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Key Takeaways:

Renewd International Virtual Round-Table - July 6th, 2022

Renewd International chair Helen Coetzee has written the following article under Chatham House Rules - to share the key points from the discussion with the event participants and the wider Renewd community.

Driving international growth: leadership challenges and opportunities in a post-pandemic world

How important is diversity in leadership? How can you approach international leadership when managing remote teams? What is the best leadership style to have? What are the benefits to mentoring the next generation?

During this virtual roundtable, we discussed a host of topics related to leadership within all types of organisations. With the emphasis on “international”, we discussed our experiences of working with global teams.

What are the key lessons the participants have learned over the years from working for international organisations?

#1 Leaders have the opportunity to positively influence the next generation via mentoring.

- It is important to encourage the next generation and help them to get noticed - especially to enable more diversity in leadership.
- A mentor is someone who can give valuable advice based on experience, and is someone the mentee can ‘lean on’. Mentors could also be sponsors for their mentees, opening doors and bringing mentees into the room where strategic discussions are happening with the most senior people.
- Once a mentee has progressed well in their career, they can help the next generation by mentoring and sponsoring others. This ‘nurturing cycle’ will continue to build strong leaders for the future.
- Mentoring is about building confidence, connections and relationships. It should be a reciprocal relationship, so both the mentor and the mentee put effort in and get value out of the relationship.
- It is important to get to know each other and learn about one others’ backgrounds, personalities and preferences - noting pain points holding the mentee back in their career, and mapping out what they want their career to look like in 5-10 years. Once a mentee knows what they want to achieve, a mentor can help them on their journey.

- A mentor can learn a lot from understanding a mentee's pain points, and can use this knowledge to become a better leader of their own team members, as their people could have the same pain points. In a good mentor/mentee relationship, a mentor can learn as much from a mentee as the other way around.
- When agreeing to mentor someone, it is important to make sure they are very invested in their own learning journey.
- A mentee could be a past colleague, client, vendor or anyone in your network.

#2 The importance of diversity in leadership, and how being a mentoring leader can make a difference.

- There is still not enough diversity in leadership or the workplace in general.
- If you are CEO or in a position of leadership, being conscious of bringing in leaders from diverse backgrounds will help you become more culturally aware of the world, which brings many benefits.
- Having a leader as a mentor to advocate for the progression into leadership of a diverse person is a good strategic move.
- When the mentee then reaches a certain level, they can become a mentor to continue the positive cycle.
- A mentor and mentee do not have to be based in the same country. Digital communications makes this relationship possible regardless of where people are based.

#3 Leaders of international businesses needed to be mindful of cultural differences.

- Sometimes a leader needs to take a step back to ensure they understand the differences between different work cultures.
- A leader who listens more, and talks less is likely to do better when working with a culturally diverse team.
- A leader may need to make a change to their own behaviours and communicating style to harmonise more with the culture of those they are leading.
- But at the same time, leaders should not be afraid of encouraging people to change their own behaviours and communication style, for example to be more direct in their approach.
- If you lead a remote team, especially if you are managing people based in different countries, to fully understand them and their culture, you should travel to where they are, visit their offices, and meet them face to face. Then you can build better relationships with them, often picking up some important nuanced aspects - something that is difficult to do over a video call.

#4 If a leader sees something going wrong, they should offer a helping hand.

- If a leader sees something going wrong, just barking orders won't help.
- For a leader to be helpful in a crisis, they need to 'get into the trenches' with their people and help out as much as they can. In doing so, a leader will build trusting relationships with their team.

#5 To make change happen, a leader needs to make their team comfortable with taking risks.

- Leaders need to accept that their people will fail sometimes, and it is helping them through the discomfort of failure and helping them learn from failure that builds trust.
- If people can see their leader is willing to take risks and fail, then they are more likely to be willing to go through change, which could feel risky for them.
- It is important for a leader to be seen as the person who is willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

About Renewd

Renewd.net is the community for professionals in specialized, B2B information businesses. www.renewd.net

About Renewd International

Renewd International has been designed to create a space for sharing and discussion - for senior executives from businesses with international operations, or those with an interest in international growth strategies. Join us for virtual roundtables to share growth strategies, best practices, and business challenges, in a closed door environment. Get in touch with Helen Coetzee (helen@mpg.biz) to find out more.

About the author

Helen Coetzee is the Chair of Renewd International and the Co-Founder & CEO of Marketing Pro Group (MPG). MPG delivers digitally-led and data driven marketing for professional, community focused organisations - focused on engaging audiences with B2B brands, and the marketing of events, subscriptions, and membership products to monetise and scale high quality audiences. Based in London, UK, MPG's team of marketing strategists, campaign managers, data gurus, and digital experts, deliver a 'full service' marketing offering to a global client base using our unique and valuable mix of experience and skills in both the 'art and science' of marketing. www.mpg.biz

