



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TECHNOLOGIES

Technological tools that facilitate leadership development

Technology definitely has its place in the discipline of leadership development. However, when you think of technology in commercial real estate, leadership development may not be the first thing that comes to mind.

Although there may be those who believe that there is a technological solution to every business issue, most would agree that leadership development is a process that is more relationship-driven than technology-driven.

Leadership development is one of many areas where it is really important to keep



Larry Schwenker
Vice President of Management Services, Bryant Management Services

the proper perspective regarding what technology can and cannot do. There is a certain tendency to view technology as the end versus the means to an end. We sometimes get caught up in the hype of “How can we implement this technology?” when we should be asking “What is the business issue we are trying to solve and is there a technology that will facilitate a solution?”

I was curious to see how others who are involved in leadership development viewed technology, so I contacted Andy Christiansen, an expert in the field of leadership development. Christiansen is the founder of High Capacity Leaders, LLC, an organization that performs executive coaching and leadership development. He utilizes technology extensively in the leadership development process.

Christiansen views leadership development as having three components: character, competency and core personality.

“Of the three characteristics, character has the highest impact on leadership success and although there are some who claim to possess the technology to measure this, there is really no proven technology that can either measure or develop character. Technology can’t speak to a human ‘gut quality’ such as this. Ironically, whenever we try to use technology to ‘trump’ the human equation, we actually risk becoming less efficient in our decisions and processes.”

Despite its limitations, technology has been used successfully to facilitate the leadership development process in the areas of core personality and competency. Two of the most notable areas where leadership development has benefited from technology are leadership assessments and training.

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENTS

There is nothing new about leadership assessment tools. A whole multitude of leadership assessment tools has been

Larry Schwenker, CPM, RPA, CCIM, is the vice president of Management Services for Bryant Management Services in Atlanta. He is also the founder of Corvidea Knowledge Solutions, a technology consulting firm that helps commercial real estate organizations operate more efficiently through the creative use of innovative technologies and practices. For more information, visit www.corvidea.com or call 770-343-8571.

Andy Christiansen, CLC, PCC, is president of High Capacity Leaders, LLC, in Atlanta, a leadership development organization for business owners desiring to expand sales revenue through developing better sales people and better systems. For more information, visit www.highcapacityleaders.com or call 404.451.0005.

available for years. These assessments typically involve gathering information in order to evaluate leadership effectiveness or personality traits.

Over the past few years, many of these tools have been converted to a Web-based format. Moving these tools to a Web-based environment has significantly improved the value they can deliver to an organization.

For example, one leadership assessment tool that has benefited immensely from the migration to the Web is a tool known as the 360-degree performance feedback. The purpose of this tool is to assist leaders in understanding their strengths and weaknesses, and to contribute insights into aspects of their performance that need improvement. In addition to self-assessment, this tool gathers feedback from the leader's subordinates, peers, managers and, in some cases, customers and other outside parties.

Probably the most significant improvement over a paper and pencil system is the ability to streamline the information-gathering process. Most Web-based assessment tools have a feature that automates the participant invitation process, directs participants to access the online assessment and tracks completion. Ease of data collection along with statistical analysis of data results also enable organizations to set improvement goals and systematically measure progress over time.

TRAINING

Innovations in Web-based technology and telecommunications have resulted in several alternative methods for delivering leadership training. Modes of training include Webcasts; seminars offered via the Internet; podcasts; a digital recording made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal media device; and e-learning.

Each of these innovations has increased the level of flexibility and affordability of leadership development training. More affordable alternatives to instructor-led leadership training have enabled organizations to involve more employees in leadership training. Now, organizations find it easier to justify the long-term investments required to develop a true leadership development process. This is a comprehensive process that involves the ongoing development of

leaders from all levels of the organization. In addition, the flexibility of these tools also enables trainees to more effectively balance participation in the leadership development process with their other responsibilities.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IS A PROCESS

Technology will never take the place of the relational aspects of leadership

development. On the other hand, consistent use of technologies such as those mentioned in this article can serve as drivers of a more comprehensive and systematic leadership development process. This gives organizations the ability to measure progress, identify success factors and most importantly, ensure a continued legacy of leadership in the years to come. **OC**