

## ARE THE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES WE USE OUTDATED?

Leadership core competencies are those abilities or related ‘excellences’ that an individual acquires with consistent endeavor over the years to become a strong leader of people and organizations. If these competencies are considered ‘distinctive capabilities’, it presumes that only a select few will achieve them and move into corporate leadership roles.

Let’s consider some of the core competencies that are common among corporations today. The attributes we consistently hear our clients call for include: being collaborative and team oriented; working with honesty, transparency and integrity; having an entrepreneurial spirit; treating others with respect and trust; having a willingness and ability to challenge others and be challenged; being inclusive and valuing diversity; being results oriented and willing to take calculated risks. Blah, blah, blah!

The competencies are now commonplace in the US corporate workplace; these phrases have become part of corporate speak. They have been absorbed as fundamental competencies essential to being successful within a corporate structure, regardless of the level of the individual. And as a result, they are no longer ‘distinctive capabilities or characteristics’ that makes a person stand out as a leader.

Isn’t it interesting that so much of that corporate speak described above is not part of the Baby Boomer but so intrinsic to the X and Y Generations? Do those core competencies we still use in fact address what is not inherent in the Baby Boomer generation and must be learned behavior? If this is true, then it is time to evolve and retool the list of leadership core competencies to address the next generations.

Consider the following competencies:

- Developing people and leaders as assets to the corporation;
- Leveraging inclusive and transparent teams;
- Infusing and articulating a value equation to the organization and its goals;
- Creating an environment of continuous learning;
- Aligning skill development and people resources to sustain the long term goals of the organization;
- Channeling resources toward targeted corporate social behavior;
- Effectively creating functional channels of interactive communication;
- Ability to continually stimulate and challenge a highly educated work force;
- Balancing individual contribution with team contribution and translating individual and team ideas into action; and
- Orchestrating throughout the organization to drive results.

They are tailored to address what motivates the next generations – and the ability to harness those characteristics and direct them to the advantage of the business and the people that are part of that business.

Our challenge is to proactively start rewriting our leadership competencies, recognizing they should naturally evolve as the people who make up the organization evolve. It is time to do that now, as the Baby Boom generation starts to retire, the next generation takes over their leadership roles, and Gen Y fill the ranks of middle management and valued knowledge worker positions.

### **Baby Boomers**

(Born between 1946 & 1964)

- Competitive
- Productive
- Ideological
- Loyal to company
- Value work ethic
- Comfortable with hierarchy
- Comfortable with authority

### **Generation X**

(Born between 1965 & 1978)

- Pragmatic
- Effective
- Expect immediate performance
- Transparent
- Loyal to people (not company)
- Emphasis on productivity
- Collaborative
- Value continuous learning

### **Generation Y**

(Born after 1978)

- Want work life balance
- Personally connected to work
- Need fulfillment
- Value corporate social responsibility
- Expect regular job changes
- Inclusive
- Value continuous learning
- Communicate through technology