

The Next Wave of Leadership

Finding and grooming your company's diamonds in the rough.

by Regina Barr, Founder and CEO, Red Ladder

The equation for organizational success is fairly simple: Results (the what) are equal to Employee Productivity (the who) multiplied by Leadership (the how). For too long, organizations have focused primarily on one part of this equation in producing results: employee productivity. One HR executive with an S&P 500 company that I spoke with said, "The gains in productivity of the past few years have been on the backs of our employees who are maxed out. I don't know where we're going to get the next round of productivity."

If your organization hopes to continue to achieve the results that shareholders have come to expect, then you are going to need to shift your focus to organizational leadership. Consider these statistics. According to a survey conducted by The Gallup Organization:

- 26% of employees are engaged (loyal and productive)
- 55% of employees are not engaged (just putting in time)
- 19% of employees are disengaged (unhappy and spreading their discontent)

Couple this with the fact that a poll by OfficeTeam showed that 71% of American workers say "they do not want to be the boss at their workplace." And, of those managers who do want to be the boss, only 10% of them are ready for the next level.

Further, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a labor shortage in the next five years as boomers begin to retire, creating both a knowledge and leadership gap for many corporations.

Problem or Opportunity?

That all depends on what actions your organization takes now. In the short-term, attracting, developing and retaining key leaders – including women – should be job one. Creating a culture where leaders can develop the skills necessary to ensure the organization's future success and growth is critical. These include excellent communication skills, relationship skills and critical thinking skills.

Sadly, many organizations ignore their best talent – their top performers and high-potentials – because most of their time and attention is focused on dealing with the disengaged and non-performers. Those organizations do so at their risk. According to a survey conducted by the Corporate Executive Board, 25 percent of top employees plan to change jobs, and that number is likely to grow as the economy continues to improve.

What can you do to ensure that your top performers and high-potentials stay engaged? Of those surveyed, 64% of high-potential employees say they are unhappy with their

developmental activities. And that's great news for you!

If you have high-potential women in your organization, I hope you'll consider sending them to the MBA Women in Banking Conference – May 21 in Lansing, where I'll be the opening keynote speaker. I'll be talking about how women can position themselves to step into the leadership roles in your organization by breaking down barriers, both real and perceived. I will also be moderating a panel of successful women in banking who will share their insights on success. Participants will gain practical information that they can put to work immediately.

As a former financial marketing executive and founder and CEO of Red Ladder, Inc., I know how important leadership development is for all employees, but particularly women. For over a decade, I've travelled nationally with the goal of helping women in banking develop their leadership skills. As the author and spokesperson for the *Leadership Gap Study*, I have a good understanding of the key competencies necessary for developing the next generation of leaders – both men and women – for banks. I also author an annual *Women at the Top Study* which focuses on helping women in banking attain leadership positions.

I hope that you'll take advantage of the opportunity to invest in the high-potential women in your company by encouraging them to attend the MBA Women in Banking Conference – May 21, 2013. President John F. Kennedy once said, "It is time for a new generation of leadership to cope with new problems and new opportunities. For there is a new world to be won." Those companies who work to attract, retain and engage the best workers now will be well-positioned to handle new problems and opportunities. Those companies who help employees master these skill sets, will be well positioned for success. How will your company be positioned?

Red Ladder's founder and CEO, Regina Barr, has one goal: to develop people and inspire success. For that reason, she founded Red Ladder to help clients create organizational success through people. Learn more about Regina Barr and her services at www.redladder.com.

Don't miss Barr's keynote presentation, "Breaking Barriers: Climbing the Corporate Ladder" at the MBA Women in Banking Conference, May 21, 2013, in Lansing. For more information, visit www.mibankers.com.