



Acquisition Learning Facilitation Coaching

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Mind the gap!

The leap from mid-management to an executive role in any business is fraught with challenges and skill-set gaps which prevent the new executive from functioning effectively as soon as required. There is somewhat of a focus and often an extensive budget provided for executive development in organizations.

The leap **to** mid-management, however, is seemingly far greater.

This transition is underestimated in many organizations, and employees are often not given the support they need to adjust and to close the gap. There are a range of new skills and behaviours required by new manager's, take these examples:

"I am an outstanding technical employee, or a fantastic operations person or a great administrator. The assumption is, that I will be up for a promotion based on my current performance as an "individual contributor". I have the technical savvy and so it is a natural progression."

Here comes trouble....

"I have never had to hire anyone; I have never had to set performance measures for anyone; I have never had to disciple anyone (formally or informally... how do I deal with late coming?); I have never had to do a performance review; I have never had to manage my time, manage others or in some cases manage managers; I have never had people look to me for guidance or "the answers" ..."

These new manager's fumble their way through their insecurities, which often manifest as defensiveness, aloofness and at worst aggression. They then get feedback to say their management or leadership style is not working, or get performance through fear which is not sustainable.

These are skills that anyone can learn. These are skills that are often neglected and, if taught at mid-management levels in organizations, would result in a large saving on executive development and hidden costs to the business (including people turnover, poor performance or teams doing the minimum to stay under the radar). The development of executives should be focussed on financial concepts, strategy, talent management and so forth. Executives should enter their roles having strong mid-management skills so that their development can be targeted at the level required of a true executive.

How many senior executives do you know that lack the ability to interview effectively, or are unable to have frank and inspirational performance discussions with subordinates? Many spend too little time mentoring their direct reports because they can't manage their time effectively or are unable to delegate to maximize the performance of their business units. Or they just don't know how.

If you truly want to grow your people from within the business, you need an effective talent management system that can help to identify development and/or coaching needs. In addition, a learning culture where new managers can be open about their needs, and have the support and training to fulfil their new roles effectively, will undoubtedly drive engagement and performance.

If you mind the gap, you will have a more effective team of people at the core of your business. You will set them up for the future executive roles they may be striving for, and that the business will need, without losing their institutional and technical knowledge.