

LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



THE MAGAZINE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY
 VOL. 28 NO. 11 THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE NOVEMBER 2011



These horses embody the creative freedom found at Apple, thanks to the leadership of Steve Jobs.

<p>GEORGE BEAHM <i>The 'Vision Thing'</i> Jobs always looked for the next big thing. 3</p> <p>MARK FAUST <i>Tribute: Steve Jobs</i> He led and managed from the heart. 4</p> <p>CATHERINE J. REZAK <i>Thinking Leaders</i> Involve them in a learning process or program. 5</p> <p>ROBERT VETERE <i>Thinking Canine</i> Create an entire team of top dogs. 6</p> <p>JOHN RENESCH <i>Mature Leaders</i> Only they can build something sustainable. . . 7</p>	<p>M.S. RAO <i>Iconic Leaders</i> Steve Jobs was worth his weight in gold. 7</p> <p>BEVERLY KAYE AND EILEEN MCDARGH <i>Turning the Tables</i> Employees benefit from boss appreciation. 8</p> <p>GREGORY GULL <i>Lead with Vision</i> Keep developing your thinking skills. 9</p> <p>TARA JONES <i>Three Key Behaviors</i> Practice them to boost your performance. 10</p> <p>GRAHAM JONES <i>Leading From the Bottom</i> Turn things upside down. . 11</p>	<p>RONALD E. RIGGIO <i>Leading with Social Skill</i> Forget about traits; start leading people. 12</p> <p>HENRY BRASHEN AND WANDA GRAVETT <i>Leading With Purpose</i> Follow these four simple IDEA steps now. 13</p> <p>BRUCE WEINSTEIN <i>Ethical Criticism</i> When done right, it brings out the best. 14</p> <p>BECKY SHAMBAUGH <i>What You Can Learn from government failure. . 14</i></p> <p>SUZANNE BATES <i>Build Your Brand</i> When you are in any leadership role. 15</p>	<p>DANNA GREENBERG, KATE MCKONE-SWEET, AND H. JAMES WILSON <i>Entrepreneurial Leaders</i> Take five actions to become one of them. . . 16</p> <p>DOUG LENNICK AND FRED KIEL <i>Moral Leadership</i> It signals a great firm. . . 17</p> <p>LAURA PARAMOURE <i>LD Accountability</i> It applies to all of the stakeholders. 18</p> <p>IRVING H. BUCHEN <i>Executive Profiling</i> Profile your leaders. . . . 19</p> <p>TED PRINCE <i>LD Strategies</i> Adjust to a new normal. . 20</p>
--	--	---	--

Thinking Leaders

Think critically in critical times.



by Catherine J. Rezak

AS ECONOMIES RECOVER from instability, they are reshaping how business gets done and restructuring the economic order. In this *new normal*, leaders must do things differently if they expect to achieve positive results.

Most leaders are poorly prepared to navigate their companies through such a demanding landscape, defined by fast and furious change and a rising tide of data. They get bogged down; make decisions based upon erroneous or incomplete information; fail to understand the implications of their actions; and become scattered in their thinking.

If *thinking drives behavior*, and *behavior drives results*, financial recovery and growth will be hard to achieve unless leaders learn to think clearly and critically. *Critical thinking* is the *number one* requirement for successful leadership today. This *big picture thinking* enables leaders to understand the impact of their decisions and ensures *alignment* with goals and *accountability* for results.

Why Critical Thinking Is Critical

Every two years *Executive Development Associates* (EDA) conducts a survey on the trends, growth and evolution of executive development—asking senior ED professionals to gauge the readiness of the next generation of leadership talent. Its 2010 *Trends* report revealed trouble on the horizon. The survey identified “hot topics” in ED. At the top of the list was *leadership*, followed by “*business acumen, honing skills in strategy execution, leading/managing change, and talent management.*”

When asked, “What competencies do your leaders lack,” respondents say that *five things are missing*: 1) strategic thinking; 2) leading change; 3) ability to create a vision and engage others around it; 4) ability to inspire; and 5) understanding the total enterprise and how the parts work together.

Smart companies are revamping their leadership development to impart this crucial knowledge. To accelerate the development of *high-potentials* and raise *leadership accountability* to a new level of awareness and action, they are

placing a new emphasis on critical thinking in the leadership curriculum.

Learning to Think Like a Leader

People learn best when actively involved in the learning process, engaging in behaviors they want to learn.

What’s vital in developing critical thinking skills in current and future leaders is framing those behaviors within a relevant, job-related context.

Traditional training often falls short. Emphasizing the *tactical* skills of managing—setting goals, communicating expectations, providing feedback—doesn’t prepare leaders to use *strategic* skills of critical thinking, motivating, energizing and providing vision. Developing critical thinking muscles calls for new methods—transformative learning experiences that force leaders to exercise new thinking and demonstrate new behaviors that are relevant to their positions and the work they do.

Discovery learning has proven to be a powerful way to change perspectives and build critical thinking skills and insights. Learners are guided and motivated to explore information and concepts, construct new ideas, identify new relationships, and create new models of thinking and behaving.

The methodology is highly experiential and interactive, incorporating game techniques, visuals, simulations, small-team exercises and other participant-centered elements that *enhance learning, accelerate skill acquisition, and ensure long-term retention.* Participants contend with obstacles, make decisions (and mistakes) and discover the impact of their actions. They practice in a safe place—*without risk or real-world consequences.*

You can hone the critical thinking skills in your leadership pipelines with two discovery learning solutions:

- *Zodiak®: The Game of Business Finance and Strategy* is a simulation board game designed to enhance business acumen. During the training, participants manage events and make decisions on capital investments, staffing, pricing and new products. Then they analyze results and answer to investors.
- *Impact5®: The Business of Leadership*

Game focuses on *leadership accountability*, using a challenging *slice of reality* simulation. Unlike approaches that address *leadership* from a “what you need to do, what skills you need to have” perspective, *Impact5* answers the question “What does your organization need from you as a leader to positively impact success?” During the training, leaders develop a new mind-set about leadership and link their competencies to results in three areas: *customer, organizational, and financial.* They leave with a *big picture* perspective, prepared to focus on behaviors and actions that will have the highest impact on success.

After discovery learning experiences like these, leaders can better think on a deeper and broader scale and solve



real workplace issues. They make connections between what happened in the LD activity and what happens in the business. They also drive results, armed with a *robust understanding of company financial and strategic performance drivers* and a *keen sense of accountability for achieving those goals.*

New 3Rs of Executive Education

To succeed in the *new normal*, leaders need to learn how to be discerning, think clearly and wisely, and be accountable for their impact. Deploy *the new 3Rs* of executive education:

1. *Reevaluating the LD curriculum objectively* to make sure it not only aligns with corporate strategy but also assures that the leaders being developed understand how their actions and decisions affect organizational success.

2. *Reinvigorating LD content with a business acumen focus* to ensure leaders understand the business—financial drivers and strategic objectives—and have ample opportunities to engage in critical thinking, *apply it* to real-world situations, and analyze consequences.

3. *Reengineering LD delivery with active, not passive, learning experiences*—small-team activities, challenge scenarios, simulations, game techniques, post-session action projects and other discovery learning exercises that make it easier to transfer learning to the job.

By assessing LD initiatives through the lens of *what’s required of the next generation*—and addressing gaps—leaders exercise their brand of critical thinking and put themselves in a stronger position to succeed in the new normal. LE

Catherine J. Rezak is chairman of Paradigm Learning. Call 727-471-3170 or email Cathy.Rezak@paradigmlearning.com.

ACTION: Cultivate critical thinking skills.