

Javier Bajer

The development of leadership has kept many people busy for – at least – the past three decades. Endless attempts at capturing and replicating the true essence of good leadership have done limited to satisfy organisations' needs to equip themselves with good leaders. Years of psychometric testing and education on a variety of profiles, taxonomies and traits, often thought as “the secrets” of x or y style of leadership, have clearly not managed to give us the amount and quality of leadership that the world needs today.

That is the reason for having this issue of *Strategic HR Review* focus on *authentic leadership*. Instead of embarking on a quest to become who we are not, our contributors reinforce the idea that true leadership has to do with becoming the best version of ourselves that we can be.

I start with identifying the need for effective, and authentic, leadership. In *How Businesses Can Deal With a Bad Manager*, Penny de Valk highlights research documenting the ways that ineffective leadership and bad management impact employee performance, and offers ways to develop mid-level and senior leaders that effectively avoid those pitfalls.

In *It's Messy Being Authentic – Lessons Learned on the Road to Becoming an Authentic Leader*, Robin Wright lays out the basics of authentic leadership – such as valuing multiple perspectives, balancing emotional and intellectual intelligence, developing internal honesty and trust with others and a dedication to commitment and the courage to act – and explores these in the context of her own personal journey of leadership development.

In *Develop Authentic Leadership – Be a Good Host*, Mark McKergow posits that adopting the innately-understood roles and responsibilities as a “host” engenders authentic leadership naturally.

In *How HR Plays its Role in Developing Leaders and Managers*, Tom O. Davenport identifies specific functions for HR managers in building leadership capacity and ensuring that their organisations have the “right people performing well in leadership roles at all levels”.

And finally, in *Authentic Leadership: Development of a New Three Pillar Model*, Fiona Jones and Stephen Swailes outline a new model for authentic leadership, based on research with senior leaders in business and the military, that relies on an individual's capacity for self-awareness, self-regulation and ethical behavior.

As I published on an earlier Strategic Commentary for *Strategic HR Review* (2009, Vol. 8 Issue 5), today it is clear that most organisations need to develop leadership in every member of our organisations, not just for a few. Furthermore, true leadership is not something that we can get by looking at others, but it is only achieved when we have the courage (and tools) to honestly look at ourselves.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

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