

Talent Management

Excellence



Are You Ready For A Seat At The Table?

| A test for HR professionals



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From time immemorial, HR professionals have wondered why they are often denied a seat at the top-management table. CEOs just don't "get it" many CHROs seem to feel, and this might be true in many cases. But not all. Let's run a little test. Pretend your CEO wants to test whether or not you are a high-performance leader of your HR team and camera-ready to occupy that vaunted seat at the top-management table.

What kinds of questions would your CEO likely put to you to test your high-performance leadership capability? And how would you answer them?

Close your office door, and candidly answer these 10 questions:

1. Have you led an alignment effort to ensure that everyone on your team is clear and committed to a common strategy and set of operational goals, to clarify roles and accountabilities, to ground rules for decision making, and to transparent business relationships?



2. Do you require that your team act as if it were a mini board of directors, on which each team member puts aside functional self-interest and "owns" team results?



3. To what extent have you encouraged your team members to hold one another accountable for business success? And that they hold you accountable—and say so?



4. How attuned are you to the leader/player dynamic of each of your team members? Do you adjust your behaviors—directing, coaching, collaborating, delegating—to the player and situational needs?



5. Do you cling to the old leadership story, “As a leader, I get paid to make the decisions?”



6. Do team members view you as an answer man, night watchman, referee, enabler—or as a questioner/coach with a maestro's baton?



7. Do you role-model effective leadership behavior in leading your team—and in how you manage upward: say, to your board of directors?



8. Think about the last time a team member disagreed with you: Did you (a) say thank you and dispassionately assess the contrarian position; (b) use sarcasm, avoidance behavior, or seek rescuers from your team; (c) become unglued; or (d) press the eject button?



9. When was the last time you asked your team to give you a reality check as to whether or not you are a leader who contributes to the team's ability to reach high-performance goals and expectations?



10. When you look behind you, do you see a team of leaders—or followers?



If your answers reveal that you are a high-performance leader and team builder, one who is strategically focused and not functionally driven, one who is flexible as a situational leader, a straight-talk relationship builder who is adept at managing conflict, then there's a good chance your CEO will not only ask you to join the team but insist you do so.

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