

## Where Have All The Leaders Gone?

We have all heard the question; “What is the scarcest resource in any company or organization?”

Some may say; “Time is very scarce”. Yes, time is limited; however, each person, and company, has the same amount of time available to them. Something that is limited is not the same as something that is scarce.

Others may say: “Money is scarce”, that is, access to capital, or healthy cash flow. This may also be true; however, very few good ideas coupled with a compelling and inspiring vision and sound management practices have floundered for long.

Finally, others have said, “People, the right people in the right places at the right time, are scarce.” This is also true and this is closest to the heart of the real answer.

It is Peter Drucker who said, “Leadership is the scarcest resource in any company or organization today”. We must not confuse “good people who work hard” and “skilled people who are committed to a worthy cause”, with effective leadership. One does not necessarily guarantee the other.

Today, we understand that leaders are made and not born. That means that growing leaders is an intentional effort and requires an investment in people not seen very often, especially in smaller companies.

People come to work for the achievement of life goals. It is up to the leaders of organizations to create an environment where people can align their personal life goals with the mission of the organization. This is the essence of leadership, at the core.

In companies today, we have differences in age and experience, differences in values and beliefs, which lead to differences in behavior. If I know when you were born and where you grew up, I can tell a lot about what you believe about life. Our lives are defined by our times, our place in history.

It is the reason that the music of The Beatles and the “Songs of the Sixties” will soon be heard in the halls of retirement homes. It is the reason hours that we work will not lengthen, as long as jobs are plentiful. People, especially younger leaders in business,

want to do more than just work. We live in a time of options and opportunities. That is why it is so important to be intentional about leadership.

Recent surveys show that 35% of leaders who leave their companies and organizations do so because of a lack of clarity about their contribution and a lack of feedback on their performance. Another 25% leave for lack of a clear vision and direction from their leaders. Andy Wilson, CEO of The Soderquist Center has said, "The future can be uncertain, however, people will not forgive their leaders for not making direction clear and compelling." Additionally, another 25% say that they were not able to use their best skills in their work. They feel the need for learning, growth and achievement and do not find it in the organizations where they work. They wait, they see, and then they move on.

Here are some suggestions that you might try in your company:

- Carve out a piece of the future and give people a vision for where you are going.
- Try showing up in areas of the company where you are not normally seen.
- Try an occasional or unexpected word or note of praise.
- Try an occasional or unexpected request for advice.
- Thank people for a job well done, as often as you can. People need to know that they are involved in something important and significant. You need to do it. They need to hear it.

We will be hearing more about portable and mobile expertise. We must learn how to help leaders grow as they are now more loyal to their profession and their dreams than to their job at any one company. We will have to learn how to attract good people, align them with our mission, vision and values and help them to grow. And yes, we will learn how to graciously give them our blessing when they decide to go on their way.

Where have all of the leaders gone? A better question would be; "Where are our leaders right now?"

And, new leaders will be joining your company tomorrow and the next day.

Someone has said that a leader is someone who knows what to do next.

Now, you know what to do next.

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