



The Great Playbook: Your Secret Sauce to Accelerating Leadership Development in Your Organization

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Paradigm Shift in the Workforce

The global workforce is going through a tremendous generational demographic shift. Baby Boomers are retiring *en masse*, leaving a deficit which the smaller population of 'Gen Xers,' the next generation in line, will be unable to make up for. Luckily, the 'Millennial' generation, those born between 1981 and 1997, is large enough to help offset this talent gap as time marches on. According to the U.S. census in 2015, Millennials are now the largest group in the overall labor force.

While it's good news that Millennials will be able to replace baby boomers in the workforce, individual businesses are finding it more difficult to hold on to them over the long term. Millennials are well known for being job hoppers and research is supporting this fact. A recent Gallup study¹ shows that Millennials are more than three times likely to change jobs than their non-millennials counterparts. On a whole, it is estimated that Millennial turnover costs the U.S. economy \$30.5 billion annually.

Lost Job Experience Yields Leadership Challenges

The biggest impact that the changing of the guard from Baby Boomers to Millennials brings is in terms of experience brought to the job. Millennials have had limited time as members in the workforce to gain the necessary experience to replace the more tenured boomers. This effect is exacerbated given the fact that Millennials are switching jobs more rapidly than ever and thus taking what accumulated experience they do have elsewhere. These two converging trends are making it more difficult for companies to attract experienced leaders to

fill the gap. When key talent moves into retirement or a new job elsewhere, companies are finding that many of their remaining or newer people are lacking the key experiences that prepare them for taking on moments that matter. They're not just losing talent – they are also reporting a loss of valuable experience-based wisdom that is a challenge to replicate in a short period of time.

60% of millennials say they are open to a different job opportunity and are more willing to act on taking opportunities than any other generation

Accelerating Experience

How do you replace this lost experience? Learning and experience can be accelerated only through highly realistic, hands-on practice – and we've come up with an approach that is having a profound impact on businesses and their people's ability to get up to speed and high performance quickly. The core of this approach centers on two important elements that are key to learning and building experience:

Pivotal Moments: Moments on the job are pivotal when the outcome significantly impacts the business results or engagement of employees. Pivotal moments are typically based around a specific business cycle (e.g., fiscal year) or within specific phases of a cycle (e.g., sales quarters). Through the course of experience, leaders learn to prioritize the relative importance of situations unfolding in front of them based on their positive or negative impact to their success. Over time, the best leaders develop the ability to discern which moments they need to focus their attention toward in order to excel in their role.

Mindset, Behaviors and Actions: Upon learning which moments are pivotal toward their success, leaders undergo the process of learning how to best manage through each one. At every pivotal moment, there is a set of actions that a leader can make. Each one of those choices has tradeoffs, and usually, the tradeoffs are such that a one set of actions tend to produce the best results, while others are sub-optimal or, in some cases, even detrimental. Sometimes it takes numerous iterations to figure out how to get it right. In some cases, leaders never figure it out how to manage through each moment. Typically, only top talent are able to figure out the best mindset and approach to take when making these critical decisions and managing through these pivotal moments.

If leaders can build recognition of these pivotal moments and develop an understanding of what great leaders do in those moments, they can gain a lot of experience in a short period of time – even if they're new to the role or organization. As we mentioned earlier, experience is too often something that remains hidden in the minds of individual leaders, and when you lose those leaders, you lose their experience. The Great Playbook is a tool developed for just this reason – to codify great behaviors and help disseminate them in an impactful way that gets leaders to high performance, quickly.

The Advent of the Great Playbook

The Great Playbook is a powerful tool developed to address the issue of lost experience by allowing experiential wisdom to be shared throughout an organization. Rather than depending on each new employee to build experience in real-time on the job – a time-consuming and expensive effort, particularly in consideration of the increase in job-hopping Millennials in the workforce – the Great Playbook instead helps leaders quickly learn what great leadership looks like in the pivotal moments of their role, so that they can then execute those behaviors in the moments that matter. By codifying what great leadership looks like through compiling the wisdom of experienced leaders, newer leaders can better understand what pivotal moments they will confront on the job and become ready for larger roles much more quickly than they otherwise would have been able to on their own.

Accelerating Leadership Development: Case in Point

BTS worked in partnership with a client within the Oil and Gas Industry to help them onboard Country Managers. Many tenured Country Managers were moving toward retirement. In fact most of these new Country Managers were just promoted into the role from other countries. For many of these leaders, it was their first externally focused role, and thus a huge step up in terms of level of exposure. Unfortunately, most of these new Country Managers were learning on the job through simple trial and error.

Seeing the clear need to better prepare these new managers, our client sought to identify the job expectations of the Country Manager role. They were interested in identifying these new expectations in terms of: 1) Core Skills and Knowledge; 2) Country-Specific Skills and Knowledge; and 3) Behaviors. In this case, the opportunity presented itself to create a leadership development deliverable that was different and unique to fit the need. It was clear new Country Managers would gain a lot of value from a guide that outlined the pivotal moments they would encounter in the field and what a great Country Managers actually did in each instance to succeed.

Codifying Experiences into Pivotal Moments

As a first step, interviews were conducted with 32 current Vice Presidents, Managing Directors, and Country Managers across the globe to elicit their insights using a modified critical incident interviewing technique. During these structured conversations, inquiries were made to identify the types of moments that all new Country Managers experience on the job. The results were codified into 12 themes related to the pivotal moments that Country Managers face. Some of these included:



1. Interfacing in public places within a foreign country
2. Meeting with key government stakeholders and local officials
3. Getting to know and lead a new team
4. Feeling lonely at the top without a sounding board

After describing a pivotal moment during the interview, the tenured leaders were asked what great leaders did to succeed that moment. This provided the input required to identify how to best engage each challenge based on the direct field experience from multiple experts. The codification of all pivotal moments and actions resulted in the development of the first Great Playbook. New Country Managers are now equipped with a simple guide to help them focus on the right moments upon entering the role and how to best succeed at tackling each one. And this guide isn't just for onboarding – as both a paper and online-based resource, it can be easily used and referenced in the field as they continue to gain experience and grow in the role.

Pivotal Moments, Mindset, and Actions in Focus Today

The Great Playbook has empowered new Country Managers entering the role today. Rather than learning through costly trial and error, Country Managers enter the role knowing what moments are critical to focus on based on the wisdom of their predecessors. As a result, new Country Managers are able to take the right actions during their first year on the job. Some examples of these actions in pivotal moments include:

Moment 1: Interfacing in public places within a foreign country

- Making a concerted effort to learn how to act within a foreign country with full cultural awareness of what to do and what not to do
- Behaving in accordance with company values and local culture at all times (e.g., limited alcohol consumption when living in Islamic countries)

Moment 2: Meeting with key government stakeholders and local officials

- Learning the basics of the local language allowing them to show respect and make easier initial connections during their first introduction
- Finding excuses to meet with key governmental stakeholders including trying to help solve any existing domestic problem (e.g., clean water)

Moment 3: Getting to know and lead a new team

- Refraining from making quick decisions and running team over like a bulldozer upon entering the role
- Showing humility and respect toward the leadership team by asking their advice on how to solve local issues

Moment 4: Feeling lonely at the top without a sounding board

- Asking the outgoing Country Manager for a recommendation on who would be the best local person to tap as a trusted advisor
- Using that trusted advisor to help navigate through the new country and social networks as well as talk through current challenges and solutions



Preserving Experiential Wisdom

As more and more key talent retires or moves between jobs, companies are finding that they are increasingly losing a valuable resource in experience-based wisdom. Codifying the experiences of tenured employees into a practical playbook can help mitigate this effect. We have found that the content of these Great Playbooks can be leveraged in multiple ways – from driving the curriculum of learning and onboarding leadership development programs to providing material for smartphone apps or coaching tools – all with the goal of sharing learnings with other talent so that they can be directly applied on the job. Clients who have developed playbooks have found success in their effort to preserve experiential wisdom through sharing with key talent the pivotal moments that they'll face on the job and how to respond in these situations in great ways. In particular, these clients have discovered that putting their talent through powerful experiences that bring pivotal moments to life has created an increased speed to proficiency.

About BTS

BTS focuses on the people side of strategy, working with leaders at all levels to help them make better decisions, convert those decisions to actions and deliver results. At our core, we believe people learn best by doing. For 30 years, we've been designing fun, powerful experiences™ that have profound and lasting impact on people and their careers. We inspire new ways of thinking, build critical capabilities and unleash business success. It's strategy made personal.

For more information, please visit www.bts.com.

¹ "How Millennials Want to Work and Live." Gallup, 2016.