



Bluepoint Leadership Development

www.bluepointleadership.com

April 5, 2005

Forward To A Friend

Welcome to the First Edition of 'The Point'

Bluepoint Leadership Development, formerly the Tom Peters Company, was launched in November 2004. This inaugural e-newsletter is yours to try because you are a Tom Peters Times subscriber. If you wish to unsubscribe, please do so at the bottom. more

in this issue

Welcome to the First Edition of 'The Point'

Risk it!

Risk it!

The Insights of Joe Whittinghill
Director of Employee Learning and Development at Microsoft
By Jonathon Flaum

Homogenization is for Milk, not Leaders!

"At Microsoft, talent is the most important thing that we have, without our talent we really don't have anything," says Joe Whittinghill, Director of employee learning and development at Microsoft. more

Great Expectations: High Performance Coaching in the Workplace

Homogenization is for Milk, not Leaders!

By Ron Crossland

Book Review: The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness by Stephen Covey

While my former business partner of eight years, Tom Peters, and I decided to "blow our company up" recently (we split our company into two parts - one for Tom and one now called Bluepoint Leadership Development), one of the many great memories I have of my work with him is a series of TV commercials he did for monster. more

events

Great Expectations: High Performance Coaching in the Workplace

By Gregg Thompson

The Leadership Experience Public Workshop in Seattle



I see coaching everywhere. Many organizations are making a significant investment in coaching. Coaching is probably the fastest growing human resource development process today. The demand for coaching is growing for one reason; coaching works! No other process provides greater impact on individual performance improvement and career development. more

The Leadership Experience is a groundbreaking workshop that represents the next generation in leadership development practice. Strengthen your leadership capabilities to help create alignment, energy, and effectiveness in today's modern and complex organizations.

Book Review: The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness by Stephen Covey

By Ron Crossland

Inn at the Market
Seattle, WA
May 17-18, 2005

What I love about Stephen Covey is his unabashed willingness to use varied sources, multiple diagrams, and biased opinions to serve a sound and important idea. What I dislike is feeling like I'm reading a series of Sunday school lectures rewritten for a business audience. more

Click here for more information

Welcome to the First Edition of 'The Point'

Bluepoint Leadership Development, formerly the Tom Peters Company, was launched in November 2004. This inaugural e-newsletter is yours to try because you are a Tom Peters Times subscriber. If you wish to unsubscribe, please do so at the bottom.

"Leadership Communication and 3D Story Telling"

back to top ^

Risk it!



The Insights of Joe Whittinghill
Director of Employee Learning and Development
at Microsoft
By Jonathon Flaum

"At Microsoft, talent is the most important thing that we have, without our talent we really don't have anything," says Joe Whittinghill, Director of employee learning and development at Microsoft. "Because we are a company that drives innovation we care deeply about what's in-between our people's ears - it's their gray matter that is the key to our success."

We often think of creativity as something that belongs to the artist working alone in his studio or the physicist off in her private lab, but Joe Whittinghill would disagree. It is his job to make sure that creativity and the innovations it spawns is within the domain of every Microsoft employee. On a practical level, this means that the physical workspace, company strategic plan, compensation packages, career development philosophy, and recognition opportunities are all aligned with enhancing employee creativity so they can innovate.

On the part of leaders, this takes a tremendous amount of forethought to implement successfully. Whittinghill described to me the necessity of leaders in the Microsoft organization being ever mindful that the people in their charge are getting the key career experiences they need to grow and develop.

When I asked Joe how he balances the need to acculturate 57,000 Microsoft employees into the Microsoft values while maintaining the individual creative bent that makes them great he was adamant: "What we don't want is a whole bunch of people that all think alike, we want innovative, contrarian thinking that produces results." At Microsoft, the core beliefs and values of the company are extremely important for each employee to understand, but Whittinghill is clear that at the same time employees should be rationalizing them against their own personal core values. Whittinghill explained that this reconciliation between personal and company values is essential for both the employee's growth and the company's. "While we grow and develop people, we are also looking for them to grow and develop us [Microsoft]."

And according to Whittinghill, there is no better situation in which to grow and develop than in a new job. "It's clear that no matter how many classes we taught or how many books people read, the best thing to do was to give people an experience where they could go out and try things - take risks. Any great organization, whether a corporation, government entity, or nonprofit, if they want to be successful long term, they have to support risk taking. When people fail after taking a calculated risk they need to be supported by leaders who view that situation as a learning experience."

Whittinghill explained that in today's economy, individuals are not seeking long-term job security as their number one priority. What the new generations are after is "career development," experiences that are hard and make an impact on the organization. These Gen X and Y workers may not want to be at the office 24/7 like their boomer counterparts once did, but when they are there they want to be constantly challenged and stretched.

A new job is not the only learning that takes place at Microsoft, who since its inception in 1975 has recognized the inherent value of structured leadership development programs. Whittinghill explained that there are particular "punctuated points" in a person's career when a formal leadership development program is beneficial. At Microsoft, it is called the "Bench Strength" program. "Bench Strength," being the term sports teams use to describe the strength of the players not currently on the field. In business, it refers to the potential of next in line leaders. Whittinghill said that once these people have achieved key competencies and had key experiences in the context of their particular career stage they are deemed ready for the "Bench Strength" program - a one or two year intensive segmented program co-developed with Bluepoint Leadership Development for employees, managers, and leaders.

The secret of the program's success, according to Whittinghill, is synthesis. It works because it takes the best of contemporary research in leadership



Webinar with Ron Crossland
April 14 at 9:00am PST / Noon
EST (1 hour)

[Click here for free registration](#)

The Leadership Experience Workshop in Ottawa

April 28-29, 2005 in Ottawa,
Canada.

For more information please
contact [Bryn Meredith](#)
Telephone: (905) 469-6526

Bluepoint Canada Launches

We are delighted to announce
the official expansion of Bluepoint
Leadership Development into
Canada and to welcome our new
Canadian President, Bryn
Meredith.

[Read More Here](#)

In Next Month's Edition...

A discussion on leadership with
Marty Bland, Future
Infrastructure Project Manager at
Capital One.

Book Review: "Educating
Intuition" by Dr. Robin Hogarth

Contact Bluepoint Leadership Development

Phone: (513) 683-4702

Email:
info@bluepointleadership.com

Web Address:
www.bluepointleadership.com

practice and weaves it into the eight core values of Microsoft. The result is a development program geared specifically for a company that thrives on creativity, innovation, and risk-taking. And besides leadership development enhancing worker performance, Whittinghill notes other benefits: "Who you are at work is who you are in the community and who you are in the community is who you are at home. It's all you. The more people understand that what you learn at home is applicable at work and what you learn at work can be used to make society a better place, the better off we are. It's not only companies that need great leadership - every segment of society is in need of great leaders."

[back to top ^](#)

Homogenization is for Milk, not Leaders!

By Ron Crossland

While my former business partner of eight years, Tom Peters, and I decided to "blow our company up" recently (we split our company into two parts - one for Tom and one now called Bluepoint Leadership Development), one of the many great memories I have of my work with him is a series of TV commercials he did for monster.com. My favorite was Tom walking through a snow enshrouded cemetery ranting about how he hated the word "Competent."

"I want to be cool, I want to be daring, I want to push the edge, but I don't want to be competent." While Tom believes leaders need competency as a baseline of performance, what he railed against was the conformity that accompanies competency in today's world of the six-sigma mindset.

Too many leadership development programs are designed to homogenize rather than individualize leaders. These programs and the attending books that precede them move against the heart of North American business - innovation. And to be innovative, you must be an individual. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in Self-Reliance: "There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till."

Rather than build upon an individual's greatness, too many programs today are pressing leaders to conform to competencies. Instead of letting best practices inform leaders in how to become better versions of who they authentically are, we seem constipated in our position to make sure individuals conform to a narrow set of competencies. CEOs want Rushmore accomplishments, yet they continually kowtow to best practices. Lincoln, Churchill, DeGaulle, Thatcher, Nehru, Agnes Bojaxhiu (Mother Teresa), and Kennedy never submitted to the six sigma-like development practices we currently enshrine. These were originals - their leadership was a true expression of who they were and what they believed. They were flawed. Lincoln was depressed much of his adult life, Churchill was arrogant and after the war was a distant and ineffective leader, and Mother Teresa was a tough minded workaholic. In present day business circles we know that Jack Welch was often harsh and arrogant and Bill Gates' genius is often limited only to his technical abilities and financial prowess- but no one would argue that these are two of the most innovative business leaders of their time precisely because they always behaved as the individuals they were and made the most of their individual strengths.

David Gergen, director of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard, said, "In his early adult years, FDR seemed carefree and condescending. Then, at 39, he was stricken with polio. By most accounts, he transformed himself over the next seven years of struggle into a leader of empathy, patience, and keen self-awareness. Richard Nixon...could never fully control his demons, and they eventually brought him down. Bill Clinton, too, has struggled for self-mastery and has made progress, but he could not fully close the cracks in his character, and he paid a stiff price." (Harvard Business Review, January 2004)

We issue a challenge to ourselves and our colleagues who labor in leadership development. Are you (we) sure that competencies is the only or best way to develop leaders? Will your competencies produce a Bill Owens, Andrea Jung, Charles Schwab, Andy Grove, Mary Kay Ash, Xie Qihua, Craig Venter, or Meg Whitman? Will they bring about anything nearly as cool as the Internet, Ziploc bags, point-to-point air travel that competes with Greyhound, direct insurance, Gore-Tex pants, titanium sunglasses, or the

restoration of soup and sandwiches as a growth restaurant business?

From the late 1970s to the mid-1980s I worked for AT&T, a company that had towering competence, and I mean that sincerely. I'm also glad I got out when I did.

[back to top ^](#)

Great Expectations: High Performance Coaching in the Workplace



By Gregg Thompson

I see coaching everywhere. Many organizations are making a significant investment in coaching. Coaching is probably the fastest growing human resource development process today. The demand for coaching is growing for one reason; coaching works! No other process provides greater impact on individual performance improvement and career development. This interest in coaching is not limited to the use of external, professional coaches but we are also asking leaders at all organizational levels to be more coach-like with their staff members.

Unfortunately, many of us who lead organizations or teams are poorly equipped to effectively provide such coaching in the workplace. The main obstacle is that we often see our coaching role as simply doing more of the same leadership practices that have served us well in the past. Giving feedback, encouragement, advice and support are all good leadership practices but should not be mistaken for coaching.

The great leader coaches I have worked with have one thing in common - they expect exceptional performance from all those they coach. Through their "Great Expectations", they deliberately see others at their highest potential and are able to identify personal talents and strengths that others are not able to see, even the individuals being coached. Effective coaching also requires leaders to engage in a different kind of process, to establish special developmental alliances in which they can engage in uniquely positive, candid and demanding conversations aimed at producing significant performance improvements. These few leaders who are also great coaches have recognized that to effectively coach in the workplace they must first earn the right to coach.

Earning the Right to Coach

Leader Coaches earn the right to coach by:

1. Demonstrating their commitment to performance improvement by openly discussing their personal development plans. (Mastery)
2. Being clear and consistent about their personal values. (Authenticity)
3. Having a burning desire to make a positive personal difference in the lives of others. (Passion)

High Performance Alliances

Leader Coaches establish relationships in which they:

1. Are focused on fostering the very best in others. (Appreciative)
2. Insist upon personal ownership for performance improvement. (Detachment)
3. Seek out the truth, wherever that path will lead. (Confrontation)

Dangerous Conversations

Leader Coaches engage in conversations that:

1. Explore new perspectives and possibilities, which are often radical and

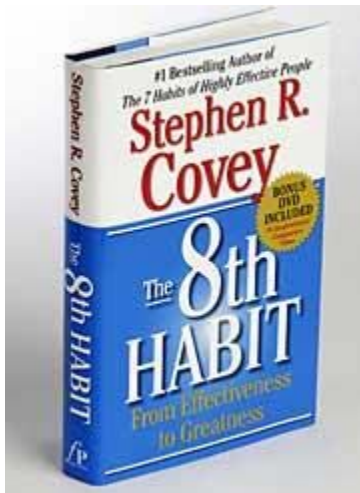
- difficult. (Discovery).
2. Develop multiple new paths forward that involve significant personal change and rewards. (Creation)
 3. Foster high levels of personal accountability for sustained change and development. (Commitment)

Coaching in the workplace is a challenging, difficult and often risky process but being part of the personal change and growth of others will make you glad you chose to coach!

[back to top ^](#)

Book Review: The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness by Stephen Covey

By Ron Crossland



What I love about Stephen Covey is his unabashed willingness to use varied sources, multiple diagrams, and biased opinions to serve a sound and important idea. What I dislike is feeling like I'm reading a series of Sunday school lectures rewritten for a business audience.

The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness is communication and this habit permeates and brings life to the seven habits Covey extolled in his first series of books. The ideas he presents - like finding your voice, helping others find theirs, the application of voice (communication) - to nearly all human endeavors are

powerful. His presentation method, however, is considerably dense and difficult. In the first twenty-three pages alone, he proposes seven separate models before arriving at his main model. And when he does ultimately get to his main model, it looks more like an engineering HVAC drawing, than something a person could use to improve his or her communication.

"Identity is destiny," Covey says. While this is a powerful concept, many would debate its basis or application to roughly three billion earthly inhabitants for whom simply "finding food is destiny." Many could also heartedly debate Covey's idea that civilization has developed from hunter-gatherer to agricultural to industrial to information to wisdom. Covey asserts that human progression is a linear path with the next step clearly in sight.

Three questions that immediately came to my mind, given Covey's hypothesis were: (1) is this a guaranteed path? (2) Is wisdom really the next step? (3) Is it cyclical instead of linear? Were the agrarian peoples of ancient Greece, Egypt, and China without wisdom? And how about the industrious societies of the Mediterranean and Pacific islands? Were they without wisdom during the periods of their great pre-modern civilizations? Indeed, was the industrial age of Europe or America devoid of wisdom? Is the current rapidly growing industrial era of China absent of wisdom? Covey's ideas are worthy of philosophical discussion (G.W.F. Hegel certainly had a great run by espousing his linear progressive view of history), but as a basis for a business book on communication, it seems heavy-handed, discursive, and beside the point.

I was looking for a book to help me increase my understanding and ability to communicate. Covey does provide many meaningful ideas about the passion, role, and importance of communication, but I had to wade through far too many sermons, asides, and difficult ideas to get to them. In the first appendix, he even provides advice on developing "physical intelligence." Experts cannot agree on what "wise nutrition" means. But Covey suggests that if we control appetite, we also control passion and purify desires.

As an armchair philosopher, I enjoy exploring Covey's iterations of such a wide range of topics but as a business professional trying to become a better communicator I am at a loss. Covey, like I am, is fond of quotes. I'd like to share one of my favorites with him regarding the 8th habit, courtesy of Einstein: "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."

[back to top ^](#)

[Unsubscribe or update your email preferences by selecting this link.](#)

101 Commerce Blvd | Loveland, OH 45140

