

## HR DIRECTORS BOARDROOM Birmingham 2018

Personal Resilience – How can HR help their leaders be at their best for longer?



Delegates gathered at the **Eversheds Sutherlands (International) LLP** and participated in this thought provoking and informative boardroom event. Introduced by **Karen Brown – Senior Business Manager & Jacqui Wall, Head of HR Recruitment - Midlands & North** for Ashley Kate HR and chaired by **David Beswick**, Partner, Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP.

**Paul Meneely**, Leadership and Executive Coach led the event, sharing his passion for leadership and this key competence. With over 30 years in HR, Paul recently made the conscious decision to leave corporate life and focus on his passion for leadership and personal development. Since establishing his own business in 2016 Paul has focused on creating value for individuals and Leadership teams through his work as an accredited coach committed to helping Leadership teams operate at their very best.

With the demands of modern business creating increased pressure for many levels within public and private sector organisations, HR professionals need to be equipped and focused on ensuring that

leaders in particular can continue to take and consistently deliver on the many challenges they face. This was the platform for a rich discussion on the importance and development of individual and organisational resilience.

The morning was very much a discussion and the opportunity to share insights, challenges and learning relating to the development of resilience within organisations was well supported.

So what do we mean by resilience? Clearly there are a number of ways of viewing this:

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change” Charles Darwin

Alternatively:

Resilience is the ability to fall, pick ourselves up from the floor quickly, learn and continue with our journey

Regardless of the definition we go with, there is the need to consider why developing resilience is so important for individual and organisational success. One key factor discussed in the HRD Boardroom event was the research indicating that resilience predicts future achievement better than skills or years or years of experience. In addition, resilience “training” improves retention, productivity and financial performance. In summary, these results are seen to be highly significant issues for the HR community to consider in terms of future strategy around building organisational capability.

A common issue put forward by a number of the attendees was the pattern of individuals appointed to Senior Leadership positions (e.g. CEO, MD or other board level positions), with little or no support to help them make a successful transition to the new role. The pattern for many organisations is a belief that successful senior personnel can step up successfully based on what has been achieved previously. Clearly many can and do make the moves successfully. However, during the debate many felt that it would be advantageous to deliberately put in place the support, tools and advice to facilitate this and support people to successfully manage to indeed thrive in the face of ongoing commercial, operational and organisational pressure. It was felt that this was surely a better option of appointing and then “hoping for the best”.

There was a real difference within the room in terms of provision already made for this type of approach and much of the discussion focused on the prevailing culture of the organisation and how this influences the requirement and appreciation for high levels of resilience and the value placed on providing training and coaching in this area.

The question was also raised about whether the majority of leaders really understand coaching and the benefits this increasingly visible development tool can deliver. Again there was a clear difference within the group; many felt that senior leaders are still unaware of the value this approach can bring and a real opportunity exists for the HR function to develop awareness and appreciation of the intervention.

The discussion then focused on why this is so important and the range of responses we see in individuals where resilience is low. During the debate delegates spoke to many examples including the loss of self-confidence, reduced creativity, difficulty in decision making, difficulty in managing emotions, the creation of a distinct “blame culture” and either an increase in desire for social contact or with-drawing from social contact. Clearly none of these impacts are good for the individual, peers, employees in general and the business as a whole.

With this issue identified, the attendees agreed that the ability to remain resilient is a really personal issue. As such, we all have different limit’s and tolerance for pressure; we react in different ways and have different triggers. It was seen as important that the HR community can understand and quantify the impact of such behavioural traits and bring the issue to the attention of their leadership teams in order to help senior colleagues successfully manage potentially damaging behaviours and responses before they escalate.

Paul then took us into thinking about resilience in terms of helping people and organisations develop their own resilience strategies. It was argued that in the majority of cases helping individuals establish their own reactive and proactive resilience tools was time and money well spent. Whilst both are important, HR should be looking to create an awareness for the need for resilience and similarly facilitate the provision of training and development activities to help build a pool of resilience skills that will equip leaders with the required capability and awareness.

So the question was posed about whether investment in building resilience capability was seen to be a key focus for L & D spend going forward. The debate focused on whether a percentage of the available development spend should be spent on reaching out to the senior team and building personal resilience to improve individual and organisational performance. Thereafter, the boardroom attendees entered into a full discussion about the impact of not investing in this area, the impact of unwelcome behaviours that might come to the fore and the determinant impact these have not only on individuals but the business results as a whole. A key issue in this regard is the long running debate about the need, importance and benefit accrued from organisations spending an excessive amount of development spend on skills relating to the management of organisational crises, rather than building capability to head the problem off in advance.

It was argued that with the current focus on mental health and well-being now is a great time to ensure that organisations have this issue on their agenda. Whilst we agreed that the ideal is that investment is made in advance, some delegates had strong examples of the fact that something had to break before this was taken seriously.

Finally, consideration was given to what factors threaten the development of organisational resilience? Change, and in particular not investing in change management in advance will have a significant impact. Similarly, not investing in the development of core Leadership skills and awareness was seen to be problematic. It was agreed that a hard cost benefit analysis on the value

of resilience spend was hard to deliver but there was genuine interest shown in the value of measuring the impact of any investment in terms of organisational metrics.

Our exclusive HR Directors Boardroom discussion gives you unprecedented access to valuable business and professional contacts as well as providing you with unique opportunities to debate topical and strategic HR issues. We have dates in place for 2018 for these discussions as well as essential Employment Law Updates.

Please email [hrnetworking@ashleykatehr.com](mailto:hrnetworking@ashleykatehr.com) to find out more or to book your place.



The flyer features a purple background on the left with white text and a black and white photograph of a woman presenting to a group of people in a classroom setting on the right. The text on the purple background includes the Ashley Kate HR logo, the Eversheds Sutherland logo, and two sections of event dates: 'HR DIRECTORS BOARDROOM 2018' and 'EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATES 2018'.

Ashley Kate  
HR

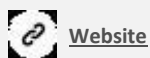
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**HR DIRECTORS BOARDROOM 2018**

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – Cambridge  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – London  
Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – Manchester  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 - Nottingham

**EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATES 2018**

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018 – Nottingham  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018 – London  
Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018 – Manchester  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November - Birmingham  
Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November - Leeds  
Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November - London



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