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Transitioning to Green

Triple-Bottom-Line

Creating 3.0 Leaders for the 21st Century

Transitioning  to Green™

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Triple-Bottom-Line

This is leadership development 3.0.



by Jeana Wirtenberg

SUSTAINABILITY AND the green economy present great challenges and opportunities—and *sustainable leadership* is what will turn the tide. We must bring about sustainable business models that enable companies, people, and our planet to flourish and thrive now and in the future. How do we do this? We start by inspiring, motivating, and developing leaders and managers to succeed in a *triple-bottom-line* world.

This shift represents a *profound transformation* in our mind-sets, practices, competencies, skill-sets, and ways of leading and managing people. While much attention is paid to the technical and operational aspects of sustainability, we must act with great urgency to add the *human side of sustainability* by taking a *triple-bottom-line* approach—integrating *people, planet, and profits* into all we do, into every decision.

Companies that adopt a *sustainable perspective* and organize around it do better, even in downturns. Sacrificing long-term vision for short-term gains is ineffective and has *huge negative ramifications* for business and our planet.

For example, when corporations choose to ignore so-called *externalities* (pollution and other environmental impacts), they do so at their peril—despite a possible brief financial uptick. It is *unreasonable* and *unwise* to remain wedded to an economic model with a single-bottom-line focus in which the responsibilities and costs for the well-being of people and the planet are not included or are assigned elsewhere.

Sustainability is both a strategy and a mind-set. It includes the adherence to deep-seated values that inform all aspects of doing business. 3.0 leaders do not think in terms of trading off *sustainability and profitability*—they seamlessly integrate people, planet, and profits. The triple bottom line is not an exotic leadership approach or new management gimmick—it is *a way of doing everyday business in a new world.* Sustainable practices embody the way 3.0 leaders assess and solve myriad problems and challenges. These leaders see business through a lens that

enables them to convert *challenges* into *opportunities* through which they can make a difference, innovate, and discover adaptive capacities in themselves and their people. They inspire, engage, and educate *everyone* to take responsibility and to act—from the board to senior leadership and middle managers, from associates who interface with customers to workers on the shop floor.

In this context, I introduce *3.0 leadership development*—a new approach to building the requisite bench strength in rising leaders (talented members—who may come from *any function* and *any level*—who exhibit potential to meet unforeseen challenges and manifest the capacity to transform present-day success for a very different future).

Focus your energies on people who can lead the organization into the future.



Examine how you train, support, and mentor emerging 3.0 leaders and ask: Are we simply feeding them *best practices* for a fading world or providing them with LD for a shifting landscape? Those being groomed for *leadership* must be equipped to lead in a triple-bottom-line world to ensure the organization *survives* today and *thrives* tomorrow.

Let Go of What We Know of LD

We can't build bridges to the future while tethered to the past. We're experiencing *unprecedented global economic problems, social unrest, and environmental disasters.* These *interconnected upheavals* create complexity and presage *opportunities and threats* that challenge business—technologically, socially, economically, geopolitically, and environmentally.

Succeeding in this world economic marketplace will require more of leaders. Since *the future will be vastly different from the present, getting better at what you're doing puts you at a disadvantage.*

We need to prepare tomorrow's

leaders using approaches that reflect the kinds of technologies, virtual and global relationships, rapid and unanticipated changes, and problems and opportunities that will challenge 3.0 leaders to develop insights and skills in realtime. LD 3.0 provides a practice ground for learning what leaders will be called on to do in a crunch: developing strategies, building relationships, surfacing ideas, negotiating and renegotiating resolutions, assessing opportunities and threats, creating new approaches, and innovating on the fly. It will hone their ability to see the big picture and anticipate the consequences of their choices in multiple dimensions.

How Do We Do It?

We need to present a practical, easily understood, applied guide to successfully building a *culture for sustainability.*

The *lessons learned* and *best practices* of market leaders and early adopters of *sustainability* can help others. For example, in *Alcatel-Lucent* we see how 3.0 leaders are integrating sustainability into the strategy, transforming global telecommunications networks to address the digital divide, and motivating employees to engage in sustainable initiatives with tangible environmental, societal, and business benefits.

Pfizer provides an example of 3.0 LD with its flagship Global Health Fellows Program (GHF). This international volunteer program offers Pfizer employees 3-to-6-month assignments with international development organizations working on global health issues.

Triple-bottom-line LD processes must include the building blocks for the green economy—skill sets such as new kinds and levels of collaboration, co-opetition, networking, navigating ambiguity, agility, and resilience. Vital to LD 3.0 is the development of team- and group-level *competencies, self-organizing, and shared leadership* (involving *group learning, team creativity, and behavioral skills* for identifying and working together toward shared goals). Participating in LD programs that incorporate group or team play and games boosts mutual learning, knowledge sharing, and creativity—elements of a *culture for sustainability.*

Leaders can play a *game-changing* role in making the shift to a sustainable world by creating a generation of leaders who will energize everyone to be fully engaged and productive, finding meaning, and purpose in their work. LE

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ACTION: Engage in Leadership Development 3.0.