LEADERSHIP, LOVE AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

How long does it take to become a leader? At face value and from a training professional's perspective this is a ridiculous question, right? At the same time, it is a question we are asked with surprising frequency, in one form or another, by well-meaning stakeholders.

The challenge with providing an accurate and genuine response is that you run the risk of coming across as clueless and arrogant: "*Absolutely no idea.*" Or as professorial and distant: "*There are so many complex organizational variables that can serve to prolong the transfer of soft skills training it is difficult to predict. For instance, the environment itself. Is the learner reintegrating into a set of circumstances that are conducive for blah, blah and blah…*"

Our advice for these conversations is to turn the dynamic of the discussion from an inquiry into an exploration that highlights how emerging technologies can accelerate the fundamental process of building leaders, driving behavior change and producing results. This exploration may resemble something like the following:

How long does it take to become a leader?

"*That's a tough question that deserves a candid and thoughtful answer. The first thing that comes to mind is that most of the people you and I would readily identify as leaders view leadership as a journey, that truly never ends, as opposed to a destination that you can calculate. This is probably not the first time you've heard that, but I honestly doubt there will ever be a reliable way to accurately predict the exact moment in time that leadership learning translates into measurable leadership behavior. But I can tell you this with the highest degree of confidence, there has never been a better time to be in the business of leadership development.*"

Really? And why exactly is that?

"*The tools we currently have at our disposal to accelerate that journey boggle the mind! For example, we have long known that you don't become a leader by attending a workshop. We can certainly assess and measure an increase in knowledge from a training program, but understanding the principles of leadership is just one component of being an effective leader. Effectively executing a leadership strategy in a real-world setting is something altogether different!*"

"*Technology now provides us with the ability to extend the workshop experience and provide personalized opportunities for practice, feedback and skill enhancement. For example, we can now systematically stream time-efficient content reminders and application activities to learners on a recurring basis to keep knowledge fresh. We can virtually coach learners taking their first steps toward implementing what they learned in ways we could have only dreamed about a short time ago.*"

> **TURN THE DYNAMIC OF THE DISCUSSION FROM AN INQUIRY INTO AN EXPLORATION.**

According to Simon Sinek, a leadership thought leader, becoming a leader is a lot like falling in love and staying there. You can probably look back and credit a high-profile event or two that contributed to the bonds you've formed or the relationships you've built. The reality associated with either pursuit is that they are the product of simple strategies effectively executed on a consistent basis over an extended period.

Today, there is an ever-increasing spectrum of emerging technologies that can be leveraged to extend the learning experience and keep leadership alive. These are very exciting times to be in the business of learning. ↻

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