

Professor Rob Goffee on Authentic Leadership

Rob began his presentation by explaining that there is a **loss of trust in leaders** around the world. This is a result of corporate scandals which started with Enron, Tyco, Worldcom and more recently the government rescue efforts in the financial services sector.

He used examples of TV Program "The Office" and the comic strip "Dilbert" as examples of disaffected cynical followers in the workplace today – emphasizing the fact that they depicted reality in many organizations. He suggested that there is a consequent **loss of faith** in organizations. They tend to homogenize and pasteurize the people within them, thus destroying potential leadership abilities.

And furthermore, a **loss of meaning and fun**:

"Work is about daily meaning as well as daily bread; for recognition as well as cash; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying ... we have a right to ask of work that it include meaning, recognition, astonishment and life." Studs Terkel

Rob describes Generation Y as Generation X on steroids ... They have high expectations, enjoy creative challenges and responsibility, and expect everything to happen fast! They also question traditional authority, are very mobile and prefer work-life balance.

He concludes that therefore leadership is getting harder. Compensation strategies won't do the trick – rather he sees a need for inspirational leadership and moral purpose.

Authentic leaders, he says, sense situations ... and articulate them. They have perspective of the whole. They also identify with ordinary people, and can be themselves with them while also maintaining their distance as their role requires. Further they reveal their difference and use their difference to be distinctively and artfully themselves.

e.g. Kevin Rudd saying "sorry", Princess Diana walking through landmine country before the media, and Richard Branson's cool, relaxed style that epitomizes Virgin.

They also reveal their weaknesses, their human frailties – selectively – so that they are not "perfect", and they communicate with great care e.g. Anita Roddick, founder of BodyShop and Barack Obama.

In summary:

1. Show strength but reveal weakness
2. Be yourself but conform enough
3. Get close but keep your distance
4. Be authentic but be prepared to be a role player

Professor Rob Goffee on Leading Clever People

“Clever people” are highly talented individuals with the potential to create disproportionate amounts of value from the resources that the organization makes available to them.

Or more colloquially – young people who think they’re smarter than you and don’t want to be led. Rather they choose organizations who have the resources to fuel their obsessions.

There is a paradigm shift emerging here:

FROM making individuals more valuable to organizations – “engagement” efforts

TO making organizations more valuable to individuals – who are already valuable.

Some new leadership rules

| Do's | Don'ts |
|---|---|
| Explain and persuade | Tell people what to do |
| Use expertise | Use hierarchy |
| Give people space and resources | Allow them to burnout |
| Tell them what | Tell them how |
| Give people time | Interfere |
| Provide boundaries (agree simple rules) | Create bureaucracy |
| Give recognition (amplify their achievements) | Give frequent feedback |
| Encourage failure and maximize learning | “Train” |
| Protect them from the rain | Expose them to politics |
| Talk straight | Use bullshit or deceive |
| Give real world challenges with constraints | Build an ivory tower |
| Create a galaxy | Recruit a star |
| Conduct and connect | Don't take all the credit as the leader |

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Notes compiled by Antoinette Braks

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