THE BATTLE FOR TALENT KEEPS INTENSIFYING

Companies around the world are struggling to confront the challenges presented by global trends according to the most recent McKinsey survey. By far the most significant trend is the intensifying battle for talented people. Of the 47% who do not believe their organisation have the right people in place to lead the changes necessary to meet their business challenges, 72% said they will need to get this talent externally. Of the 36% who do believe they have the right talent, 79% indicated this group of talent will need to develop new skills.

NEW ROLE TRANSITION AND ON-RAMPING RISKS

Increasing reliance on new hires and the pressure for internal talent to "grow or go" creates real challenges. 75% of executives rate the difficulty of their transition as above average (AGSM) and it is higher for women taking up their first line role. 40% of senior external hires fail within 18 months (CLC) costing more than ten times base salary.

Insight: Leader promotions, new management roles or on-ramping can be high risk – for the individual, the manager recommending the promotion and the organisation. These transitions are pivotal turning points. They can propel a career towards greater heights or completely stall it. It is no surprise that derailments typically occur in the first year.
Solution: Taking a more strategic and integrated approach to supporting these crucible transitions will ensure effectiveness is achieved more quickly. The types of interventions should vary based on whether it is an external hire or an internal promotion; changing from a support role to a line role; or moving from a functional role to general management position where a broader set of skills are needed.

SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS AVOID DERAILMENT

Insight: Despite an increasing need for new hires, promotions or on-ramping, and the real impact of these transitions, companies invest minimal organisational effort and lack sustainable practices.
Solution: The right transitional roadmap can avoid relying on a "sink or swim" approach. Providing a systematic framework and coaching can accelerate the transition process while producing better results for both the individual and the organisation. Focus on specific business challenges, providing organisational insight, the executive's own situation, building quality coalitions and connecting with key individuals.

Insight: The speed and competitiveness of business, places great anxiety on transition managers to make immediate contributions with high expectations that they will quickly reach their "break-even point" where they have contributed as much value as they have consumed.
Solution: Often the new leader is expected to have completed a diagnosis of the business and the organisation at a systemic level; had broad and frank dialogues to reach alignment on the business situation, understand communication styles, clarify expectations, and begin negotiating resources; assessed the team; built relationships and identified when and how to achieve momentum through early wins. The transition roadmap and coaching plans must clearly benchmark where a new leader should be and in what time frame.

Insight: Some business situations and the needed focus are clear, while others will not be obvious and spark divergent opinions.
Solution: Clarity and alignment on the business situation points to the real challenges and most appropriate way forward. Sustaining a successful business will require different interventions to a turnaround and differ to a start-up which will differ again to realignment strategies.

The Talent Advisors
growing / capability

Insight: Women moving into their first line role or appointed to partner or on-ramping do face compounding risks. On a personal basis, her early actions go a long way toward determining her overall success or failure in that role, with far reaching career implications. While companies require more from all their executives, these women are truly in the spotlight. Their inner voice also constantly raises questions and doubts. Catalyst research shows that women have increased pressures during transition, face more intense competition and receive less help.
Solution: The success rate for women can be improved and accelerated by learning and mentoring tailored to her specific experiences and situations, as well as the particular business situation at hand. Women also benefit from an external coach to help them take up their power, influence and authority and be a confidential and objective sounding board. If the organisation fails to assist women transition into a line role or partnership, it is in her own best interest to take the initiative to create such a framework.

Insight: Transitions also disrupt the organisation. Every mid-level managerial transition negatively affects more than twelve others.
Solution: Leadership transitions require strong change management skills and an astute view into the organisation at a systemic level, not just the business. Connecting to information-rich networks that exist within the organisation is important to help the executive get things done and understand the people dynamic.

Insight: While a major role transition is an important development experience, it is one of personal vulnerability due to encountering unfamiliar situations; interacting with new people, including a new boss; and encountering high expectations. An executive can recover from a bad start, but it is going to be a hard task.
Solution: Help the executive avoid the typical communication, cultural, political traps and blind spots of new leaders. These include attempting to do too much, avoiding conflict, not acting quickly on underperformers; not being tapped into the formal and informal information flows; coming in with "the answer" or a lack of regard for how things happen; and alienating key, needed people.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION

An effective transition roadmap will: **1.** Use search or performance reports to be proactive on possible difficulties or derailers, as a past strength can now be a weakness **2.** Clearly articulate the real business situation **3.** Schedule regular feedback to help the executive know what they should keep doing, start doing or stop doing to be more effective **4**. Ensure early, meaningful exposure to CEO and C-Suite **5.** Assign clear ownership for transition success **6**. Agree to change management program and a team 'jump start' **7.** Build social capital, connecting to new networks, while mapping enablers, influencers, blockers **8.** Provide mentoring and coaching to assist executive design a personal transition checklist; let go of the past so they can work at a more strategic level; explore tactics to deliver results and strategic capability in unknown settings.

To find out more about the coaching programs for executive transition and on-ramping call Dianne Jacobs on 0400 806 336

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