

EIGHTH
ANNIVERSARY

MEDICAL SPAS[®]

The Healthy-Aging Business Review™

THE MEDICINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE FUTURE



Les Thermes Marins de Monte Carlo
THE MONTECARLO SPA CONCEPT
Monte Carlo, MONACO



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monica Wofford brings more than 17 years of experience as a business consultant, trainer, and speaker to Monica Wofford International, Inc. A sought-after trainer, Wofford leverages scientific research and data to design curricula and presentations that positively impact both behavior and performance.

She is the author of "Contagious Leadership," "Contagious Confidence," and "Contagious Customer Service".

She can be reached at www.monicawofford.com or (866) 382-0121

WHO SNATCHES OUT THE MANAGEMENT JOB RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE?

Can you Become a Leader by Accident?

By **MONICA WOFFORD**

JIM had been a graphic designer for years and he was happy there. His role had become easy and frankly he could do his job in his sleep. Michelle who was the second best designer in the office was really blossoming and showing some true leadership skills, yet with Jim in the way, the Director of the newspaper couldn't very well promote Michelle over the design department without ruffling some feathers. The Director had talked with Jim several times about leadership and he just really wasn't interested.

The Managing Editor position had just become vacant and the Director was thinking of putting Michelle in that position to let her leadership skills shine. She didn't really have any editing experience and there were others in that department, who were qualified, but he really wanted to give Michelle a chance and he thought she deserved it. Today, he was going to announce Michelle as the new managing editor and the only problem was going to be how to break this news to those other editors

who would be surprised. He was on his way to personnel to strategize about the announcement.

Haven't you been there? Thinking you've got the job when out of the blue comes someone from outside the company or a completely unrelated department who snatches the job right out from under you? Perhaps we all have been victim to this phenomenon of accidental leadership: when someone is promoted to a position for which they are not necessarily qualified, yet placed. Can you be a leader by accident? Absolutely, it happens all the time.

In promotion and hiring decisions, the rule of thumb is often not a rule at all, but more of a guess. Senior and middle managers place employees in roles for which they might have the right skills, but perhaps not the right credibility. They position employees in roles in which they might have knowledge to impart and teach, but not the ability to teach as well as they perform. So how do you promote and make leaders

Credibility is a compilation of experience, tenure, expertise, likeability and attitude, most of which cannot be taught in an on-the-job training environment. Yet so many leaders are promoted in what can be called the "life jacket approach" in which the leader is put in a position, pushed off the edge of the pool and told to swim.

IN PROMOTION, THE RULE OF THUMB IS OFTEN NOT A RULE AT ALL

in an organization on purpose, instead of by accident? Answer these questions prior to making your next promotion or hiring decisions:

Do they have the skills for the job?

This question is an age old one that is answered often, but not usually completely. The skills for the job extend far beyond the ability to run the software, use Microsoft word, or sell a copier. Do they have the skills to lead, guide, motivate, manage and disperse rewards and consequences to those they will be leading? Do they have the emotional intelligence skills to defer their own emotions for the greater good or better solution? Do they have the people skills to manage conflict among the team, handle a major change in the organization or calm a client down in an escalation? These are the skills that make great leaders. The computer software program you can teach easily, the other skills can take months of development and sometimes years of experience or trial and error.

Do they have credibility from the team?

This quality is an elusive one as it relies on the perception of those the leader would be leading. Do the team members of this leader's potential position think the person has any credibility? Would he or she be respected? Would he or she be able to handle a Jim who has far more years, but far less interest in management or leadership, if he balked at the promotion? Credibility is a compilation of experience, tenure, expertise, likeability and attitude, most of which cannot be taught in an on-the-job training environment. Yet so many leaders are promoted in what can be called the "life jacket approach" in which the leader is put in a position, pushed off the edge of the pool and told to swim. If they make it, so does the team. If they flail, so does the team.

Why put people in these positions without first investigating if he or she has the credibility to command the helm and if not, helping them develop it over time.

Do they have a first things first or "fire drill" philosophy?

Today's employee is showing us more and more that they want to be valued and considered a vital part of the team or organization. First things First, a Steven Covey book, details the skills needed to be a value-driven person, looking at the value of a decision, a project, or a person prior to taking action. Those who adhere more to this kind of philosophy are more likely to create a loyal following of well-developed, highly motivated employees who complain less and wish to stay on a job longer. Those who subscribe to the fire drill philosophy are likely to make snap decisions without considering a larger picture; are likely to be reactive instead of proactive; and will likely have a following of employees with similar reaction patterns who see that the positive reinforcement for this kind of behavior is a promotion. Thus, those with a "fire drill philosophy" develop employees with that same philosophy and the entire epidemic of reactionary behavior becomes contagious. Which would you rather have more of: "First Things Firsters" or "Fire Drillers?"

No matter the questions you ask of those you intend to promote or the questions asked of those promoted above you, there will be times when those who fall into or are put into leadership will get there by "accident" rather than because they have learned it. One way to combat this is by preparing a funnel of candidates for the role of leadership before a vacancy exists. In order to be successful, leader must have strong communication skills, relationship skills, rapport building behaviors, and the ability to create trust, earn respect and allow people to grow.

Most of us did not acquire those skills or behaviors by accident. Why would we expect that being given a title would suddenly make them appear? Only with intention and preparation can one truly become an effective leader with intention and purpose. ■