer enough to craft cleverly worded communications about maximizing shareholder return or growing market share (if it ever was!) Employees at every level, but particularly at the lower levels in an organization, want to know how the effort they put in every day actually serves something more important than a dollar value can measure; they want to know how it impacts the world at large.



A leader who is unable to speak from the heart, to the heart, connecting people to a bigger “Why” is like a lake without water – dry and depressing.

By contrast, a leader who can enlarge the context and provide a compelling sense of purpose will inspire employees to work more passionately, to go the extra mile more often, and to elicit greater ingenuity as they do.

Make it safe for people to speak bravely

The traditional command and control style of leadership is disappearing from the business landscape for good reason. It lacks effectiveness. Getting the best results from people today requires cultivating what I call a ‘[Culture of Courage](#).’ That is, an environment in which all employees not only feel safe to speak up and express dissenting opinions, but are actually encouraged to do so in courageous and constructive ways. As I wrote in my book [Stop Playing Safe](#), “People play it safe when they feel it’s unsafe to do otherwise.”

The best leaders are highly intentional about making people feel they have a psychological safety net to catch them should they dare to challenge the consensus and forge new ground. So leaders must ensure employees know that when they stick their neck out to suggest a new approach or provide critical feedback, they won’t be penalized for doing so. In fact, they will be recognized for the courage it’s taken to do so.

Empower career ownership & leading without a title

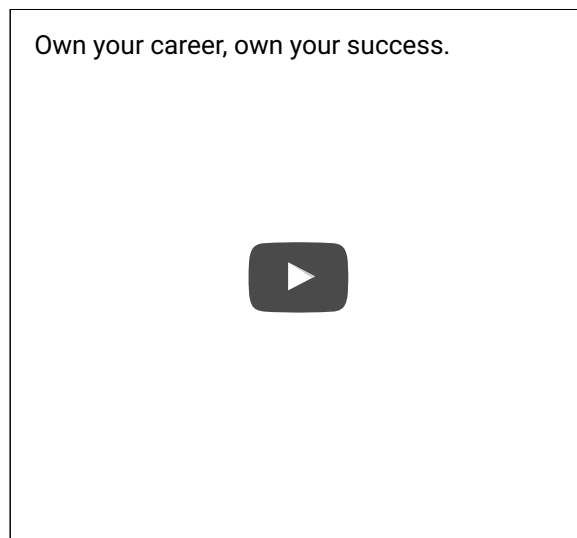
Most millennials have no intention of spending their career in one organization. In fact, the idea of it is anathema to many of those who have a higher tolerance for risk and greater need for variety and career fulfillment than their parents and grandparents. This is changing the traditional employer-employee relationship as employers work to retain talented arrivals over the long haul.

Doing that takes a multi-pronged approach – not just providing challenging and meaningful work, but also ensuring they take ownership for creating a career path that will continue to satisfy the newly hired as they grow their competence and confidence.

Accordingly, leaders need to ensure that their younger employees aren’t waiting for instruction on how to execute their job or expecting a step-by-step career plan laid out for them by some mythical figure in HR. Expecting this 20 years ago may have been risky. Expecting it today is

outright lethal. This group should be actively encouraged to be proactive in charting their own career path, advocating for themselves and, when they see an unmet need or new opportunity, championing how they can solve or seize it. As Ray Carvey, executive vice president of corporate learning at [Harvard Business Publishing](#) shared with me, “Leaders need to ensure that their people know that they don’t have to be a manager to be a leader.”

To thrive in the workplace today, self-leadership is more important than ever. As I wrote in my latest book [Brave](#), you don’t need a title to be a leader, you don’t even need permission. You just need to start acting as one and be patient while those whom matter gradually catch on. In this video below I share how young, emerging and seasoned leaders alike can do just that and be the CEO of their own career.



Provide ongoing ‘user-friendly’ development opportunities

The top ten jobs today didn’t even exist ten years ago, and even the best futurists couldn’t have accurately predicted what they would be. Accordingly, it’s impossible to predict precisely what skills will be in highest demand ten years from now. While no one can foresee the future, what we can be reasonably sure of is that those who’ve continually honed their skillset will be best positioned to reap the rewards and seize the opportunities of the mid 2020’s.

Leaders who provide easily accessible, user-friendly training and development opportunities for employees will help to future-proof their organization by giving employees the skills to adapt quickly. Learning agility is the name of the game.

As Carvey has found in organizations like Goodyear and Hilton, those which have [strong internal learning programs not only create stronger leaders, but retain them far longer](#). Given millennials spend much of their lives on their mobile devices, providing ways for them to learn new information, skills and expertise where they want it (i.e. anywhere!) and whenever they want, will create more skilled, engaged and creative contributors.

Adapting to the new world of information dissemination, away from the confines of the traditional classroom and onto our take-anywhere digital devices is not just good for the learners, it's good for all organizational stakeholders.

The most valuable resource any leader has isn't their organization's market cap, technology or brand strength. It's the human talent, passion and ingenuity working within it. Harnessing that fully may be the greatest challenge for today's leaders, but it is also the most rewarding.

[Margie Warrell](#) is a bestselling author, [keynote speaker](#), and women's leadership coach. Check out her 3 [bestselling books](#).

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Linked In](#) | [RawCourage.TV](#)

RECOMMENDED BY FORBES

[Five Ways To Build Bravery At Work](#)

[Leadership Courage: Creating A Culture Where People Feel Safe To Take Risks](#)

[Doubt Yourself Less, Back Yourself More](#)

[How To Turn Rejection Into Success](#)

[The Global Celebrity 100 2016](#)

[Ten Things I Wish I Knew When I Started 'Pokémon GO'](#)

[The Global Celebrity 100 2016](#)

[The Walking Dead's Enduring Appeal](#)

This article is available online at: <http://onforb.es/1DYlu66>

2016 Forbes.com LLC™ All Rights Reserved