DEVELOPING EXECUTIVE TEAMS THAT FLOURISH

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Preamble: *Working in the Almost Post Covid-19 World*

We were almost finished with the final draft of this article in January 2020, where we advocated and provided a formula for executive team success -- and we were abruptly halted by the adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We opined that C-Suite executives had to balance four factors to improve executive teams intentionally and successfully. The four factors -- executive team governance, leadership principles and practices, management rhythm, and continuous learning -- while relevant in the pre-Covid-19 organizational world -- are significantly more critical in the almost post-Covid-19 world. An array of respected professional articles and survey results published this past year address topics including office architecture, design and technology; best virtual meeting and teaching practices; data supporting the value and effectiveness of virtual workshops; leadership practices demonstrated by most effective leaders; the significance of organizational purpose; the value of virtual learning; the best of three types of collaboration; and, of course, the enhanced importance and relevance of teams and team building. Not only has the virtual technology become readily available, but the know-how methodology also has become available whether you are Zooming with one or one hundred colleagues.

Our work over the last year has not only reinforced the enhanced importance and value of teams and team building. Just think about this . . . organizations have had to re-examine their purpose, and incumbents have had to re-evaluate their roles on their respective teams. C-suite executives have had to review and revise their leadership principles and practices. Team management rhythms either were disrupted or no longer exist. In many cases, the organization's operating cadence dictated by leaders only was predictable for a few weeks or months. Finally, the continuous learning plans, as well as the entire employee life cycle, had to be re-thought and virtually re-configured, from recruiting through hiring, onboarding, and training. Existing team

members had to learn how to work virtually, regardless of age, tech-savviness, home-based equipment, or time zone. According to one McKinsey survey, "executives say their companies accelerated through COVID-19-related changes much more rapidly than they thought was possible before the crisis." More specifically, prior to the pandemic, the industry-wide average to increase remote working and collaboration was expected to take 454 days compared to once the pandemic hit, it only took an industry-wide average of 10.5 days to design, implement and deploy remote work and collaboration, an acceleration factor of more than 40. We also believe that each team executive, depending on his or her level and according to our estimates, no longer had to commute to work or spend non-productive time sitting in airports, gained up to one day per week of extra time.

Now more than ever, we believe there is the opportunity to take an inventory of how your executive team can flourish. There are still trade-offs, and while the water cooler conversations still do not take place, larger shifts can occur. One example of a breakthrough is that the executive team that consisted of multiple factions no longer exists. One-half of the team now works out of the Midwest headquarters, and the other half, who felt like second-class citizens, are based in the southeast. Because of technology, no one is in either office, everyone is working from home and not traveling, and consequently, the playing field is leveled . . . literally overnight. Relationships have been re-defined; bosses and peers alike need to listen, be more respectful, empathetic, and appreciate one another in different ways. Well-established principles and team norms, and structures have been re-evaluated. Rather than one individual requesting to work remotely, in most cases, entire organizations have closed their offices and now everyone works remotely. Or as economist David Autor is quoted in a February 2021 online issue of The Atlantic, "The most important outcome of the pandemic wasn't that it taught *you* how to use Zoom, but rather that it forced *everybody else* to use Zoom."

GlobalEdg's Overnight Transition to the Virtual New Normal

When first drafted, we titled this article "Why Are Executive Teams Still Floundering." However, during this past year, it has become increasingly evident that better teams do not flounder, but that they flourish. We conducted telephone surveys with our clients and asked C-suite executives to identify the most critical aspect of their executive teams' performance that contributed to their successes, under the most adverse, complex, and unpredictable circumstances imaginable – Covid-19 and the resulting primary, secondary, and tertiary consequences. The overwhelming majority said that it was the team members' individual and collective resilience that was the primary factor that contributed to the teams' well-being and success. To push our anecdotal research project to the next level, we asked them what they meant by resilience. Their reply was that the most resilient team members and teams were those that focused on the physical and emotional well-being of their teams' members and the members' shift to harnessing individual and team energy to focus on tangible business results instead of time in the office. The best performing team members and teams demonstrated what researchers have been studying about the concept of resilience since the mid-1960s and what neuropsychologists have been studying about a complementary concept, brain plasticity, since the late 1990s. The American Psychological Association's definition of resilience is "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress . . . (and) it can also involve profound personal growth – the opportunity to create new behaviors. The CEOs we surveyed provided an array of their teams' specific examples regarding resilience and the opportunities to create new behaviors.

"We talked about our concerns about not only the health of the business but the mental health and concerns of our colleagues and our families."

"We over-communicated – we provided clarity and specificity on what we knew which was distinct from what we believed and felt."

"We established a Zoom water cooler and coffee machine – we found time to commiserate and talk about non-office, non-work topics, everything from the latest Netflix TV programs

that we binge-watched to the pros and cons of our kids' virtual athletic practices. And complaints about virtual schooling were also high on our list!"

"We even brainstormed how we could convince 'management' about how we could continue working from home once the pandemic subsided!"

And, finally, as one of our co-authors observed, "Virtually every organization I've worked in has been incredible in a crisis but could not always reapply what they did during a crisis to the more normal operating environment."

As we anticipate transitioning our client work to the virtual environment, we hope that you will still value and appreciate the article that follows.

Developing Executive Teams That Flourish

Paul V. Butler, Mark J. Safferstone and Mark Bertolami

Susan, formerly a V.P. of Marketing for the largest division of a multi-billion-dollar company, recently was selected as the general manager for one of its underperforming business units. She was finishing her first 30 days on the job, was excited about her appointment, but was concerned and nervous about the challenges that came with stepping into a mid-size company that needed her help.

One of the most critical issues was the executive team she had inherited. It was a combination of legacy leaders from the organization resulting from a merger and acquisition, as well as a few managers hired by the former General Manager. Susan's concern was not about the business knowledge these leaders brought to the table. She needed their experience in running the business. Her primary concern was how they functioned and worked collectively as an executive team. Sound familiar?

Over the past 35 years, we have worked closely with an array of high performing as well as under-performing executive leadership teams. Based on our experiences, we have developed a framework that has improved the collaboration of top-performing organizations and has enhanced underperforming teams' performance. Our framework's factors provide executive team leaders with a robust and reliable conceptual structure for building trust, improving team communication and collaboration, improving team performance and accountability, and sustainably improving leadership team and organizational results. This article summarizes what we have learned and provides executives with a road map for assessing and improving the performance of their leadership teams. And we will demonstrate how Susan, our newly appointed G.M., has capitalized on our framework, our assessment, and the consulting process.

What Makes a Winning Executive Team?

In business, public-sector, and nonprofit organizations, as well as in award-winning movies, musical groups, and sports teams, talent plays a big part, yet not all sides have the best talent. So, what makes a winning executive team? Executives teams today are under pressure to deliver results in response to internal and external dynamics, uncertainty, increasing complexity, and the need for change. According to a 2018 Forbes study, rapid growth, new executive committees, and with the present C-suite turnover, there is a critical need for the current leadership to building executive team capabilities quickly. Putting mechanisms in place to get up and running, improving processes and leadership behaviors, and onboarding new members, given the dynamics of team composition, also are priorities.

Starting in the 1980s, articles appeared in academic journals and practitioner-oriented books that focused on the need for top management consensus, improving the firms' top management teams, demonstrating the attributes of ad hoc task forces, and the impact that top managers have on organizational outcomes. A recent Amazon search on executive teams found more than 500 books that are four and five star rated. A 2019 Google Scholar search on executive teams resulted in more than 19,000 articles. The top 20 strategy, management, and second-tier consulting firms, niche consultancies, college, and university business schools as well as highly rated professional development organizations offer a variety of programs, services, and assessments that address the critical importance of executive teams and teamwork. More recently, journal articles have advised potential C-suite occupants that to advance their careers, creating and building a strong executive team is critically important. Finally, future executives must understand that there is an increased emphasis on what has been characterized as emotional intelligence – empathy, compassion, humility, communication, collaboration, trust-building, and to be team oriented. And while numerous frameworks and assessments exist, a well-known and highly respected executive, leadership development, and team expert posited that "there is no universally accepted model for transforming collections of individuals into high performing teams." So, with more than 60 years of evidence, why are executive teams still floundering

Why Highly Successful Executive Teams Matter

We have worked extensively with executive teams from publicly held, private corporations, public sector, and nonprofit organizations. We have interviewed hundreds of senior executives and conducted assessments with their teams. We have captured substantial qualitative data, which has resulted in attaining extensive insights into how executive teams work. The patterns that have emerged from this robust anecdotal data collection and analysis have resulted in the development of a four-factor model, a companion assessment, and clear-cut approaches that have improved executive teams' effectiveness and positively impacted organizational performance. Executives working at the top of the organization need a different approach. They need a way that incorporates the critical aspects of what their teams must do to be successful.

Executives on effective top-level teams are committed to making a difference. However, the highly effective teams that we have worked with, and something that differentiates our approach from so many others, is an intangible aspect – the ability to successfully balance and optimize four essential factors that support their organizations' visions, purpose, and values:

> **Executive Team Governance.** The extent to which the executive team understands the team's role, each member's role, and the factors that contribute to effective team performance.
>
> **Leadership Principles and Practices.** The extent to which the executive team displays, promotes, and rewards behaviors that facilitate trust, effective communication, transparent decision making, and an inclusive organizational culture.
>
> **Management Rhythm.** The extent to which the executive team consistently employs strategic, systematic, and innovative management processes that contribute to achieving the organization's mission.

Continual Learning. The extent to which the executive team is committed to providing continuous and results-based learning, effective, on-onboarding and succession planning for themselves, their managers and the organization's staff.

The Notions of Balance and Interdependence

To visualize the notion of balance, think about a stable four-legged table. When weight is placed on the table, each leg provides structural support, and it distributes the weight evenly, i.e., it is balanced. If one of the legs is not as strong as the others, the table is neither structurally sound nor stable. If one of the legs is missing, the table cannot fulfill its purpose – and the same is true for executive teams. The notion of balance is critical because each of the four legs, i.e., the four factors of the Executive Team Leadership Model, contribute to the team's success. Concomitantly, there is a subtle but critically important interdependence among the four elements. Neglecting one or more of the four factors, and the significantly important associated principles, practices, and behaviors may adversely impact the team and decrease the likelihood of exemplary organizational performance.

The Executive Team Leadership Model

Let us look at the model, each factor's importance, and Susan's actions to assess and address her team's issues. It is important to note that her initial steps are not random – they are based on our assessment and consulting process described below. The organization's vision, purpose, and values, positioned at the model's center, represent the "why," i.e., why the organization exists. They provide the organization with its direction and communicates the behaviors the organization wants (and does not want) from executive team members as they pursue the vision. The likelihood that any of these guiding components are missing from today's organizations is nominal at best. However, and again, based on our experience, if all executive team members are new to the organization or if the existing executive team is not working effectively, the vision, purpose, and values need to be revisited. Once re-affirmed and revised, the executive team then is responsible for clearly communicating the vision, purpose and values throughout the organization before

The Executive Team Leadership Model
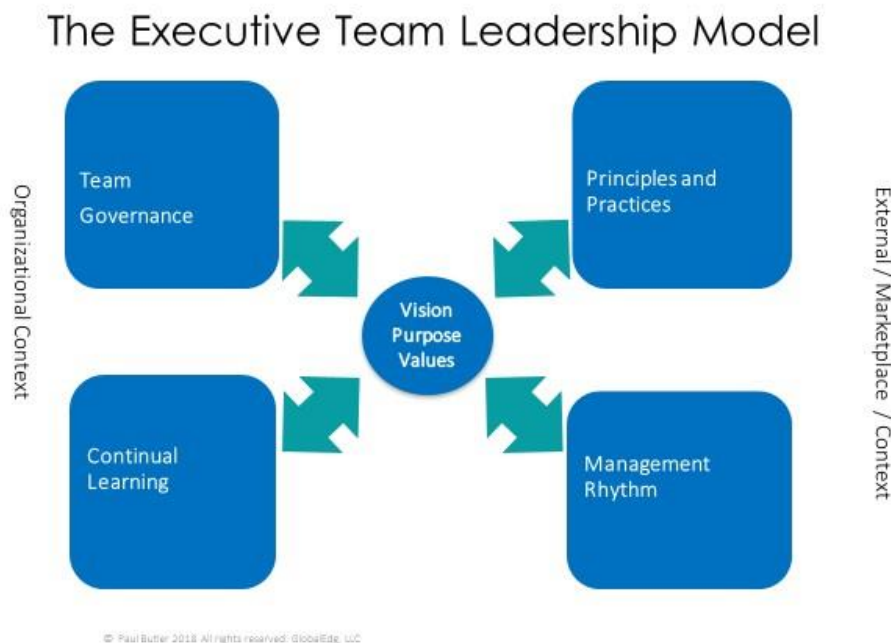
they tackle the critical issue of the team's effectiveness. At the risk of sounding

redundant, but we will repeat it – the importance of an aligned vision, purpose, and values that are understood and supported by all executive team members and are well-embedded in the organization's culture is what holds the four factors of the model together. The interdependencies are represented by the arrows that are going back and forth to each of the elements.

Executive Team Governance

- *Why it is important* – Lack of either team or member role clarity is a common source of frustration. On one level, responsibilities that are either understood or misunderstood makes holding people accountable difficult at best. And an array of dysfunctional behaviors that are highly detrimental to the executive team, team members, and the organization are sure to follow. Clear roles can help, but merely defining them is insufficient. Incumbents need to understand them, hone them, and commit to operationalizing them in ways that their behaviors produce results and add value. It also is essential that executive team members think and act in ways that are in the best interests of the entire organization.

- *Susan's actions*– Susan wanted to understand how her executive team viewed the organization's mission, vision, and values as well as how team members saw their roles – individually and collectively, as the organization's executive team. To gain a sense of the mission, vision, and values, she reviewed several documents, including hand-scribed flip charts, from an executive team retreat that took place before she recently was promoted to General Manager. Before her first meeting with her newly forming team, Susan also looked at PowerPoint slides from two key members who described their areas of responsibility and a third member who crafted an org chart of the names and positions of the functional team members that reported to her. Additionally, as pre-work for the initial on-site meeting, Susan personally asked each team member, and then followed up by email,

to answer three questions: (1) What is the role of the executive team? (2) What do you see as my role as the leader of this team? And (3) As the leader of your functional team, how do you add value to the executive team? When the meeting began, without laptops and a full-screen projector, she asked the entire group, "What is the role of the executive team and what is not? She followed with a similar question that she asked of each team member, and finally, she asked her team what role did they see her playing? Before the meeting, she drafted a one-page characterization of her role that she passed out so that her team could see points of agreement and disagreement. With this as just the starting point, and not unexpectedly, it is going to take time, dedication, and commitment for Susan's team to gain a clear and shared understanding her role, their respective roles and how this team will need to work together to provide the much needed and focused direction that will contribute to the organization's success.

Leadership Principles and Practices

- *Why it is important* – The leadership principles are the "what" -- what team members do when they conduct themselves, especially interacting with others that characterize the ways team members work collaboratively and individually. Identifying the behavioral norms for the team to be successful is only part of this factor. What is just as important are the constructs that drive those behaviors – what we call leadership practices. The leadership practices are the "how," i.e., the systems, processes, and techniques the team uses to bring the principles to life. The organization's mid-level managers, front-line supervisors, and staff will take their cues from the attitude, behaviors, and relationships displayed by executive team members, individually and collectively. Honesty, integrity, and professionalism, coupled with compassion, sensitivity, and empathy, will trump technical know-how every time.

- *Susan's actions* – Susan instituted weekly closed-door executive team meetings that served as the platform for each team member to update Susan and the team. Topics included updates on current and future issues affecting their division and the organization. These meetings also served as a platform so that team members could seek advice on addressing obstacles and problems from their colleagues. At an early meeting, the group discussed and agreed to stick to several fundamental principles and practices that would drive their behavior, one of which was characterized as speaking with one voice. For roughly the first month, Susan had several concerns -- team members' abilities to deliver on their commitments and the need to publicly communicate agreement once a decision was made. Her underlying concern was the issue of trust, i.e., could each team member be trusted to support what the team agreed to in Susan's weekly meetings. A case in point – an essential agenda item, an $800,000 capital equipment purchase that would impact every team members' function and budget was postponed for good reasons. A substantive proposal analysis was presented, there were healthy perspectives that advocated for both sides of the issue, and several reasonable alternatives were considered. Based on a consensus decision-making approach, the outcome was that the team agreed to move the purchase to the right on the capital outlay project and budget timetables. After leaving the meeting and on the return to her office, Bill, the organization's operations director, stopped Susan in the hall and, again, strongly advocated that she signs off on the purchase regardless of the team's decision. Susan, tactfully, refreshed Bill's memory that the group had adopted the principle that when the team decides, they will present a united front, i.e., they will speak publicly with one voice. She also reminded him

that to make sure that the principle is followed, the corresponding practice was that everyone would commit to and scribe the decision in the minutes before the meeting adjourned. "I am dead serious that we adhere to our agreed-upon principles," Susan said forcefully. "If we don't," she continued, "it will destroy the trust that we've worked so hard to develop."

Management Rhythm

- *Why it is important* Having a predictable rhythm and universal framework for when and how the recurring mission-critical functions – strategy formulation and execution, focusing on current issues while looking for future opportunities as well as managing risk, resources, and talent – get done, contributes to the firm's success. Additionally, the agreed-upon framework ensures that key performance indicators are met or exceeded, high-value work is accomplished, low-value work is avoided, duplicative efforts are minimized, improvement opportunities are identified, and the list goes on.

- *Susan's actions* – From the time that Susan took over as the organization's G.M., she was frustrated by listening to team members' excuses as to why they had to miss her weekly executive team meetings. It was stressful for her and the executive team, and the team's perceived inability to schedule meetings – a relatively simple task – spilled over into the entire organization. So much so that support staff's negative comments could be overheard as they gathered around the bottled water dispensers and Keurig machines. Susan saw this deficient planning process and the team's inability to balance its focus on current and future issues as another symptom of the executive team's dysfunctional behavior. Since the organization was competing in a volatile and dynamic environment, this deficiency adversely impacted team performance and organizational effectiveness. At her next weekly executive team meeting, the organization's annual operational calendar was the first

agenda item. Sandra, head of the R & D division, was trying to get a three-hour new products review session on the schedule and was looking 90 days out. What happened next was unfortunate and more than embarrassing – early in Susan's career, she learned that bringing her calendar to every meeting was not only required but beneficial. However, not all executive team members learned that lesson. Two team members had to return to their offices to retrieve their phones, three team members could not make any commitments more than 30 days out, and only Susan and two additional team members were prepared to address any calendar request through the end of the next fiscal year. Susan apologized to Sandra, called a 15-minute break, texted her admin assistant and asked him to bring flip charts, tape and markers to the meeting room. When the meeting reconvened, Susan asked that team members, now with devices in hand, clear their calendars for the day and asked her admin assistant to order pizza, salads and beverages. Susan took command of the meeting, taped sheets of flip chart paper to the walls, and with markers in hand, drew a timeline through the end of the next fiscal year. She started by posting the dates for the weekly executive team meetings and the required follow-on departmental meetings. If a team member were not able to attend a weekly executive team meeting due to an emergency or vacation, they were told to send a departmental representative, someone who had the knowledge, experience and could speak on behalf of the executive (i.e., not just a note-taker), the department and make decisions. The next items posted to the calendar were known as the command performances – board meetings and regulatory deadlines.

Susan then asked the team first to prioritize and then post the major meetings, events, and deadlines to the calendar. When finished, Susan said that her admin assistant would post the information to the organization's online project management system within 48 hours. Once this was

done, each executive was asked to replicate this calendaring process within their departments before the next executive team meeting. It was a long, productive meeting, the executive team was proud of what they accomplished, and Susan used this as an opportunity to connect today's accomplishment to the three other factors of the model. Their efforts established the organization's initial step at creating a management rhythm, i.e., one of the four factors that contribute to achieving the organization's mission. And if you are wondering, yes, they all brought their calendars to next week's executive team meeting.

Continual Learning

- *Why it is important* – Rapid growth projections, volatile stock prices, and current CEO, C- suite, and board turnover rates impact all organizations. Additional competitive challenges include the acceleration and breadth of change internationally, environmentally, in social systems, and even within families. Consequently, there is a critical need for current leaders to build and develop their executive team's capabilities quickly. The challenges at the top of the organization also exist at the mid-and front- line levels, and several recent studies reveal that these employees lack faith in their supervisors. While leadership and organizational development is often viewed as a cost, several highly respected professional development firms empirically have demonstrated that investing in this factor improves bottom-line performance, attracts, and retains talent, drives strategy execution, and increases success in navigating change. It is apparent that the positive outcomes far outweigh the costs of the investment.
- *Susan's actions* – Susan was keenly aware that this factor was one that the executive team would need to work on to initiate and sustain continued success. From prior conversations, she knew that the former executive team had conducted some nominal team building activities at their annual

meetings. She knew that these training events, while enjoyable at best, were not the substantive team interventions that were needed. Susan believed that individual development planning was a vital management scheme and that, if intentional, would help drive a learning culture. She asked her H.R. executive to compile the division managers' development plans, i.e., the individuals one-level below her executive team. She was not surprised that they were either inconsistent or non-existent. She found that only a third of the division managers were pursuing ways to individually build their capabilities while enhancing their day-to-day performance and that of their teams. Susan knew that if these numbers were this low, it was unlikely her new executive team members' numbers were any higher. In addition to limited development planning, there was no formal onboarding process for future executive team members. If the organization were going to invest time and energy onboarding, it would have to include role clarity, the leadership principles and practices, and the management rhythm, i.e., the systems and structure for running the business.

If Susan's underperforming business unit was going to survive; the commitment to leadership and ongoing organization development had to start with and be modeled by the executive team. At her first executive team meeting, she introduced her leadership philosophy and the importance of continuous learning, especially at the executive team level. *"We will not succeed as a team or as an organization unless we commit ourselves to getting better. I see this as a three-dimensional process – individually as a leader, collectively as an executive team member, and organizationally, by cascading individual and team development throughout the organization. I have been asked to serve as this business unit's general manager for a reason – to help this organization, **first and foremost, get back on its feet, and then, most importantly, grow** (Susan's emphasis). We can only do that if we know where we are – where we want to go - and how we are going to get there.*

Our Consulting Approaching

Before any engagement, we take the time to understand the top leader's challenges, her or his critically important outcomes before the leader introduces us to the executive team. We explain and answer questions about the way we use our pre-offsite proprietary assessment, as well as the way that it is connected to the leadership transition offsite. Also, as part of the process, we interview each executive team member. These conversations are vital for the business context and understanding of how the group operates. Finally, we close out the process with a follow-up meeting with the CEO, who then schedules and leads quarterly offsites. We also schedule subsequent hourly online video conferenced sessions initially every month, then quarterly, and finally annually or as needed.

We have developed, refined, and validated our proprietary Executive Team Leadership Assessment, a four-factor questionnaire that elicits each team member's perspective (strongly agree to strongly disagree) on 25 items, each of which is linked to one of the four Executive Team Leadership Model's factors. We administer the confidential assessment online, maintaining each respondent's anonymity, then score, report, and discuss the results at the leadership transition offsite in each of the scenarios, Susan's actions are based on one or more items from the assessment results.

Susan Can Hit the Ground Running

Given the significance of the board's clear and specific expectations and the importance of Susan's relationship with the board, these are the immediate actions that we believe that Susan should take:

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1. **Begin with an executive team transition offsite**. One of the best ways to jump-start an organization is to hold an executive team transition offsite. Before this one- or two-day event, an external consultant typically conducts a structured and multi-faceted data collection process. The comprehensive analysis and resulting reports usually guide the conversations and focus on the team's energy. This initial offsite also will provide Susan with a perspective on how she can improve her team's cohesiveness regarding communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and decision making.

2. **Schedule another session to shape a new strategy.** A strategy session, as a follow-on to the executive team offsite and subsequent quarterly CEO-led offsites, are potent ways to unite a team. These multiple-day sessions provide opportunities for strategy, business development, and operational issues to get the attention they deserve. They also provide the executive team with opportunities to learn collectively and make decisions collaboratively.

3. **Calendarize and invest in the right meetings.** Establish a management rhythm for weekly touchpoints and formal meetings that have an organization-wide impact. Executive team meetings are distinct from other events such as new product or talent reviews. Executive time is a precious resource, and only calendarizing it one year in advance will make a difference.

4. **Implement an organization-wide learning and development program.** Enhancing the capabilities of the organization's executive leadership team and management ranks was an issue that was identified as a priority. A three-stage approach – multi-rater assessment, individual development planning, and coaching – requires the assistance of a

5. specialized firm with the experience, approach, assessments, and highly qualified staff to create and sustain an organization-wide learning and development program.

6. **Establish an onboarding process.** The primary emphasis of an executive team member onboarding process should be on leadership, emotional intelligence, and cultural fit based on team principles and practices. Once on the team, each new member should have a 90-day, tailored onboarding plan. Each executive team member also should be expected to cascade this process through his or her division with newly hired directors, managers, and supervisors.

Closing Thoughts

We have learned a substantial number of critically essential leadership lessons by being in the thick of things and working with thousands of executives and their teams over our 30-year careers. We have consulted with and coached a vast number of executives and facilitated an array of team-related events with their organizations. When we connect with executives following our engagements, we see them still successfully using our tools and methods.

As we watch leaders and how they lead, it continues to inform our work. We have seen similar patterns emerge over time -- there are good leaders, and then there are those who truly distinguish themselves by how they develop themselves, their teams, and their organizations. Those who distinguish themselves and their organizations ultimately will more than satisfy external customers and their stakeholders. We know some critical messages have emerged from our work. As top executives address the challenges associated with today's competitive environment, it is somewhat cliché to say that they face an increasingly volatile future, one where tomorrow's issues cannot be addressed successfully using yesterday's solutions. Our

experiences consistently have shown that executive teams built on the cornerstone of empathy, trust, and collaboration characterize those that create and sustain enduring organizations. Team members in these organizations know and appreciate one another and respect the strengths and capabilities that make each team member a unique and respected contributor. And relationships with these attributes evolve only by executive team members spending dedicated time discussing, disagreeing, and honing the four organizational factors that we know will contribute to their organization's immediate and long-term success.

About the Authors

Paul Butler is Founder and President of The Global Executive Development Group, a firm dedicated to building strategic leadership capabilities in individuals and their teams. He has over 30 years of experience working with executives in some of the world's most respected organizations. Paul's corporate experience includes senior-level sales, marketing, and human resources positions with Wyeth Labs and Procter & Gamble (Gillette). Paul earned his Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership and Learning from The George Washington University and is the co-author of *Think-to-Win Unleashing the Power of Strategic Thinking*.

Mark J. Safferstone, Ph.D., was instrumental in the development of educational programs as well as overseeing the construction, management, and community engagement of two additional campuses as an administrator at the University of Mary Washington. He has over 40 years of executive leadership and management consulting experience in public and private organizations. Mark was on the faculty of The George Washington University's Graduate HRD program and for almost 25 years, served as a consultant with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Federal Executive Institute. His bibliographic essay, *Organizational Leadership: Classic Works and Contemporary Perspectives*, is among the top 10% of all read and/or viewed business research articles posted on ResearchGate.net.

Mark Bertolami is a global senior operating executive with over 30 years of experience building, growing, extending, and turning around global brands and businesses. Most recently, Mark served as president of Procter & Gamble's Duracell Global Business Unit, a position in which he held full responsibility for the $2.5 billion global Duracell franchise. He also served as Chairman of the Board of China Battery Holdings, a majority-owned joint venture. He currently serves as a board member and strategic advisor to several privately held companies and non-profit organizations. Mark holds an MBA from the University of Connecticut.