



HR NEWSFLASH - EDITION HR9/2016

Engine Capacity

Imagine for a moment that you are the lucky recipient of a large pile of money (legally). You decide to take some of this money and buy a [Bugatti Veyron](#). (Remember to keep some of that money for fuel and tyres). The car is a spectacular piece of engineering, producing 1,250Nm of torque, acceleration from 0-100km/h in 2.5 seconds, and a top speed of 407 km/h.

Somebody still has to drive it though. Would you give it to your teenager to drive? Would you let just anyone get behind the wheel? Of course not- you want a person who is experienced and skilled enough to handle it. In fact, if you were really sensible (which you obviously are having just purchased a supercar) you would make sure that you were equipped to drive a car with that kind of power and potential.

Why don't we do the same with our people? An organisation that spends a massive amount of money on the tools (both technical and systems based), but not on the people is not likely to get the full power and potential from them. Training and development should happen at all levels of a business, but should be focussed specifically on leaders, and most definitely should include training on human interaction elements- the soft skills.

Over the past year we have been involved in an intervention focussed on improved connection and communication of leaders. We started out the programme with training sessions, focussing on the theory, and then moving on to the practical application of the theory by way of goal-setting (With what I now know, what am I going to do differently?). This was then followed up by several, regular 'touch-base sessions'. And we have had incredible feedback- from the leaders themselves, but also from the people who report to them. The production numbers don't look half bad either!

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Our model allows delegates to grapple with theory in a classroom environment but then also practically apply it in their workplace; the addition of the touch-base sessions allow us to then discuss this practical application and talk through challenges and ask for guidance. What these group sessions also facilitate is an opportunity for delegates to praise or congratulate their colleagues on times when they saw that person put theory into practice.

Often when I sit down to facilitate an intervention around soft skills, such as communication and connection, I am met with derisive snorts or directions to the quickest way to the front door. Delegates tell me that I don't understand their business, or that I have no experience in their organisation / sector / plant etc. Delegates tell me that my model is not possible in their organisation / sector / plant etc.

And although I agree that I haven't worked in their organisation / sector / plant etc and I don't have a complete understanding, I always draw their attention to one simple fact: There are PEOPLE working in your organisation / sector / plant etc. And I strongly believe that any concern in terms of productivity, absenteeism, labour turnover, waste and / or quality is a PEOPLE issue. Yes, make sure that you have good systems, policies and processes in place. Yes, you should have solid contracts in place. Yes, you should implement and apply performance management systems and you should absolutely apply progressive discipline. Those are tools, but there are still people on either end of those tools.

It is in the best interest of organisations that seek a sustainable competitive advantage that those people are upskilled.

That is future thinking, now.

Kind regards

Robyn Evans

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