



ANALYSIS AND EGO: THE DRIVING FORCES OF UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING

Years ago, the CEO of an industry-leading We would suggest that our mutual friend, former CEO of Boeing Alan Mulally, is a generational talent. So, when we sit down and try to draft a few words intended to aid practicing leaders in a world bursting with formidable challenges, we routinely reflect upon the driving forces behind his unmitigated success at Boeing and Ford.

And, under the umbrella of all that constitutes upskilling or reskilling talent, two forces we would call to your attention are analysis and ego.

ANALYSIS

In Alan's own words: "Facts will set you free!" Here are a few on the upskilling/reskilling front:

- The half-life of a skill in this day and age is **five years and dropping quickly**.
- More than **1 billion jobs, almost one-third of all jobs** worldwide, are likely to be transformed by technology in the next decade.
- **34% of employees** left their previous employers because they were seeking better career development opportunities.

We could go on and on here with more of the same, but it would only confirm the reality that sophisticated organizational upskilling and reskilling initiatives are an essential element of survival moving forward.

Add to this the related trend expertly documented by Ravin Jesuthasan and John W. Boudreau in their book, "Work Without Jobs." Skills, not jobs,

will be the fulcrum around which organizations will revolve in the future. Net-net? Upskilling and reskilling, at every level of the organization, are indeed challenges of contemporary significance! So, how should leaders in those organizations respond?

EGO

When leaders respond to an identified challenge, they traditionally dive in, figure out a solution and orchestrate its implementation, right? With Alan's experience on the world's biggest stages and under its brightest lights as our guide ... not so fast, my friend!

Next-level leaders understand the critical importance of putting their personal egos aside (regardless of how smart they are), and empowering employees to step up and solve problems of significance for themselves. We would suggest this is especially the case when the problem is rooted within their own value-producing capabilities.

We have addressed the challenges organizations have faced over the years with employee engagement in previous columns, but believe it is worth repeating. For decades, employee engagement across industry has hovered **at or around 30%**. How many corporate-sponsored engagement initiatives have come and gone since you first heard the term? Answer: Too many! The problem with most of those initiatives is that the wrong people were driving them. Who knows better than the employees themselves how their engagement could be enhanced?

Too many leaders think it's their job to figure everything out: It isn't! Like Alan,

those leaders need to establish and cultivate a culture that recognizes and supports employees for proactively taking charge of their own upskilling and reskilling needs. First and foremost, this means putting their egos to the side and taking themselves out of the problem-solving, decision-making equation.

Mulally was famous at Ford for referencing his Boeing experience and saying things like, "Don't look at me. I'm an airplane guy!" He then facilitated development of an action plan generated by those that would actually be doing the work. It wasn't his plan that they were implementing; it was theirs. They owned it, they took pride in it and they saw it through.

NEXT-LEVEL LEADERS UNDERSTAND THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF PUTTING THEIR PERSONAL EGOS ASIDE.

When you lead from a predisposition that openly acknowledges that employees have the answers to their skill gap challenges, your path forward illuminates almost immediately. And, while putting that ball firmly in their hands takes courage, it also builds trust, enhances workplace dignity and serves to thoughtfully address a gnarly problem that isn't going anywhere anytime soon! ☺

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