

From Learning to Leading

WHY PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES ARE CRITICAL TO DEVELOPING LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

Corporate Advice



Caryn Walsh

Caryn Walsh coaches the 2016 Australian CEO of the Year. She is an International Business Consultant, Executive Coach, Keynote Speaker. She is in Fiji four times a year.

Leadership is as much about the theory as it is about the practical application of that theory and the marriage of both mostly results in talented leadership.

However, many institutions that train and grow leaders spend a vast amount of time on the theoretical implications of how to lead well. Failing to provide sufficient ‘on the job’ activities, case studies, role plays and other forms of experiential learning to sufficiently prime leaders (and emerging leaders) for their role.

Subsequently, there are countless people who lead Organisations without having been adequately groomed or prepared for the important role.

As Confucius said
‘I hear and I forget. I see and at times I remember. I do and I understand.’

Moving up the ranks
Many leaders start at the bottom of a Company and work their way to eventually run it and so understand all sides of the business- a valuable asset to the Organisation.

To move up the ranks doesn’t mean that we necessarily do things well or that we have been taught ‘how’ to, but it does mean that we gain critical business experience as we go.

However, understanding how the business works is only one part of running it – the other is how we form and sustain great relationships both within and outside the Company.

Rosie Holiday’s Leaders – In Full Swing
Recently we worked with 108 Rosie Holiday Tours leaders.

Teaching them a whole range of leadership topics, from key communication skills modern day leaders need to have and servant leadership, to why communication struggles in Organisation and how to influence others.

The sessions were divided into theoretical and experiential sections - providing both leadership theory and a key problem solving activity that enabled participants to use the theory in practice.

Transferring their learning from the classroom to their roles



Success at last! Rosie Holidays leaders go through the process and finish their Tower after careful precision. Photo: Eremasi Rova.

on an ongoing basis becomes the vital part of the transformation of their competencies and skills.

Confucius explains that ‘it is always the practising and the acting-out of roles and skills that gives the quickest results, especially through games or skill-building activities.’

Always good-mooded, we challenged this huge group of leaders at different times throughout the day to solve a problem, which they attacked with zest and optimism.

Some succeeded, others tried and never quite got there - but it was the attempt at solving the problem that provided the valuable learning.

Then the challenge is to use this learning in their daily roles.

If your greatest asset is your People, strategically develop them Rosie Travel’s Groups Managing Director Tony Whitton is keenly focussed on developing his people at all levels, knowing that they are the key to making his company Fiji’s best travel company.

Tony explains that:
‘Success in business does not come by lucky breaks. But rather by having the best people. I am so lucky to be working side by side with an amazing team here at Rosie, that deliver world class service to our international visitors and firmly believe that tourism can create jobs and improve the social and economic wellbeing of every single Fijian.’

Like in many industries, the true difference any Organisation has are its people.

Well trained, professional, good at their jobs and with a positive, can do attitude, this is the one asset that drives Organisations forward and make an ongoing difference to a business’ success.

And Mr Whitton knows this very well.

Leadership Role Plays – Really? Yes, really!
We all hate the dreaded training ‘role play.’
That activity that means you must practise something that you have just been taught to give you the opportunity to give it a go.

We hate them, pray the trainer won’t make us endure them and begrudgingly do them when we have to.

However, they play an important role in enhancing skills and if done creatively, form an important part in a leaders’ learning.

‘For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.’
-Aristotle

A role play, particularly under the watchful eye of an experienced facilitator, can be a pivotal approach to trying something, getting valuable feedback to improve and then doing it again until you perfect it.

The outcomes are invaluable.

Laucala Leaders
We worked with leaders on Laucala Island last week, who are responsible for successfully steering the world’s most exotic private midway resort in the world.

We used the same strategies as we normally do: theory then experiential team-building activities and role-plays.

One topic we were teaching was ‘Giving effective Feedback to your People during Performance Appraisals.’

We did role-play after role-play after role-play, equipping participants with the skills and knowledge to do it well every time.

We also used a ‘fish-bowl’ technique, where two participants sat at the front of the room to do their role play so the rest of the attendees could critique them.

6 key considerations when de-



Laucala leaders show sheer determination to get their construction over the line. Photo: Eremasi Rova.

Developing your people

- Is their learning relevant?
- Is the theory supported by ‘doing’ activities – role plays, case-studies and the like?
- Is the theory and learning transferrable from the classroom to the workplace?
- Push their boundaries. Make them work hard to learn more
- Coaching can be part of a development plan for leaders
- Make their development applicable and interesting. Nothing like fun to enhance learning.

Developing leaders at all levels needs to be carefully thought out with some key ideas included in the planning.

Make it fun and relevant, give them ‘on-the-job’ activities to do and problems to solve, push their boundaries so they are challenged and be available to help

them grow at any time.

Caryn Walsh is CEO of Pure Magic International Business Solutions, a leadership and team development specialist Organisation working all over Australia, Fiji and Africa.

Caryn has won various international and national Awards for her work in Leadership and Learning and Development.

She was a finalist in the 2016 Australian L&D Professional of the Year, Finalist in the 2016 Woman in International Business Award and she was Coach to the 2016 Australian CEO of the Year.

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