

A New Model Of Organizational Leadership



Are you building effective leaders for your organization?

The model of business leadership in Canada had become out-dated. Many of yesterday and today's leaders emerged almost fully formed from business school or grew into leaders in a model of business leadership that has lost its mojo.

The Days of Stability and Homogeneity Are Behind Us

For decades stability and homogeneity were hallmarks of success in business in Canada. Fitting in and learning the business worked well in organizations where the status quo was champion. When leaders did emerge they were often those who were able to stand out in the crowd by steering a steady ship to a score a big win. People who were determined to lead often steered the ship and this required setting the course and leading from the front. Determination, perseverance, unwavering confidence often enabled a strong leader to emerge. Not all of these ships set sail in the right direction but they set sail and in a stable, predictable economy and this was often enough to find success.

However, we are no longer in times of stability and homogeneity. To compete in a chaotic, evolving, dynamic and global landscape new leaders need to emerge who have the skills and adaptability to steer the ship through changing waters. The strong, determined, standout leader and sometimes take the lead alone may not be the right leader to take you where you need to go tomorrow.

The Future of Business Is Diversity and Fluidity

Today's business landscape is comprised of diversity and fluidity. No longer are careers unfolding like a plan within a stable and homogeneous organization, industry or economy. Transition, transformation, change are becoming the key leadership traits organizations who want to adapt must seek in their leaders. Leaders can emerge from within and, as often as not, from outside, way outside. Leaders who bring a new perspective, which can include coming from a different industry, country or field can often be the right leaders to enable a team, department or organization to hop on the board and ride the wave to the next stop.

Where your leaders in the past may have stood out heads and shoulders above the rest it turns out the the leaders best positioned to lead a successful strategy, team, department or organization today are those who fit into the diverse and fluid motion of being, remaining and becoming connected. The skill of being connected and not

standing apart may be the key skills you want to develop or spot in a leader. Leaders today must step in and not step out to gain perspective.

What is leadership really? Is it a virtue, such as setting the example by doing the right thing or is it a set of skills that enable you to perform a task 'better' than others. Although these remain key competencies of a leader, doing the right thing and doing what you do well is not enough if you do not have people on board. Leaders can no longer lead from the front instead they are leading from inside.

Being a Connected Leader

One of the world's top network scientists (people network not IT network), Ron Burt, associate professor at the University of Virginia McIntire School of Commerce, has demonstrated that successful careers belong to those who have mastered the ability to build and cultivate multiple clusters of networks. In the old paradigm being part of one homogeneous network enabled you to take a shot at standing out and everyone in that network could see it. Today with multiple clustered networks it is not about standing out in one but about being able to tap into many. The ability to broker relationships among these clusters can often lead to leadership success.

Being a successful leader today requires 3 key components:

- **Connected to your self:** Self-awareness to be able to navigate multiple relationship with a diversity of connections – self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence something good connectors tend to bring to the table.
- **Connected to an idea or goal** – A leader who understands both where they want to go and why, a purpose for their leadership
- **Connected to people** – a connected leader sees him/herself as a representative of other people. He/she is connected to. An effective leader today is not seeking to push his/her agenda to stand out and steer the ship. The connected leader is connected to why leadership and not only the what and how of leadership.

Recognize or Develop your Leaders?

There is a place to both recognize the ability to be a connected leader and also train talent to become a connected leader. The skills of self-awareness can often be developed with time and opportunity. Helping potential or actual leaders understand their purpose in being a leader is not usually to push or pull but to lead from within can enable a clarify of purpose. Connecting to people can emerge when leaders are present and listen to others, seeing different perspectives and valuing the benefits of diversity of people and ideas.

When you are looking for leaders it can pay to look not only as who stands out but also who fits in and leads from within.