

OPINIONS

Leadership Development

In demanding times, leadership is a competitive edge. Good leaders provide opportunities for others to grow their communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and other related skills. Leading is setting direction and guiding others to follow that direction. Good leaders debate, clarify, and enunciate values and beliefs; fuel, inspire, and guard the shared vision; ask big picture questions and “what ifs,” as well as encourage thinking the unthinkable. But leadership development is an effort, hopefully, planned in nature, that enhances the capacity to lead people.

PharmaVOICE asked executives throughout the industry: how do their companies develop leaders.



Cultivating talent

The CommonHealth organization has been built on a premise that great leaders can come from within. Our network of 13 operating companies has been organically grown — built, not bought — during the past 35 years, with leadership emerging from within our ranks to head each one. We certainly seek to bring in senior talent from the outside as well, but we're proud that the majority of our leadership team has been cultivated within the organization. To make this happen, we expand participation in leadership through multiple tiers of planning and management committees; we have a training system in place called CommonHealth University, which affords employees the opportunity to further their knowledge in a variety of industry-related

subjects; we have both formal and informal mentoring programs; and, wherever necessary, we use outside coaches to advance the leadership capabilities of our senior staff.

Matt Giegerich
PRESIDENT AND CEO
COMMONHEALTH

ees to realize the carry-over benefits to products, care providers, and patients.

Philip T. Lavin, Ph.D.
PRESIDENT
AVERION INC.

Intangible benefits

The recognition and presence of a prospective corporate mentorship program has many tangible and intangible benefits through professional development (longer retention, increased morale), as well as project continuity (more complete project history, better new staff training). Kudos to companies (sponsors, CROs) that care enough about their employ-

“Followership”

This question is wonderfully defined. We at BASi are terrible at this in any formal sense. We are a very small company (headcount of about 375), and there is no way we can afford the corporate leadership activities of a GE or IBM with their formal campuses. I would hope that bright people would observe and learn from observing and doing. It all starts with hiring. I try to emphasize hiring people who are brighter and more enthusiastic than I am.

I try to hire people who make others better and not the reverse. We aim for a culture where we have little fear of experimenting and little fear of making mistakes. I like to say the more mistakes we make, the smarter we get. This applies technically as well as in human interactions. Experience beats theory every time, but people can't get experience if they don't have the opportunities to fail.

It is equally important to develop “followership” as well as leadership. We need people who can execute in a regulated R&D environment with unquestioned integrity. I believe that to some real extent leadership has been over-played in recent years. The expectations of “charismatic” CEOs have been unrealistically high; and many of them, in their arrogance, have taken short cuts and even believed in their inflated press, with excessive bonuses and stock options and private jets. This is not leadership. This creates an ineffective climate between leaders and real doers. To succeed, a com-

What's Your Opinion?

THE BLOGGING PHENOMENON

Blogging — often a mixture of what is happening in a person's life and what is happening on the Web, a type of hybrid diary/guide site — is quickly becoming an important online resource for consumers and patients. Bloggers share personal information with others about their willingness to try certain pharmaceutical products and why they avoid others. They share their personal stories regarding medical treatments. Furthermore, bloggers enjoy the freedom of speech. But this information exchange has the potential to influence compliance and alter perceptions about medicines and treatment regimens.

PharmaVOICE wants to know what is the potential impact of patient blogging? How is this new online exchange altering the perception of pharmaceutical companies, the industry, and its products? And, how, if it all, should the industry react to the blogging phenomenon?

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Please e-mail your comments to feedback@pharmavoices.com.



pany, much like an army division, must have an exceptional group of sergeants who really make things happen. They must be recognized for doing so.

I don't think one can teach leadership; you can demonstrate it, and you can learn it if you have the energy to do so. Anyone who thinks a MBA is a leadership degree is going to be very disappointed. It's a technician's degree. Leadership is something else.

Pete Kissinger

CEO
BIOANALYTICAL SYSTEMS INC.

Energy, optimism are key

At Clinical CONNEXION (CCX), we believe that the first step in developing leaders begins with a prospective candidate's initial interview and identification process. First and foremost, CCX looks for people with positive energy and optimism. This is one of the most important attributes of leaders. It is more important to us than a resume filled with experience. Our culture embodies optimistic leaders who have a winning vision. While our leaders are free to challenge ideas, they must be problem solvers, not problem makers. This type of person tends to have a very strong work ethic.

We have also implemented a Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) that meets bimonthly. These meetings are intended as a status update so that all of our leaders/department heads are working toward the same vision and goals. In addition, we talk about the importance of leadership and reinforce our strong beliefs of quality, service, and innovation for our clients. Our leaders cannot simply memorize our vision, they need to internalize it; they need to have the courage to motivate and maximize teams. Therefore, it is critical for them to be passionate and zealous to their core about our dynamic culture and vision.

Susan Stein

PRESIDENT
CLINICAL CONNEXION

Leaders at all levels

At Abelson-Taylor, a very real part of "growing up" at our agency involves learning how to lead in a collegial environment. Our program of developing leaders has given us a top-notch group of loyal managers, many of whom have been with us for 10 years or more.

Unlike most agencies, in which senior managers supervise a large number of employees, we expect all but entry-level employees to lead. It has always been our goal to "grow" our managers from within, giving all employees both training and responsibility in leadership,

evaluating them as they progress. For example, our entry-level account staff and traffic coordinators are paired with account coordinators, who generally are recently promoted from traffic coordinator. Along with other responsibilities, account coordinators are expected to train traffic coordinators. This process continues throughout our employees' life within our agency.

Also, rather than giving our directors a large staff of account supervisors, account executives, and assistant account executives to manage directly, account supervisors have direct line responsibility for account executives and assistant account executives. A formal part of their annual review includes how well they lead and develop that important resource.

Personnel decisions for the account team are managed by a council of five VP account group directors, rather than by one director of client services, ensuring that all these managers grow in leadership experience.

On the creative side, each of the brands in our agency is shepherded by an associate creative director, who has formal responsibility for mentoring his or her team.

We also have developed several formal mentoring relationships among our senior creative staff, giving them responsibility to lead more junior creative staff and accountability for that action in their annual review.

Jay Carter

SENIOR VP, DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES
ABELSON-TAYLOR

Leadership principles

At PharmaStrat, we know that the company's future success depends on our ability to develop people as creative, analytic thinkers and to nurture an environment of leadership throughout all levels of the organization. The success we've achieved to date stems from a few key principles.

We set a clear vision from the top without dictating policy. Each quarter, PharmaStrat conducts a staff off-site meeting so I can share the vision of the company and we can discuss as a team our plans and objectives for the quarter and year ahead. Similarly, we each share our key client perspectives and priorities so we can maintain a cutting-edge service orientation.

We encourage a risk-taking culture that provides opportunities for failure. We challenge our colleagues and ourselves to innovate and to apply unique methods and processes to all business issues. I calibrate the amount of client interaction to the level of expertise, so our staff can regularly make mistakes (and learn from them) without a negative impact on client satisfaction.

We publicly praise and recognize leadership. It is a regular occurrence in our office to conduct an impromptu "awards ceremony" to recognize

superior performance. This often includes framed thank-you letters from clients, unique project plaques, and so on. Praise and recognition from well-respected peers are the greatest motivators I have as a leader, and I make sure our firm uses them often.

We create a burning desire to never stop learning. To make each employee a star player, we place an extreme emphasis on the value of education. We encourage employees to never stop learning. We provide countless opportunities for each staff member to broaden his or her horizons through lunch and learns, conferences, trade publications, meetings with industry professionals, and more. The employee is given every opportunity to develop the professional skills needed to ensure personal and organizational success.

Phil Patrick

PRESIDENT
PHARMASTRAT

Learn by doing

The best process to develop leaders is as basic as exposure to opportunity. As a student of managerial science, I have always followed the guidance of Carl Rogers who proclaimed: "Learn by doing." Sure there are natural-born leaders, but every Fission staff member is cultivated to lead and give our organization a competitive edge at every level. Our executive team continues to be dedicated to a process that involves each member of our organization making contributions with existing and prospective clients.

For example, unlike our competitors, there are no "pitch" teams; any member of our staff of "Fissionaries" has the aptitude and experience to shine in front of a prospective or existing client, depending on the need of that specific client. They are the staff that will be working with the client when we win the business; they need to be presented as the team that can deliver at the pitch as well.

Our level of confidence in our staff to lead at every level is mainly due to our investment in educating and exposing our strategic thinking and tactical execution to every member of our organization at every level. Clients need support from a partner that is invested and passionate for its business, understands their goals, and provides expertise to help them obtain and exceed those goals by yielding results through creative solutions. We take this best-in-class thinking to the leadership development of our staff as well. This only happens to our Fissionaries with more exposure to our clients and more opportunities to carry forward our vision and mission.

Mario R. Nacinovich Jr.

SENIOR VP