The Future Of HR Leadership In The Age Of Diversity: Shaping The Next Generation Of HR Leaders

The role of HR leadership has expanded to diversity, equity, and inclusion, coupled with a thorough understanding of the conceptual skills of interpersonal relationships. First, leaders must accept that diversity is here to stay, and finding the uniqueness of each employee and accepting them where and how they are is key to future success in any organisation. Conceptual skills used to be found primarily in the upper echelon of organisations. Still, now it is at the forefront of every business, from the front-line staff to the Chief Executive Officer. Everyone needs to use conceptual skills so that they can manage their own job and the expansive reach of the organisation to its vital customers.

Peter Drucker once mentioned that a business is not operative without a customer, and reaching each customer where they are is tantamount to an organisation's success. Drucker also coined the term " knowledge workers as those employees who are engaged in work that requires a high degree of cognitive and analytical abilities. The cognitive ability to not only do a job well but also be capable of leading others through strong interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships between leaders and employees create a positive work environment that promotes trust, collaboration, effective communication, empathy, and teamwork. These qualities enhance employees' customer orientation, leading to a focus on delivering exceptional service and meeting customer needs.

Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion (DEI) In Future HR Leadership

We have found that the discussion of the challenges and complexities of HR leadership makes some senior managers reluctant to develop leaders. This reluctance seems quite logical, as leadership development requires leaders' personal development and deepening their insights in dealing with complex issues. These issues are sometimes too complex to solve in a short time, or larger and bigger issues must be addressed. Authentic leadership involves an introspection about oneself to develop an authentic leadership persona. Some leaders came up the ranks before the introduction of digital transformation and artificial intelligence began to emerge.

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One way to solve this new phenomenon is found in one of our examples in an international financial company in Australia. After several meetings were held via chatbots with lower-level employees to include their views on the redevelopment of new knowledge management systems, employees became more aware of the possibility of cyber-attacks and how to avoid phishing. Leadership as a circumstance, or an event, may appear as a mode of operation, and in some cases, executives appear to be following predetermined recipes to resolve problems and lead others. Models of leadership are often used in universities and certain organisations. Some leadership models are only used once, while others are only used with certain leaders. Once the leader moves on, they take the leadership model with them, and that leadership model is not utilised.

The key to leadership models is that they are for all people in organisations and, in some cases, reach out to suppliers, vendors, and even customers to build a solid leadership presence - leadership models that reap the largest benefits to the stakeholders. In practice, leadership models set certain roles at all levels of the organisation that not only motivates people within the organisation and instils a sense of ownership into employees but also become a boundaryless model of organisations, creating an Open business system. In an open business system, team members are involved in decision-making and creativity and collaboration are encouraged. This can lead to increased innovation and greater efficiency in the organisation.

New Learning For Future HR Leadership

The new learning also requires upskilling in culture, communications, allyships, and creating an inclusive environment. One way to do this is to train leaders using diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have them develop a positioning statement that reflects how they address DEI, why they do it, what it means to them to understand and develop HR leadership competency, and the importance of this introspective viewpoint as role models for followers. The origins of DEI come from authentic leadership and servant leadership approaches, resulting in extensive participation in programmes promoting self-reflection, building skills, adopting inclusive behaviours, driving systemic change, fostering collaboration, and establishing accountability measures.

A possible certification internally by human resources or externally through training providers who train leaders in DEI organisational processes is beneficial. Achieving this personal transformation for leaders requires understanding the impact of assumptions of their past and present behaviours. In fact, leaders must realise that their assumptions will play an essential role in their behaviour.

Accordingly, leaders should adopt the best assumptions according to the diversity, equity, and inclusion circumstances to provide the best behaviours to meet the followers' needs. We also distributed a checklist determining their stand on several managerial issues. Once this was diagnosed, we attempted to raise the bar through extensive training and development. At this stage, we asked the organisation to distribute a checklist of the best possible behaviours according to adopting the best assumptions and try to master behaviours separately.

This stage is usually challenging, but in training workshops for the managers, we convinced them that it could play an essential role in their personal development. For example, we asked them to hypothesise how humility can play an important role in developing organisational leadership. Then we asked them to write down the best behaviours in performing their duties in a checklist, according to this assumption and regardless of the position of the organisation in which they are located.

The results were fantastic, and the feedback received from the managers showed us that the behaviours of these leaders with their employees had improved significantly compared to before these training workshops. We describe HR leadership roles after the deep dive and the personal assessment criteria. The first role emphasises the democratisation of the organisation and away from pyramidal and bureaucratic structures. With the emergence of the complexities of digital transformation and artificial intelligence, leaders need to grasp ways of meeting the needs of employees and stakeholders without them being persuaded by leadership models that are counterproductive not only in the workplace but also in their personal lives.

Leaders do not initiate a dialogue about what happens outside the workplace, but what happens outside the workplace sometimes spills over into the organisation. The view of creating a spark of innovation in the mind of a leader should give way to a new view that believes that all employees make the pussle of innovation and each plays a role in it. This new perspective is strongly dependent on democratising the work environment, and leaders should provide as much human power in organisational innovation as possible by expanding the culture of participation and trust and creating flexible and flat structures. In this new role, leaders are not just leaders; they appear as supporters who are full of personal qualities such as patience and humility.

The Training Factor

There are many ways of using DEI executive training. We use DEI training to improve discussion learning quality by enhancing teaching and learning to maximise learning opportunities and experiences for employees and stakeholders. We do it by enhancing the tools and techniques of DEI to explore significant ways of learning and growing with diverse life experiences, different perspectives, and a wide array of backgrounds. We do this with a life story exercise that gets executives to explore their life stories and utilise lessons to help them lead people better.

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We shed light on motivational techniques that address inequities in HR leadership and follower relationships by enhancing the authentic styles of leadership to help leaders be more capable of meeting the needs of the people that will follow them, collaborate with them, and communicate with them in our diverse global society. We do this with particular movie scenes and exercises that tap into the inner core of leadership development. We develop the civil leadership characteristics that enhance organisations' ability to meet stakeholders' needs by equipping them with what it takes to have an inclusive community, embracing a society of social justice. We do this while showing how this new phenomenon can enhance leadership development by removing the negative stereotypes of the power and sophistication of artificial intelligence. The next step for our future endeavours will be completing the unlearning processes and connecting them with the learning ones.

The unlearning and training activities can be a great way to learn through experience, and we think that "action learning" a concept pioneered in the 1940s, is the best way. Action learning involves actively engaging with real-world challenges and reflecting upon them to gain new knowledge and insights. When combined, people can effectively draw from experience to address complex problems and reflect if they are applicable. They benefit from supportive peers who offer new perspectives to explore emerging issues through novel inquiries and probes. The solutions proposed can be divided into 1- without and 2-with technology.

In Conclusion

Organisations may flourish with excitement and freshness in embracing this DEI HR leadership change. Our model with unlearning and learning using scenarios, real-situations is used as a cornerstone of the leadership developmental process. It can help assure that through actions, the learning approach, regardless of the options available, can surface and remove biases, assumptions and mindsets at the base of HR leadership behaviours in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Diversity encapsulates the many differences among people in general and does not exclude any form of human development, experimentation, or references toward socioeconomic status. Inclusion represents both organisational and environmental cultures in which all social classes with diverse characteristics thrive. Inclusive organisations and environments require intentionality toward embracing differences and accepting, recognising, and praising them. Leaders of all organisations are invited to ensure the perspectives and experiences of others. Everyone is welcomed, acknowledged, and respected in inclusive organisations and environments.

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