

Responsible Leadership and Engaging and Retaining Talent ^{^+}

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Relationships with stakeholders have been considered a central element of responsible leadership (Maak and Pless, 2006a & b). Responsible leadership involves acting responsibly towards the various stakeholders in an organisation. Other elements of responsible leadership that have been identified include sustainable/green development and social responsibility (Atunes and Franco, 2017; Lasrado and Bimal, 2018). A challenge for corporate boards is to be simultaneously responsible to key corporate stakeholders, while at the same time balancing requirements for affordability and the efficient use of resources and acting responsibly towards the environment and wider society. Too often some interests are pursued at the expense of others.

Ethics has been described as the heart of leadership (Ciulla, 2002 & 2006). Exploring the relationships between ethics, leadership, social responsibility and governance has also been identified as helpful to an understanding of the nature of responsible leadership (Doh and Stumpf, 2005). Ethical and responsible leadership in commercial activities such as buying and selling could be expressed by helping and supporting the interactions of buyers and sellers so that customers can acquire an offering, solution or outcome that is right for them in terms of their aspirations, preferences, priorities and values and is also sustainable.

Acting ethically and responsibly towards stakeholders can involve helping rather than harming them and taking steps to enable them to understand offerings and alternatives, their relevance and suitability, environmental and other implications, and their true internal and external costs, rather than taking advantage of innocence, naivety or ignorance.

Acting Responsibly Towards People

The people of an organisation and across its supply and value chains and network of relationships represent a key group of stakeholders. Acting responsibly towards them can involve insuring they are properly supported and enabled to do what is expected of them, and in particular that they are helped to understand complex areas and undertake difficult and on occasion stressful tasks. Directors and boards often have to balance the contending interests of different stakeholder groups and those of the organisation itself. An area to explore is how responsible leadership and stakeholder management are inter-related and impact on organisational outcomes (Doh and Quigley, 2014). Can people be supported in such a way as to better engage and retain them, while also delivering benefits to other stakeholders?

A study of millennial employees in the Chinese hospitality industry has found that a combination of responsible leadership and human resource management can have positive impacts on employee well-being, which could improve task performance and so also benefit an employing organisation (He et al, 2019). Responsible leadership could also involve ensuring that an organisation has a responsible purpose and acts as a responsible entity (Basu, 1999, Coulson-Thomas, 2019a). In developing countries, according to global company

executives contacted in one investigation, the purpose of a company was a significant factor in attracting talent and corporate purpose ought to benefit a job candidate's home country and express the value of global citizenship (Ready et al, 2008). A family of studies have shown it is possible to support employees and inter-personal interactions in such a way as to simultaneously benefit multiple stakeholders (Coulson-Thomas, 2012a, b & c).

Human Capital Challenges

The 2014 Conference Board international survey of challenges facing CEOs identified "human capital as an enterprise wide driver" as the top ranked challenge globally and also highlighted the extent to which "a talented, engaged and properly motivated workforce is critical to success" in addressing this issue and also the next three issues in order of priority, namely "customer relationships, innovation and operational excellence" (Mitchell et al, 2014). The findings raise a number of questions about the relationship between talent, engagement and motivation and how businesses engage and retain talent. Five years later in an uncertain and changing world in which new and technology enabled business models are more widely adopted, are traditional approaches to talent management still valid and how might responsible leadership impact upon the engagement and retention of people?

Employee engagement can impact upon work outcomes and co-employee support can be particularly effective at sustaining longer-term engagement (Andrew and Sofian, 2012). There are, as we will see, affordable, practical and responsible steps that companies can take to engage employees and deliver benefits to them and other stakeholders (Coulson-Thomas, 2012a, b & c). An Australian study has found a relationship between responsible leadership and organisational commitment (Haque et al, 2019).

Talent Management

Companies vary in how they define talent (Smilansky, 2006; Davis et al, 2007). In relation to talent retention, while various practices are adopted to reduce staff turnover, evidence based approaches are desirable (Allen et al, 2010). A survey of 4,352 employees across 28 Indian and global organisations operating in India found an association between responsible leadership and retention after one year, with the authors mentioning employee perceptions of the support received from their managers as a factor connecting them to their employers (Doh et al, 2011). Too often talent management overlooks the potential of 'ordinary' or 'average' performers that might or could be released if they were properly supported. One should try not to be beguiled by the outstanding characteristics of particular individuals that do not relate to the purpose of an organisation, future intentions or current activities and priority tasks. Hiring for future potential in an uncertain business environment can be risky.

Many organisations introduce costly and general initiatives to improve particular aspects of corporate performance and take other steps to attract, recruit and retain talented individuals and increase employee engagement, commitment and motivation. If people who have hitherto been regarded as 'top talent' are difficult to recruit and/or retain, are there more affordable means of enabling existing communities, groups and networks of people to remain current, engaged and motivated? Might these include providing better support? Could this in itself

deliver multiple benefits for both people and organisations and the natural environment and is such support something that one should expect responsible leaders and managers to provide?

The speed with which offerings and innovations are taken up can reflect their affordability as well as their relevance. Companies need to avoid bidding wars for scarce skills in demand that might push up costs and result in them becoming unfordable. One can succeed without recruiting expensive stars (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b). Keeping existing staff current can often be less risky than importing expensive prima donnas and trying to recruit and develop high fliers for an unknown future. People should be helped to excel at key activities and remain current, and enabled to handle challenges as, when and wherever they arise. The approaches of many firms are doomed to disappoint.

Talent Management Strategies

Some talent management strategies are unsustainable (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b and 2013d). Responsible leaders should not 'follow the herd' and adopt an approach just because it appears trendy and high status companies champion it. Hype can lead to expensive, time consuming and frustrating journeys, when much better, cheaper and proven alternatives exist. Talent wars to attract 'the best people' can push up salary costs, be distracting and involve collateral damage. Talented people can also be difficult to manage and retain. A person who is exceptional in one arena may be average elsewhere. In both private and public sector organisations it may be cheaper to work with the people one has and put the right support environment in place to enable them to succeed (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c, 2013d).

Some organisations spend large amounts on expensive people who are not engaged, effectively used or appropriately supported (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c). Views of what represents 'top talent' can also quickly become outdated. We need more flexible ways of making it easier for affordable people to understand complex issues and helping them to do important, difficult and stressful jobs. Having talented people on the payroll is one thing but leveraging their capabilities to secure competitive advantage is another (Lawler, 2009). Paying for talented people may make little sense if one cannot harness, or capture and share, what they do differently. We need to move on from single-issue initiatives such as preparing a few 'high fliers' for an unknown future to boosting the performance of today's key workgroups and quickly delivering multiple benefits for both people and organisations.

Responsible leaders seek affordable approaches that improve results by taking people as they are, rather than as we would like them to be. Performance support offers one route to achieving a high performance organisation and multiple objectives with the people one has - average people who do not cost an arm and a leg to recruit and retain - and an existing corporate culture (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c, 2013a, b, c & d). It could take the form of a paper or on-line checklist, or a computer-based support tool. The World Health Organisation found that a simple checklist can have a significant impact on surgical complications and inpatient deaths, even when used by highly qualified professionals (WHO, 2009).

People and Technology

How important is technology in the provision of performance support? The capabilities of people and technologies are inter-related and inter-dependent. For example, developing renewable energy solutions for a sustainable future is more than just a technological challenge or a human resources one (Coulson-Thomas, 2019b). We need to look at how people and technologies can support each other and remain current and cost-effective at all stages of their life cycles. To quickly scale up, we also need to look beyond high fliers and work with our existing people (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b).

Successive generations of technology can appear much more quickly than previous ones were rolled out. The shelf life of many related skills is correspondingly shorter. Reskilling, upskilling and life-long learning are now urgent necessities. Hence the value of affordable ways of updating people with what they require, as and when they need it, 24/7, wherever they might be, including on the move (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c, 2013a). For many potential adopters, the promise of a new offering or technology may only become a reality when it is offered in a form that is suited to their needs, means and local context.

Talent Management and Development Practices

The management practices of many companies tend to treat workgroups as homogenous communities. In a series of studies of areas of critical importance for business success, investigations led by the author found there were usually few stars in the top quartile of achievement, often less than one in twenty. For example, only four per cent of those engaged in competitive bidding were found to win more than three out of four of the opportunities they pursued (Kennedy and O'Connor, 1997; Coulson-Thomas et al, 2003). Those who excel at one task might be hopeless at another, while even top quartile superstars are only very effective at less than half of the critical success factors identified in our studies of winning business (Kennedy and O'Connor, 1997; Coulson-Thomas et al, 2003, 2007a & b, 2012b). League tables may enable top performers in sales to be identified, but in other areas they are not always recognised and hence little attention may be devoted to what they do differently.

General competences and training can miss what is important for excelling at a particular task or certain aspects of a job, while focussing development on what annual assessments suggest people are not good at or interested in can be a costly indulgence (Coulson-Thomas, 1999, 2019b). Greater engagement and much higher returns on investment can often be obtained by helping people to become even better at the things that interest them and which they do well. Many corporate initiatives fail to engage. They also sometimes demotivate and deskill. They may be perceived as being primarily designed to work people harder and squeeze more out of them. People are expected to modify how they work to fit in with the requirements of a technology rather than support being designed to match their potential and what they require to excel (Coulson-Thomas, 2007a & b, 2012b and 2019b). Thoughtful individuals are forced to operate according to the rules of systems to which they become an appendage.

Technologies that operate as black boxes and quickly produce answers, responses and solutions can deskill their users and increase dependency. An engineer might weigh sensory clues such as noise and vibration in order to identify the source of a problem. The use of a

push button device that speeds up this process may result in the erosion of this capability and the replacement of the engineer by someone who is cheaper to employ or self-diagnosis. Diagnostic devices have their advantages. They can ensure consistency of performance and be easier to update than humans. The deskilling and increasing dependency of users is not an inevitable consequence of their introduction. Transparency could allow users to understand how answers are arrived at. Windows that open and give reasons for outcomes can increase capability with each use (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b). A relationship between people and technology that increases the capability of both enables more complex problems to be addressed. It might also enable repair or renewal as a responsible option to replacement.

Approaches to Performance Improvement

Many companies adopt general, expensive, time consuming and disruptive approaches to increasing performance such as corporate wide restructuring, motivational drives or culture change programmes (Coulson-Thomas, 2004, 2007a & b, 2012a & b, 2013a & d). They can irritate rather than engage and often fail to deliver. Before they are implemented, requirements and priorities may and often do change. Opportunities are missed during transformation journeys. The results of reorganisation and recruitment drives can be overtaken by events. In contrast to general initiatives, a quicker and more focused approach such as changing the support provided to key workgroups can yield multiple benefits and deliver large returns on investment (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c, 2013a). Continually updated support can ensure people stay current. When personalised and it makes it easier for people to understand, learn and use, and design features are also included for the purpose, it can also engage.

Talent Management 2 involves: assessing the roles and tasks that contribute most to priority objectives; ensuring people undertaking them excel by putting relevant critical success factors in place; and providing the workgroups concerned with appropriate support (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b, 2013d). Performance support can be a focused, relatively quick and cost-effective way of improving efficiency and productivity, securing large returns on investment, engaging people and addressing talent requirements as they arise (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c, 2013a). It can be individualised and easily updated. People can learn and build their skills with each use. It can also be designed to match how they prefer to work and operate.

Responsible leaders ensure that practical and affordable mechanisms are in place to help and support those undertaking difficult tasks and stressful jobs. Performance support is particularly cost-effective and can simultaneously deliver multiple objectives, and benefit people, organisations and the environment (Coulson-Thomas, 2009, 2012b, 2013d). Some talent management strategies focus upon 'high fliers' and 'tomorrow's leaders'. This requires investment today for future benefit. Many boards have endeavoured to reconcile a continuing desire to build talent and capabilities over the longer term with the need for short term savings and current viability. Performance support can mitigate this trade-off by quickly increasing performance and greatly speeding up paybacks (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b, 2013d).

Recruiting or Building Talent

Should one recruit for a job, or select people thought to have ‘potential’ and build jobs around them as situations and circumstances change? The latter seems attractive, particularly in dynamic environments. However, is this approach always affordable for sufficient people and roles across an organisation? Could building talent and supporting particular tasks and job roles be more cost effective? With Talent Management 2 the focus shifts from people to particular jobs and the requirements for succeeding in them (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b, 2013d). As mentioned above, the emphasis is upon: assessing the key roles and tasks that are or will be required; identifying steps in work processes that have the greatest impacts; and ensuring that people in these jobs are enabled to excel by providing them with appropriate performance support that incorporates identified critical success factors and is kept current.

Finding better people can be problematic. Recruiting and inducting new members of staff can take time and be expensive in comparison with changes of support to enable more to be achieved from an existing team, especially those who are open to taking advice, prepared to learn from their peers, and willing to adopt superior practices. An examination of the performance of Wall Street analysts suggests that individuals identified as highly talented may not necessarily perform at the same high levels when lured elsewhere by higher salaries (Groysberg, 2010). Buying high performance can be expensive if a star in one context is less effective in another. It may be cheaper to work with the people one has and put the right support environment in place to create a high performance team (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b).

The Question of Affordability

It is responsible rather than mean or misguided to be concerned with affordability. Customers may not be prepared to pay higher prices for organisations to engage in bidding wars to recruit ‘the best people’. Efforts to attract particular skill sets can push up wage and salary costs. It may be better to concentrate upon understanding critical success factors and capturing and sharing what top performers do differently, particularly when a quick response is required. A company that does not remain competitive may not survive in the short-term to implement strategies to build a better tomorrow in the longer-term

The change in emphasis required and the use of performance support justify the coining of the term Talent Management 2 (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b). Avoiding talent wars can be sensible and responsible. Identifying future leaders can require considerable effort. Retaining them in the hope that they will remain relevant and of value in a changing world can demand continuing commitment. High flier programmes can discourage and demotivate those who are not selected. They can be counter-productive and lead to an exodus of talent as those who have been overlooked seek opportunities elsewhere. In contrast, performance support can make it easier for average people to understand complex issues and excel at difficult tasks (Coulson-Thomas, 2007a & b, 2012b, 2013d). It can be more inclusive.

Capturing and sharing what high performers do differently can greatly benefit the ‘ordinary’ person. The approach also increases the beneficial impact that ‘superstars’ at key tasks can have on organisations, creating a larger return on their talents. Those who excel at particular tasks are usually overlooked by high flier programmes that focus upon generalists who might

become future leaders. Talent Management 2 does not preclude the identification of leadership potential, but it enables a wider range of people to build upon and complement natural strengths. It can be quickly adopted and can also support certain ‘essential freedoms’ that can help to build engagement and assist retention (Coulson-Thomas, 1997). People may be reluctant to move in order to retain access to particular learning and performance support.

Talent Pools as Conspicuous Waste

Uncertainty can increase costs and erode affordability. Views of what represents ‘top talent’ can be overtaken by changing priorities and external events. Like organisational structures, policies and technologies they can quickly date. Some ‘talent pools’ of ‘high fliers’ appear expensive when the cost of ‘fast tracking’ them is taken into account. Are they an example of conspicuous consumption that may not be sustainable (Veblen, 1899)? Responsible leadership should avoid waste and the hoarding of talent that could be better used elsewhere.

Are today’s recruits more committed, entrepreneurial and creative than people one could work with at the time specific needs arise? Will they be more effective than those who might be able to do what is required with appropriate support? Going into the market as needs arise may be cheaper and more responsible than creating roles for people who are not effectively used just to give them a ‘development experience’ and hoping that their ‘time will come’. Talent Management 2 and performance support meet a requirement for more flexible ways of enabling affordable people to confront and handle new, tricky and/or unfamiliar situations, as, when and wherever they arise (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b, 2013d).

The cost of endeavouring to develop general talent for possible future use can be daunting, especially for smaller enterprises, when ‘traditional’ approaches are used. In comparison, the entry ‘price’ to Talent Management 2 - and implementing a solution for an extensive and scattered workgroup that addresses a critical problem for an organisation – is relatively low. It can be around the cost of recruiting and paying the first year’s salary of one new hire and has been adopted by both small and large companies (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b, 2013d).

The Challenge and Opportunity of Exceptional People

Talented people are not only costly to recruit and difficult to manage and retain. Colleagues might also feel threatened by them. They may appear prima donnas, obsessed with building their CVs and their personal careers. They may become bored, disengaged and discontented when given tasks they feel are beneath them or they do not experience the fast promotion they come to expect. Giving special treatment to some can alienate others. However, such reactions can change when Talent Management 2 is adopted and a wider range of contributions is recognised and there is a mechanism for capturing and sharing what hitherto overlooked high performers do differently (Coulson-Thomas, 2007a & b, 2012b, 2013d).

Clever people represent both a challenge and an opportunity for organisations. They need to be appropriately managed to realise their full potential. Talent Management 2 recognises those who excel at particular activities. Performance support can enable them to push the envelope and help others to emulate what they do differently (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c,

2013a). While some qualities that people have might be transferable, an exceptional talent in one area may be average in another. Achieving objectives often depends on the skills that are employed in particular jobs, especially 'front line' jobs that have a disproportionate impact on customers and priority areas for improvement. Hence the importance of supporting those undertaking these jobs and enabling them to excel.

Sometimes when talented people hit their stride they get headhunted or move to another organisation which then reaps the benefits of a previous company's selection, recruitment and development processes. With interactive performance support there can be an inter-relationship between individuals and support tools that is mutually beneficial. As a result users may be less willing to move. Without their previous support they may also be less valuable to an organisation that poaches them. While 'traditional' practices can increase churn within a labour market, the focus of Talent Management 2 upon helping and developing existing workgroups can aid retention. Without the support to which they have become accustomed it might be more difficult for them to learn, develop and do a job.

Clever Person, but Ineffective Approach

An individual who shines in one context may struggle in another (Groysberg, 2010). Most superstars have areas of deficiency. With Talent Management 2 the focus on particular jobs and tasks makes it easier to identify relevant high performers, while the support provided can incorporate critical success factors and the superior ways of high achieving peers. The author's investigations of critical success factors for key corporate activities have found talented people with outstanding qualifications tackling tasks in a 'loosing way', while others with fewer credentials undertake similar tasks in a more effective way (Coulson-Thomas, 2007a & b, 2012a & b, 2013a, b & c). Success often depends upon whether or not, and to what extent, critical success factors are in place and work is done in a 'winning way'.

This finding is particularly stark in relation to bidding for business (Kennedy and O'Connor, 1997; Coulson-Thomas, et al, 2003). In some sectors, a significant proportion of new business derives from competitive bidding. Success at submitting winning bids can determine whether or not a company survives as a main contractor. Adopting identified critical success factors in important areas, for example by using performance support to help bid teams, can have a significant impact on organisational prospects (Coulson-Thomas, 2007a & b).

Talent Management Focus and Organisation

Talent management tends to focus on recruitment, development and planning and succession activities. Some people in talent management roles appear to exhibit a vested interest in continuing past practices and priorities such as new recruitment. The performance of key workgroups sometimes suffers when experienced experts are replaced by younger people who are 'multi-skilled'. They may have some understanding of many areas, without being exceptional in any of them. Capturing and sharing the superior approaches of high performers who have learned better ways of doing certain things can address this problem. Hitherto, responsibilities for different aspects of the talent management process have often been split between service functions and line management. Performance support can help ensure that

talents, competences, qualities and potential are relevant and applied to key tasks and what an organisation is setting out to do (Coulson-Thomas, 2013d).

To summarise, very talented people, especially those who are generally 'clever' rather than outstanding at an particular task, can be challenging to manage if their potential is to be fully realised and focused in areas that are beneficial to both them and an employing organisation (Thorne and Pellant, 2007; Goffee and Jones, 2009; Groysberg et al, 2010). Talent managers hope that 'fast tracked' people will stay long enough to repay substantial investment in their development. In future there may be less need for 'overhead' roles at senior level. Fewer managers may be required if front line staff can be supported and monitored by other means.

Talent management 2 looks beyond 'high fliers' and potential for possible future senior roles is especially relevant to current front-line support. It integrates learning and working. While tactical and local applications can quickly generate significant returns, a joined up and more strategic approach is required to obtain its full potential (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b, 2013d). As development initiatives fail to engage, many organisations do not reap the benefits of learning from people who excel in certain areas. The challenge for corporate leaders is to build a high performance organisation and deliver multiple objectives with existing people - average people who do not cost an arm and a leg to recruit and retain - and a current corporate culture.

A Better Alternative

Organisations require an affordable approach which can achieve improved results by taking people as they are, rather than as we would like them to be. Can this be done in such a way that beneficial and quantifiable impacts can be obtained within a few months? Could applications be self-funding within a single financial year? Talent Management 2, particularly through the use of performance support, offers an alternative paradigm that can bridge a gulf between aspiration and achievement (Coulson-Thomas, 2004, 2012a, 2013d). Evidence from pioneer adopters of performance support suggests it represents a more focused, relatively quick and cost effective way of securing large returns on investment and achieving multiple objectives. It can both engage people and meet a talent-on-demand requirement.

The approach brings together various elements, from helping people to understand complex areas and making it easier for them to do difficult jobs, to a cost-effective mechanism for providing learning and performance support on a 24/7 basis to people wherever they may be. It has been shown to be relevant to entrepreneurial ventures as well as global corporations in different sectors. It is also applicable to public bodies and can contribute to creating flexible, adaptable and high performance organisations (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b & c, 2013a).

Pioneer adopters of performance support are building critical success factors into the processes for key activities and adopting cost effective ways of helping people to emulate the superior ways of high performing superstars. Workgroup productivity and corporate performance can be boosted to deliver success for organisations and satisfaction for individuals. Providing better support can enable more to be achieved by fewer and less costly staff. People can be enabled to handle more complex cases. They feel more confident and 'in

control'. By making it easier for staff to do difficult jobs, performance support also reduces absences due to stress and the requirements for overtime and additional help.

Other Impacts and Outcomes

Incorporating critical success factors and best practice from elsewhere enables a form of access to external talent. The results of 'crowdsourcing' and social networking can be quickly shared across a community in a usable form. Performance support can engage while supporting conversations and relationships. It complements collaborative approaches and can embrace business, channel and supply and value chain partners and user communities (Coulson-Thomas, 2012b, 2013d). It recognises that urgent and priority talent requirements are often for specific skills rather than general competencies (Kennedy, 2003).

The talent management expenditures of some companies benefit other enterprises and/or organisations in general rather than just them as people move on (Gathmann and Schonberg, 2010). Talent management 2 unashamedly addresses the development and deployment of talent at the point at which work is done in order to increase value, productivity, performance and compliance, and reduce cost, risk and stress. It also addresses certain problems of current approaches. For example, one should be better equipped to benefit from higher performers and ensure their legacy continues should they wish to leave if their superior approaches have been captured, shared and updated by a community of networked users.

In place of 'investment' in acquiring talent and 'potential' for an unknown future, there is a focus upon boosting the performance of today's key workgroups and quickly delivering multiple benefits for both people and organisations. Doing this in a cost-effective, flexible and sustainable way, and ensuring people stay current and employ good practices, may be the most reliable guarantee of continuing relevance and vitality. Instead of hoping for the best one takes steps to ensure that key workgroups adopt what across a community are the best approaches at any moment in time and they are enabled to stay abreast of new developments.

Some directors are reluctant to 'let go' of past practices. They may be concerned about the possible consequences of alternatives. 'Traditional' talent management involves risks, such as whether people will fit in and shine in a particular context, or be retained long enough to yield a return on their recruitment, induction and 'fast track' development (Coulson-Thomas, 2013d). Many corporate structures, initiatives and practices prevent people from achieving their full potential (Coulson-Thomas, 1999, 2004). In 1997, the author called for essential freedoms that could liberate people (Coulson-Thomas, 1997). As mentioned earlier, performance support can enable many of these, for example freeing people from dependence upon particular times and places of work. With built-in controls performance management also ensures compliance and can enable bespoke responses and responsible innovation.

Responsible Next Steps

Engaging and retaining talent can be a challenge. Bringing in exceptional people – even if they are affordable - can create a host of problems if they are not properly managed. The dangers of current and unaffordable approaches to talent management can be avoided

(Coulson-Thomas, 2012b). Responsible leadership involves caring enough to provide practical, accessible, affordable and easy to use support. Performance support enables relevant capabilities to be built as and when required. It can incorporate critical success factors for excelling in key roles and quickly deliver multiple benefits for people and organisations. It can also benefit the environment by improving the effectiveness of purchasing and enabling more informed and responsible procurement choices (FitzGerald, 2000, Coulson-Thomas, 2009 & 2010). It can be consciously configured to support United Nations environmental and sustainable development goals (UN, 2015, UNEP, 2019).

Responsible leadership can also be approached by seeking to understand what motivated an early responsible leader role model to develop a values based business (Pless, 2007). Helping, supporting and listening as opposed to top down command and control are the essence of 'new leadership' and the creation of high performance organisations (Coulson-Thomas, 2013a, b & c; 2014). They could be included among the core values of an organisation. Responsible leadership balances the interests of different categories of stakeholder (Pless, 2007). A shared desire and drive to be helpful and supportive of others, whether employees or customers, and to help them to understand and tackle difficult choices, decisions and tasks, can deliver various benefits for multiple stakeholders (Coulson-Thomas, 2012a & b, 2013a).

Our challenge is to build mutually beneficial and capability enhancing relationships between people, organisations and emerging and enabling technologies to the advantage of them all and our planet. Like the effective use of artificial intelligence (AI), performance support can complement human capabilities and intelligence. It can enable people, organisations and technology to evolve together in a sustainable way. Responsible leaders should ensure its use is considered whenever and wherever it could be relevant and its application beneficial.

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^Notes:

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Talent Management 2 by Colin Coulson-Thomas is published by Policy Publications. Reports on critical success factors for key corporate activities and what high performers do differently in these areas, along with *Transforming Public Services* and *Transforming Knowledge Management* which consider performance support from change and knowledge management perspectives, *Winning Companies; Winning People* on helping average people to excel at difficult jobs and *Developing Directors* on building an effective boardroom team are also available from Policy Publications: www.policypublications.com

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An experienced chairman of award winning companies and vision holder of successful transformation programmes, Colin is the author of over 60 books and reports and he has spoken at over 300 international events. He has also held public appointments at local, regional and national level and professorial appointments in Europe, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, India and China. His research has covering key corporate activities in over 2,000 companies and over 400 professional firms. Colin was educated at the London School of Economics, London Business School, UNISA and the Universities of Aston, Chicago and Southern California. He is a fellow of seven chartered bodies and obtained first place prizes in the final exams of three professions. He received the CSR Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2018 CSR Leadership Summit and in 2019 a Global Excellence Award in Renewable Energy from the Energy and Environment Foundation.

Summary

Responsible leadership involves acting responsibly towards the various stakeholders in an organisation. A challenge for corporate boards is to be simultaneously responsible to key corporate stakeholders, while at the same time acting responsibly towards the environment and wider society. Too often some interests are pursued at the expense of others. The people of an organisation represent a key group of stakeholders. Acting responsibly towards them can involve insuring they are properly supported and enabled to do what is expected of them, and in particular that they are helped to understand complex areas and undertake difficult and on occasion stressful tasks. Engaging and retaining talent can be a particular challenge. Some

organisations spend large amounts on expensive people who are not engaged, effectively used or appropriately supported. Talent Management 2 involves: assessing the roles and tasks that contribute most to priority objectives; ensuring people undertaking them excel by putting relevant critical success factors in place; and providing the workgroups concerned with appropriate support. Responsible leadership involves providing practical, accessible, affordable and easy to use support. Capturing and sharing how high performing super-stars tackle particular tasks can be especially effective. Performance support can quickly enable people, workgroups and communities to excel at key tasks and simultaneously deliver multiple benefits for individuals, organisations and the environment.

Short abstract (100 words)

Responsible leadership involves acting responsibly towards an organisation's stakeholders. Engaging and retaining talent can be a particular challenge. The people of an organisation represent a key group of stakeholders. Acting responsibly towards them involves insuring that they are properly supported and enabled to do what is expected of them, and in particular that they are helped to understand complex areas and undertake difficult and on occasion stressful tasks. Talent Management 2 involves providing practical, accessible, affordable and easy to use support that enables key workgroups to excel at key tasks and deliver multiple benefits for individuals, organisations and the environment.

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