



NetConnect Teleconference

Leading From the Edge

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Summary

Position your company for innovation and growth as a global leader. The most successful global leaders lead from the edge. They understand context and the changing landscape in ways most people don't. They understand that it's not only how valuable your products and services are to the global markets that you serve, but also how appropriate your organization is in terms of its structure and operations to the culture and setting in which you conduct business. Attendees learned the 10 essential traits successful global leaders embody; each leader doesn't possess all 10, but each has a healthy mix. The discussion included how seven top executives used their strengths tie to global successes.

Key Topics

Need for Re-creation of Leadership Models

What does leadership mean in this age of great change? The route to industry market and product success begins and ends with leadership. How do our organizations out think, out strategize, out innovate and out execute their competitors and with leadership capability that creates strategic differentiation globally? The field of leadership development is in huge inflection right now. If the strategic and economic models of the industrial age are no longer relevant, then our organizational and leadership models need to be re-created as well.

Four Main Macro Factors Changing Landscape of Leadership

1. Mobile make over - Rapid advancement in technology and in particular mobile technologies
2. Macro Economic Shifts
3. Shifting demographics of work force are changing who and where and why people work. Fundamentally changing the way organizations think about using the world as their talent rather than using the zip code where their corporate headquarters sits.
4. VUCA Dynamic (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguity) - because this is all happening simultaneously, it adds a new level of complexity.

Concept of Scaled Learning – comes out of the work of John Hagel, Deloitte Center for the Edge

- In these times of great change, what matters is how organizations create dynamic differentiation.
- They need to learn and evolve rapidly to continue offering that meaningful differentiation to the market.
- When organizations are static, no matter how powerful products are today, they will become increasingly more vulnerable in the competitive landscape.
- Those organizations that can continually innovate, to build a sense of scaled learning will stay ahead of technology change and market uncertainty, more so than those organizations who have not created ways for their organization to learn, adapt, and be agile.
- In order to stay ahead, companies must be out there learning at scale as opposed to learning as individuals in an organization.

Traits of Global Leaders

- Explorers by nature – seek to learn about history, culture, landscape, and country
- Approach with “seek to understand” attitude – keep assumptions about how things should be aside
- Miss global travel when grounded; it is part of their soul rather than tolerating global travel as part of their job

Top 10 Essential Leadership Traits

Leadership is becoming less about demographics and pedigree and more about **psychographics**, about who you are and how some of these traits are part of your being as a leader, as opposed to unique skills you have learned along the way.

1. Strong sense of self
2. Having courage to constantly evaluate and re-create organization models, business models, team, yourself.
3. Engaging in multi-modal lateral thinking about new and different - How to manage to both/and create for tomorrow and deliver for today
4. Leading with an experimental mind
5. Balancing control and chaos
6. Influencing for constructive collaboration
7. Being a super global change agent
8. Having freedom to fail and fail fast
9. Power of empathy as business imperative
10. Authenticity is becoming a critical point in leadership platform

Top 3 Traits Lacking in Leaders Today

1. Balancing Control and Chaos – how do you do both and how do you reward both as an organization?
2. Courage to Re-create – Leaders think that doing more of the same will work...how do we push leaders out of their comfort zone, encourage leaders to re-create rather than what they have done in the past?
3. Experimental Mind – Large companies can't fail on a large scale; they must have smart experimentation; how do leaders build new engines from blank space?

Current Leadership Assessment Strategies Are Not Effective

Because good leadership is less about a skill and more about a way of being, leadership lab environments are a better way with real time problem solving situations and then tested and retested against the work they need to get done and how they show the above mentioned attributes in play as opposed to a paper/pencil 360-type approach. It is more complicated and complex than a traditional assessment center.

Are Most Company Leadership Development Approaches Today Successful at Creating Global Leaders?

The field of Leadership Development is painfully at an inflection point. For a number of years we've dialed in on how to develop leaders where predictability, control, and process works but that world is fast receding. The new world order requires us to think differently about how we develop leaders. We must develop leadership capability and also develop those who do the work of leadership

- Help our leaders think and develop around integrative thinking
- How they experiment and how they build and test strategy
- How they interconnect and collaborate with partners, customers, and competitors
- How we help leaders understand a very complicated changing global marketplace and dynamics there

Solution: Develop leaders while they are doing the work of leadership. Putting leaders in the field to gain development as close as possible to the work they are trying to get done makes more sense.

Case Study Example 1 – StarWood Properties

They took top 100 leaders into key markets and developed them JIT. They also took the leadership team to China and Dubai to run the company from those locations for 4-6 weeks at a time. This proved to be much more effective than classroom development.

Case Study Example 2 – Executive Action Learning Forum Developed at Cisco

Created in partnership with Chief Innovation Officer

- **Problem for Business side:** Many very good ideas -how can we build business plans around these ideas?
- **Problem for HR side:** A lot smart leaders needing development
- **Solution:** Put business ideas and leaders together into a "viability lab" to incubate products and solutions and organizational capabilities simultaneously.

- 16 week period - Came together physically in the beginning, middle, end (virtually in between)
- IDA, collaborate, experiment, test technology solutions, build go to market strategies, build business processes around their solutions
- Brought ideas to VC board who reviewed their solutions for investment viability
- **Result:** Over 5 years, this strategy created \$25B in proposed value creation for Cisco. Leaders learned how to lead differently.

Final Thought

We have an opportunity to change the conversation about how we do the work that we do. We can continue to approach leadership development in a very transactional way by sending potential leaders to business school programs. The other option is to challenge ourselves and lean into this work with a different level of courage to reinvent how we approach the practice of developing strategic capability for our organization, not just traditional leadership programs.

*Annmarie Neal is the founder of the Center for Leadership Innovation, and the former chief talent officer at Cisco Systems and First Data Corporation. With more than 25 years of experience working with multinational firms, she advises venture capital investors, boards of directors, and executive teams on the alignment of business strategy with innovative talent management and leadership practices. She is the co-author of the book **Leading from the Edge**.*