

Money Saving Conversations Every Leader Needs to Have BUT No One Wants to Start

Talent is like any other resource in an organization. You either manage it consciously and well and it makes you money, or you ignore and defer it and you waste money on it.

Managers must have crucial conversations with the talent they manage if they are going to **engage** their talent for maximum contribution and **retain** that talent for maximum ROI.

But there is a pretty uniform dread or reluctance or just plain incompetence when it comes to actively managing the talent that reports to us. We don't have to look very far to find a solid explanation for such a persistent problem. There's no shared framework for how, when and why to manage talent. No experienced business leader looks forward to starting a conversation that goes nowhere, wanders or, worse yet, turns into an emotional disagreement. We want mutual benefits, agreement and action.

A Model to Consider

Here is a talent management model that frames the three coaching conversations all managers and employees must have, a) development planning b) performance management c) transition/exit.

The Three Questions Model helps organizations, their managers and their employees see what shape their careers are in and have open conversations about what each wants to change or keep the same. We have all been consciously, or more likely unconsciously, addressing the three career questions multiple times throughout our careers.

1. ***When is it time to move up*** in work or an organization or profession that satisfies us? *It's about progression not just promotion.*
2. ***When is it time to move out*** of a role, relationship, organization or profession that is no longer a good fit? *It's not about "the quit" it's about "the fit".*
3. ***When is it time to adapt your style*** for greater success when you realize you're not getting traction and it can't be everyone else's fault.

THREE QUESTIONS CONSULTING Career & Management Consultation

The Three Questions Model makes both the questions and the conversations explicit. The answers are not “given” by an employee or their manager. They are jointly designed, negotiated and implemented – but only if you have the conversation first.

Symptoms of Over Paying for Passivity

What are the symptoms that your team or company is paying too high of a price for passive talent management and avoiding the conversations about:

Leaders Not talking about MOVING UP? - Bitter, resentful attitudes. Critical. Disengaged from work and team members. Beginning to isolate. No bench strength in the company. Succession plan is crippled.

Leaders Not talking about MOVING OUT? - Low productivity. Retirement-on-the-job. Avoidance. Disengaged with current work. Potential contribution squandered with person in the wrong job.

Leaders Not talking about ADAPTING STYLES? – Burnout. Defensiveness. Discouragement. Alienation from teammates or direct reports. If in a leadership role their direct reports may exhibit – Resentment that no one is intervening. Discouragement. Sabotage. Job hunting.

If you're like nearly half of all the businesses (across 17 industry categories) surveyed by Price Waterhouse Coopers in 2012, you're having a hard time finding the type of talent you really want at this time. Managing the talent gap is not just addressed with a recruiting solution. But that is the solution most businesses will instinctually reach for and over-rely upon.

Here's the real problem behind many talent needs: ***the talent you want hasn't even been created yet.*** Our work cultures and education and training cultures are recalibrating with each other to better prepare talent that is able to match not just current specifications but impending future needs too. They are preparing talent that is better able to be resilient, emotionally intelligent and able to adapt to successive waves of change that will continually wash over all forms of public and private sector work.

What to Do

The workforce you have now is a three-to-four generation “stew” of talent and it's part of your problem and solution. It may be your only solution if the talent you wish for hasn't been created yet or you can't compete for it. To actively manage the talents working in your organization right now, you need an explicit, simple and sustainable approach to talent management that managers and their teams can share. Get a talent management model that takes some of the ambiguity and ambivalence out of the process for managers first. They are the ones that must lead the conversation.