



熱點
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Passing the Torch

Zhuang-zhi's Yang-Sheng-Zhu says: "Even though the wood may be burnt, the sparks are still in the air." The torch should be passed regardless of the domain concerned – family, work, and society. On the other hand, as 300,000 baby boomers approach their retirement and with demand for labor exceeding supply, it is anticipated that the majority of Hong Kong's various industry may be facing a huge manpower supply gap.

There has been a lot of media coverage on the "retirement wave" in recent years. For example, the wave will hit the top management of Hospital Authority this year and next, which includes 3 directors and General Manager of Nursing who manages over 20,000 nurses. The wave extends to Disciplined Services, industries and corporations of all sorts. Employees with more seniority may naturally be promoted to a higher position but may lack management experience and this in turn may affect a business' operations and team morale. It was feared that this phenomenon could negatively impact businesses' continuous development. In light of this, the Hong Kong Government announced that the retiring age for civil servants will be extended to 65 in its latest policy address. It is believed that a number of corporations and businesses would take this as a reference to delay existing challenges.

In view of Hong Kong's population aging and the shrinking labor force, here are some questions to consider: Aside from extending senior staff members' serving time, what can companies do to facilitate cross-generational bridging at work? How can we allow aging staff members to come down the stage, while letting younger generations to gradually take over, and confidently maintaining profits and quality at the same time?

In this issue of LEAP, we will touch on how corporations and businesses can better prepare themselves for the retirement wave, including caring for retiring staff members, and nurturing a new generation of able, driven successors.

LEAP 是指：

L eading Personal Effectiveness
發展人才

E nhancing Family Cohesiveness
凝聚家庭

A chieving Team Success
卓越團隊

P romoting Corporate Wellness
促進企業健康

The Successor

"I don't know if I can handle it!" Derek said anxiously.

Derek worked at a foreign trading company and it was his 15th year working here. While he was currently a Senior Manager, he worked from the bottom up slowly, now assisting his supervisor in managing a few dozens of staff members. He had a close-knit relationship with his team and works closely with his supervisor, seeing him as his mentor. Given Derek's serious working attitude and good relationship with his team members, his supervisor put a great deal amount of trust in him and as of last week, Derek was promoted to General Manager to further lead the company.

Upon first hearing Derek's description, it may be difficult for one to grasp the reason of his attending counselling. He then highlighted the point he has been making, "I've felt very comfortable having my supervisor as my 'mentor', but now that he's going to retire soon I'm promoted as General Manager. Of course I'm happy about his believing in me, but I really don't know if I can fill those big shoes!"

Upon further exploration, it was apparent that while Derek was content with following his mentor's footsteps, now that he is put in charge of the company, this translated to a tremendous stress and a big threat to his confidence.

The consultant first facilitated Derek to understand that it was completely normal for him to be experiencing this degree of anxiety and stress given the changes to be taking place. He must first accept the impact brought upon by this change and find means to cope with his emotions.

Then, the consultant tried to gain a better picture of his strengths and performance at work over the decade or so. Derek understood that his progression to where he was now, recognition from his mentor, respect from his colleagues, and trust from his customers was all attributable to his ability, vision and leadership. He also realized that the key to successful succession was the corporate culture that had been nurtured by his mentor and other leaders in the company – an emphasis on "people orientation" – building a friendly atmosphere and working relationships. This was exactly what had kept him working hard for the company over the years and would play a vital role in people management in the time to come. With the consultant's reminder, Derek saw a boost in his confidence. He had great knowledge about how every department in the company operated and the perspectives of staff from various positions, precisely because he worked from bottom up. This would help him significantly establishing strategies for people development in the future.

In addition to enhancing Derek's confidence, the consultant also collaborated with him on planning a systematic succession. As there were still 6 months left for the transition, Derek decided to proactively discuss the company's mid- and long-term business plans with his mentor, to take over his vision, management wisdom and experience, along with delegating his responsibilities to younger colleagues to steadily and continually develop the business. After several discussions, Derek became more and more confident to extend his mentor's work.



Story of a Retired Carpenter

A carpenter had worked very hard over the years, and finally reached an age when he would retire. His boss, who has worked with him for years, was reluctant to let him go but understood that it was about time this carpenter retired and stayed with his family. He hired a young man and told the carpenter, "Before you leave, can you build another house for me? I've hired someone to take over and assist you. Please teach him how to build this house piece by piece, and I'll let you decide on its style and materials." The carpenter agreed to his boss' request. However, he was already fully occupied with his retirement plans and did not put much thought into building this house. In the end, he just hastily ordered some poor quality building materials and asked the young carpenter to build everything his own way. It was apparent that the construction work done by the young man was relatively coarse but the carpenter reported to his boss that the house was completed anyway. The boss then said to the carpenter, "This house is my retirement gift to you – thank you for all your hard work and contribution over the years!"

Most people spend a lifetime building their career but never think about how they can pass the torch to others or the younger generation before they retire. Like the carpenter in the story, it is indeed a pity that he chose to use a sloppy attitude to end his career. Perhaps we can reflect on this: when you are able to help others without looking for anything in return, you could actually be rewarded by much more.

