

# LEADERSHIP Excellence

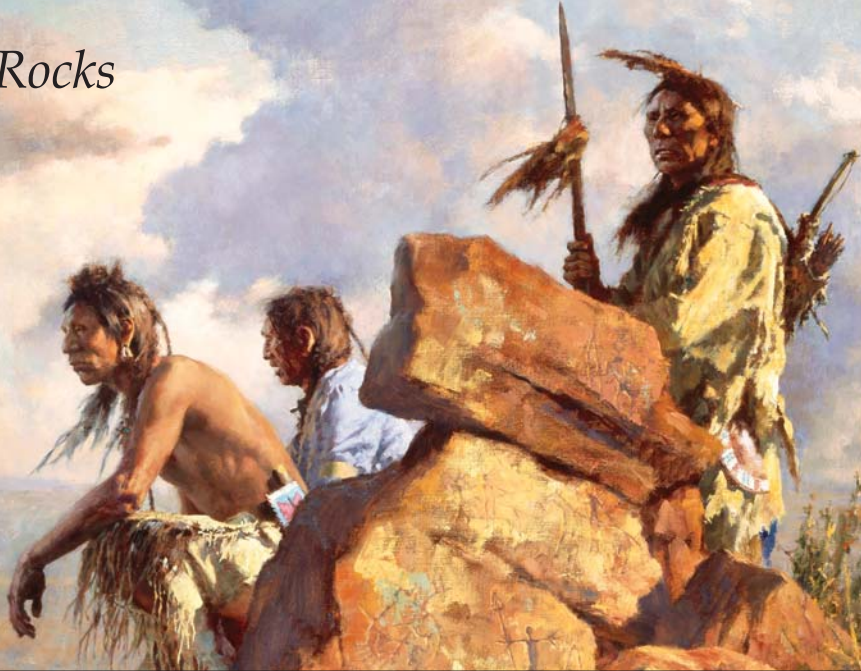
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## Schedule the Big Rocks

*As leaders survey the landscape from the high and sacred place of petroglyphs, they give thanks for their blessings and pray for success.*



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# Global Leaders

*Why they succeed and fail.*



by Owen Sullivan

WE HAVE ENTERED the Human Age, where human potential is the catalyst for change and Talentism has become the new Capitalism. Despite the varied implications of our current dynamic market conditions and the global readjustment to economic trends, the one constant is the need for an exceptional workforce. And, at the heart of business growth and transformation is the need for exceptional leadership, specifically leaders with global mindsets and competencies.

**Leadership development (LD) today is more science than art.** Recently, we partnered with the Chally Group to survey 1,400 CEOs and HR professionals to learn about their LD practices. *We asked them to rate the four competencies most critical for C-level positions.* They cited: 1) *creating a strategic vision*, 92 percent; 2) *inspiring others and maintaining key leadership responsibility*, 62 percent; 3) *developing an accurate and comprehensive overview of the business*, 57 percent; and, 4) *wise decision making*, 55 percent.

Leaders can greatly impact growth and transformation by accelerating the development of high potential talent. Development must include real-world experiences with strategic leaders and exposure to executive stakeholders. Today, leadership development needs to be grounded in real work and focused on the critical competencies required for success in C-level roles. High potentials need to have a *mix and integration of development activities, supported by stretch assignments, mentoring opportunities, and action learning efforts.* Real-life work situations need to be carefully selected to develop the right parts of the success profile. Creating predictive and validated criteria, supported with consistent metrics is required to evaluate their performance.

A challenge for corporate leaders is that leadership turnover for *non-performance* or other *leadership dissatisfaction* issues continue to be problematic for many organizations. Our survey iden-

tified the **Top 10 factors that contribute most to the failure of senior leaders:**

1) *failure to build relationships and a team culture*, 40 percent; 2) *mismatch for the culture*, 32 percent; 3) *failure to deliver acceptable results*, 25 percent; 4) *unable to win support*, 25 percent; 5) *lack of appropriate training*, 23 percent; 6) *egotistical*, 15 percent; 7) *lack of vision*, 14 percent; 8) *inflexible*, 13 percent; 9) *poor management skills*, 12 percent; and 10) *poor communication*, 11 percent.

***If leadership success is so critical, why is so little support given to leader on-boarding and early development for both internal and external candidates?***

A lack of company support for new leaders may be attributed to an onerous cost-management focus—a perspective that it is expensive to develop leaders. Part of the lack of company support may be due to the organization moving with speed to address an urgent leadership opening. The caution here is to not overly rely or assume that the selection process is perfect. The mistake companies often make is to assume that a perceived *all-star* does not warrant development to perform at the expected level. Frequently, this is simply not the case.

***The costs associated with failure or ineffective executive transitions are high*** and the lack of support for talent has long-term negative effects for both leaders and organizations. Considering



the evolving workforce and the increasing importance of *engagement for performance* and *productivity*, the leader's role is *the greatest catalyst for success.* Public or visible failure of high potentials undermines the overall succession and development effort.

For organizations to thrive in the *Human Age*, leaders must be at the forefront in creating exceptional workforces. Leaders need to build the case for a robust workforce strategy that has a unique and committed focus on leadership development. That strategy must ensure success for internal progression and integrating external talent. It must clearly identify the leadership competencies required for success today and in the future, as well as a sound understanding of the factors that lead to derailment. Only then can leaders truly deliver both on *business growth* and *transformation.*

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**ACTION: Know what contributes to success.**