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hda Review



DELIVERING BUSINESS SUCCESS THROUGH PEOPLE SOLUTIONS

HDA equip a leading asset management HR team with the skills required to effectively hold challenging conversations

Melissa Gallagher
Client Partner & Project Manager at HDA

Business Context/Objectives

The client is a leading asset management company that has been through significant change over the last year. The key issues for the HR team were around attracting, engaging and retaining staff in the current climate; supporting managers and equipping them with the skills to engage their team members; while also promoting HR career development.

The client was keen to equip the HR team with the skills required to effectively hold challenging conversations, thereby providing beneficial guidance for their target audience at the transactional level, whilst at the same time contributing to the ongoing development of the HR team itself. HDA was invited to provide an effective development intervention, an outline of which is detailed below.

HDA Approach

After discussions with HR to further define their key objectives, HDA decided that the best approach would be to run 2 half-day developmental sessions, to ensure minimum disruption to the business; while also encouraging maximum take-up.

The sessions focused on the following areas:

- Challenging Conversations and how to tackle them - the key objectives being to assist the HR team in developing a better understanding of the dynamics involved in challenging workplace communications and establishing a best practice model for use in business.
- Creating awareness and understanding of the best possible approaches to navigating through these tough times - given the changing workforce; refined organisational structures and changing leadership priorities. The key issues for both the individual participants and the HR team as whole were identified through pre-course online assessments and tips/tools for moving forwards to create successful outcomes were provided; alongside successful tactics and case studies from leading organizations.

Business Outcomes

The session provided the team with the tools and techniques required to facilitate discussion; promote career development; and engage and motivate staff. As a result of the session the HR team developed a practical preparation strategy to become proficient in delivering difficult messages. In addition, given the changing workforce, refined organisation structures and changing leadership priorities it was important for the HR team to understand the best possible approaches to navigating through the current climate. As a result of the session the HR team were better placed to develop internal strategies for motivating and engaging staff; thereby ensuring they retain key talent when the markets pick up.



HDA speaks at the AFC Conference

HDA have been selected to speak at the annual Association for Coaching Conference, 'Going Global 2010' (www.aconference.com), which will be held in London on the 11th and 12th March 2010.

'Going Global 2010' is aimed at expanding thinking and building upon the principles of coaching as the profession, organisations, leaders and their people emerge from a significantly challenging time.

This 4th International conference promises some of the most **powerful and challenging speakers in coaching** and HDA has been selected to present an executive coaching session on the topic of 'Coaching for Stress Management: The 3-Dimensional Approach'.

For more information on HDA News, please contact **Sweta Patel** - Campaign Manager
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New Financial Director Appointed

HDA is pleased to announce the appointment of [Steve Lovett](#), as Financial Director, responsible for scaling HDA's financial and governance infrastructure.

Steve has a keen passion for getting the most out of business systems, streamlining business processes and developing effective management information to scale and take the business forward. Having been actively involved in many IT Systems Development Panels, Steve is now a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (England & Wales) IT Faculty.

With an analytical mind, methodical approach and tactful manner, Steve is an effective negotiator and arbitrator.

A Chartered Accountant, Steve has spent 13 years in FD and MD roles within medium-sized private companies and has gained an in-depth knowledge of business at all levels.

According to Tricia Dicks, CEO at HDA; *"we are delighted to have Steve onboard as a member of our senior leadership team as we continue to develop our UK and international interests".*



HDA builds its outplacement services by supporting the vocational / professional training needs of people in transition



HDA's 2009 Outplacement Survey results would appear to indicate an important new realism in the marketplace; namely that in the emerging UK economy, outplacement support provision for impacted staff at all levels, (and who to partner with in its delivery) is best aimed at:

- providing the most relevant, flexible and innovative career transition leverage, customised to individual needs
- achieving best value-for-money
- taking a realistic view of opportunities for re-settlement in a difficult market, vs having unrealistic expectations about likely settlement rates

Given this realism and value-for-money focus, HDA is currently focusing its attention on inter-weaving its core outplacement support services with the provision of vocational / professional training opportunities for those impacted by the recession and transitioning their careers during a particularly lean market for alternative job opportunities in most sectors.

We are very aware that more and more people are recognising the need to develop their skills and knowledge during the current recession, either a) as time well spent during transition, and part of their ongoing development, or b) with a view to embarking on a new career requiring new knowledge and competencies. In response to this, HDA has **partnered with Hemsley Fraser** to provide access to leading vocational training programmes within our outplacement programmes. Training courses are available in the following specialist areas:

Management & leadership development
Personal impact & effectiveness
Project management
PA, secretary, administrator

Credit & finance
Sales & Customer service
Marketing & PR

Publishing & media skills
Health & safety and first aid
HR, employment law & training skills

A HDA Candidate, Jenny Naylor (past VP Marketing Director, Leisure Industry) who recently attended a Hemsley Fraser Workshop as part of her HDA career transition programme, says.....*The Finance for Non Financial Managers course was the best two day course I've been on for years. It demystified profit and loss accounts and balance sheets in a very clear and easily understandable way. The course content was pitched at the right level for the participants, with time for questions and lots of practical exercises to put the theory into practice. I left with confidence that I could return to my role as a Marketing Director with a better foundation for decision making where budgets and accounts are concerned. I would thoroughly recommend it.*

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HDA Workshop



For more information or to book a workshop, please contact **Melissa Gallagher, Client Partner & Project Manager**

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For more information on these workshops, please click here - <http://www.hda.co.uk/corporate/hda-overview/inhouseworkshops.asp>

The current economic climate dictates that it is now an employers market, however what will happen when the economic crisis we currently find ourselves in subsides?

Are you confident that your talented employees will remain with your organisation? Or do you believe you need to act now to ensure your talent is retained in the future?

HDA believes it is important to develop practical strategies for ensuring your key talent are engaged, motivated and ultimately committed to your organisation and its objectives, regardless of

how green the grass may appear on the other side. With this in mind we have created a selection of **in-house workshops** which focus on key areas that if managed effectively can play a role in building and sustaining a cohesive unit of committed employees now and into the future.

These workshops combine HDA's reputation for providing highly interactive, practical and informative sessions; with the flexibility of having the workshop on a date and at a time that suits you; tailored specifically to your organisations needs.

in-house workshops:

- Effectively Handling Challenging Conversations
- Leading During Challenging Times
- Career Development in a Downturn
- Coping With Personal Change
- Managing & Integrating Change
- Stress Management
- Empowering teams to thrive (not just survive) in challenging times
- Incident Management Training

Leadership Development & Engagement - What Makes an Effective Leader?

Although there has been an ever so slight shift upwards in the market; the current economic climate still dictates that now is an employers market; so what will happen when the economic crisis we currently find ourselves subsides - are you confident that your talented employees will remain with your organisation? Or do you believe you need to act now to ensure your talent is retained in the future? It is important to develop strategies for ensuring your key talent are engaged, motivated and ultimately committed to your organisation and its objectives, regardless of how green the grass may appear on the other side. There are many factors that can influence employee engagement and retention – one of the most powerful being the existence of effective leadership.



Melissa Gallagher
Client Partner & Project Manager at HDA

Effective leaders are instrumental in the creation of a cohesive, engaged workforce. According to recent research, it appears that there is a highly positive correlation between effective leadership and employee engagement and indeed if effective leadership is present in an organisation then the negative impact of other factors such as perceived poor pay or limited work-life balance is reduced (Financial Times Top 100 Companies, 2008). So what makes an effective leader and has the current climate altered what is required to be considered effective?

In order to go some way towards answering this question, HDA recently surveyed senior executives (including HR Professionals, Managing Directors, and Vice Presidents) across various sectors. The results provide an interesting insight into the perceptions of effective leadership in today's economy.

So what of our experience of working with effective leaders – are they commonplace? Do they exist? It would appear that most people (78%) have experience working with an effective leader; with various factors making these leaders stand out as effective, for example:

"They exhibited both a fair, robust but intellectual considered approach to leadership and always led by example. The tacit approach to leadership is not necessarily what you do when the garden is rosy, it is your ability to lead under adverse conditions and use your strength of character coupled with a sense of humour to take individuals to the unknown or a place where they might not necessarily wish to tread."

"...taking us from an ok performing to high performing business by focusing the business on a tighter set of priorities and then relentlessly driving these through; engaging and mobilising the leadership team and their direct reports. At the same time increasing the investment in people and team development starting with the leadership team...also has not avoided tough decisions but made sure they were done in the right way."

"They encouraged me to learn, gave me responsibility for my own work, inspired me to progress in my career and achieve my goals."

Figures in the public eye that attract our attention as effective leaders (and why) include:

- **Richard Branson** - has a vision, inspires, engaging, his businesses break new ground and challenge dominant players, he thrives on challenge and change;
- **Barack Obama** - gravitas, honesty, he has a vision and can use his oratory to build a sense of belief in that vision and trust in his ability to lead, adjusts his style and communication to meet changing needs;
- **Fabio Cappello** - focused on the meaning of success, with the ability to inspire and motivate where others have failed;
- **Sir Alex Ferguson** - inspires a team to work well together to achieve common goals, ability to stay at the top of his profession over 25 years with differing societal and professional changes not to mention individual and team management expectations.

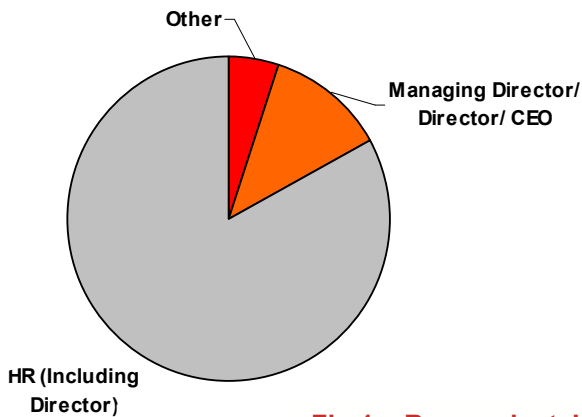


Fig 1 – Respondent Job Titles

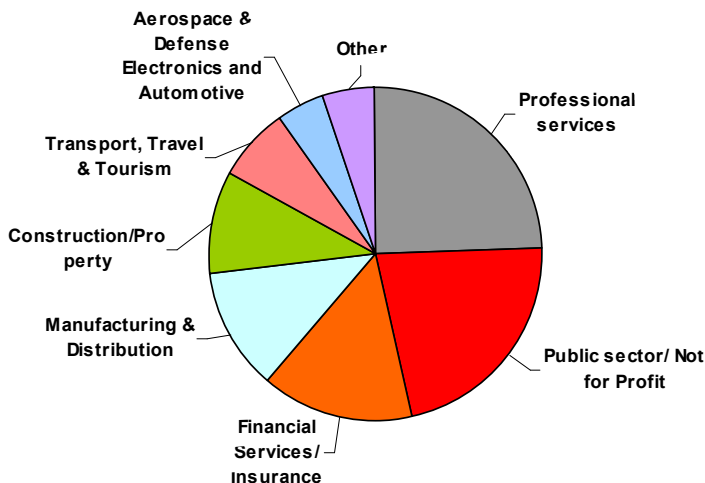


Fig 2 – Respondent Industry

Leadership Development & Engagement - What Makes an Effective Leader? continued....

In terms of specific characteristics that we identify with effective leaders – over 88% of those responding believe that an effective leader is ‘ethical and fair’ – “not avoiding tough decisions but making sure they are done in the ‘right’ way”. It would be naive not to assume that this is heightened as a result of the downturn and that staff members will perceive a leader as more effective based on both the way any organisational changes have been handled and also on the success of these changes.

When asked to rank a number of factors in order of importance, ‘possessing a vision for the future’ was the most important element for the majority (34%) of people (see Fig 3). ‘Motivating others through persuasion and influence rather than intimidation’ was also ranked as most important for a large percentage of respondents (20%). These factors may also be a symptom of the current climate in that currently staff members equate successful leaders as being those that ‘possess a vision for the future’; a goal – something stable in an otherwise tumultuous, unpredictable environment. Staff members want to have something to believe in and someone to trust, that will navigate them and the organisation through these challenging times.

Over 29% of respondents indicated that the second most important characteristic for an effective leader is that they ‘inspire others to achieve organisational goals’ – again this is aligned with staff members desire to have a focus for the future. In order to share a commitment to achieving a common goal, staff members must first trust in the ability and vision of the leader. This is achieved not through intimidation but through influence, persuasion and leading by example.

‘Responding effectively to changing environments’ was rated as the third most important characteristic (17%) – this is a characteristic that will have been particularly important over the last eighteen months; where those that have possessed the flexibility and intuitiveness to respond quickly will have had the greatest chances of success.

‘Communicating effectively with staff of all levels’ was ranked fourth by 20% of respondents. Engaging staff with what the organisation is trying to achieve requires not only clear leadership and supportive management but also excellent communications in order to establish trust and elevate concerns over the future. Effective leaders must now *“possess the ability to manage people holistically, i.e. business outputs are affected by personal circumstances. They must be perceived as an active and effective listener.”*

With altering leadership priorities for e.g. consolidation/containment compared to growth and expansion; it would seem that the weightings placed on the various factors that are deemed important for effective leadership have also changed over the last 18 months. However the impact of an effective leader on organisational success has not and largely the characteristics required remain constant regardless of the industry the leader operates in.

If the above are the perceived characteristics of an effective leader then are these characteristics innate or can they be learned? It appears that many characteristics are innate and people who are effective leaders have always been ‘leaders’ throughout their career. However, at times individuals in leadership positions may be technically proficient but lack the skills required to motivate and engage staff to work towards a common goal, a shared vision for the future – as one respondent noted *“leadership is a privilege with accountability and responsibility for people and resources and often individuals are placed in such a position because they are an excellent banker/accountant/lawyer and not because they demonstrate the necessary ability or attributes to lead”.*

Recognising the powerful role that an effective leader can play in engaging, retaining and indeed attracting key talent (with 100% of respondents indicating that the presence of an effective leader would be a key factor in attracting them to an organisation) – naturally developing these leaders and equipping them with the skills required for success, should be at the forefront of any talent strategy. In doing so you will ensure that your organisation is well placed to survive the war for talent when it resumes once more!

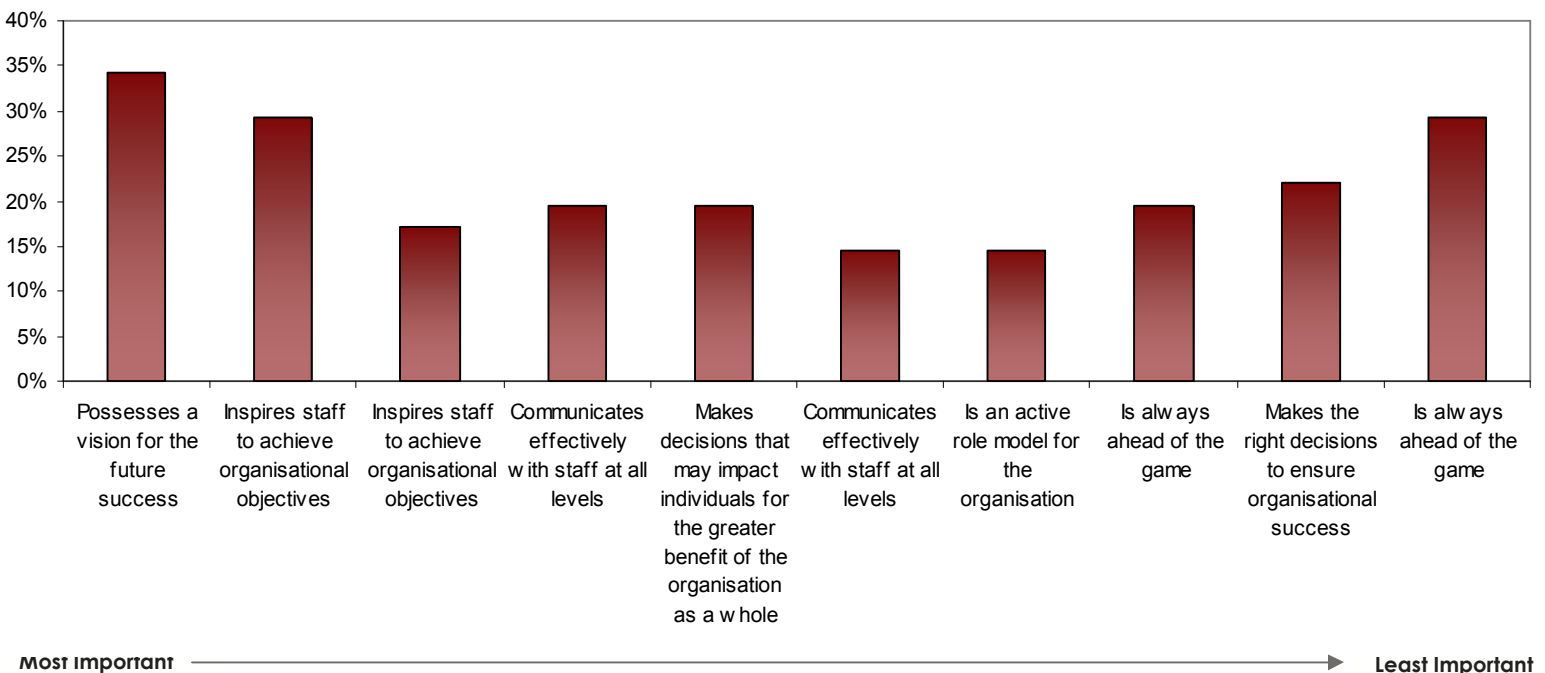
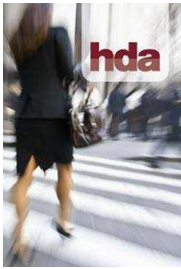


Fig 3 – Leadership Characteristics ranked in order of importance



Enhancing Corporate Reputation and engagement via Career Self-ownership

From The Telegraph - Tuesday, September 8, 09

Clayton Glen, Director – HDA Associates

It seems naïve these days to even mention a special closeness of bond or psychological contract between employers and their employees.

In a world reeling from the very personal impact of recession, instability across the world's largest and formidable organisations, high volume redundancies at all levels, and black holes in pension fund balance sheets; this sense is strengthened. People have a growing sense that they need to own their futures, and, by definition, the direction of their careers. For a dwindling group this is alarming, and for a growing group, this is reality.

According to Clayton Glen, Director at HDA Associates, 'the implications of this breakdown from an employer's perspective is that employers need to work harder at maintaining relationships with key talent, work harder at enhancing levels of morale, engagement and hence performance, and work harder at maintaining their corporate reputation; in particular the employer brand, which impacts the quality of key talent attracted to and retained within the organisation. All of these are long-term strategic business continuity imperatives for organisations with long-term survival and/or growth aspirations; in particular given the impact of globalisation.'

Notwithstanding increasing budget limitations, the growing challenges of ensuring engagement, morale, performance and corporate reputation are now leading organisations to approach HDA for advice on *diverting* a component of their outplacement spend towards increased spending on *internal career development support* for those who are likely to remain in the organisation, and/or those whose roles are at potential risk of redundancy, but who will benefit from having the organisation shift its focus to leveraging their careers whilst they remain with the organisation. This rising class of internal career leverage initiative includes eg.:

Redeployment empowerment initiatives – internal interview/assessment preparedness coaching, together, in cases with the provision of vocational training support aimed at increasing the competitiveness of internal candidates for internal roles and hence reducing external recruitment and onboarding costs.

In-house career centres which recognise that much is to be gained from engaging all staff in honest confidential personal career leverage conversations, including one-to-one career coaching, group networking and facilitated career development events, assessment and 360 degree feedback tools, and a range of online personal career development resources. The logic here is that the more prepared people are now to manage their careers, the less support they may need in the future, in the event that their roles no longer fit. This adds efficiency when any redundancies are announced in the future, removes the stigma of job loss, and improves employer reputation and the employer branding.

Survivor support initiatives, supporting those who have been indirectly impacted by change and the redundancies of peers, to deal with their experience of the change that has occurred around them, and to re-focus them onto their post-change career development needs, and any new opportunities available within the organisation.

Any internal career advisory service should be underpinned by the realistic expectation that there will not always be a direct match between the organisation's need for talent, and the current availability of that talent.

Redundancy is not a new thing, it affects an increasing number of people at some point, and it is often a valuable career development step.

For this reason, an open-cards approach, which recognises career development as a continuum, is the most mature and honest approach for any organisation to take.

Simply put, says Glen; 'organisations which improve the marketability and career prospects of their staff are likely to hold onto them longer, and when they release them, they do so with their reputation enhanced. Everybody wins.'

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