

Alexander Ross & Co.

INSIGHTS



The Talent to Transform

Economic Change Highlights the Importance of Transformative Talent

Introduction

The global financial crisis has sharply focused the need to re-think risk and embrace discontinuous and often unpredictable change. Organizations around the world are responding to the new realities brought on by shifts in international markets. Taking advantage of these new realities requires putting organizational talent in place that is change-agile and capable of adapting to the growing complexities of architecting and developing resilient global organizations.

In our search practice, we focus exclusively on these types of human capital leaders. We call them “transformative” not only for their ability to transform organizations, but also for their willingness to transform themselves, to grow and change and evolve into roles as needed.



A Recent Example

We were reminded of the extraordinary change readiness of these individuals on a recent multi-role search we conducted for a significant sovereign fund in the Middle East. Candidates we interviewed for this search demonstrated the intellectual curiosity and strong ability to think cross culturally that we required.

They were emotionally intelligent and, importantly since their roles would require them to align a values-driven culture with business imperatives, had shown they could build constituency across an organization. But, in addition to these required traits we identified an unexpected geographic flexibility rooted in a view of change as positive and necessary to meet interesting opportunities.

Without personal ties to or experience with the Middle East, without reference to compensation or close familiarity with the organization they might join, a surprising 70% of the top performers we approached were ready and willing to seriously consider making a personal and professional move to the Middle East. These candidates were energized by the opportunity to create a complete Organizational Design capability where none existed and willing to make a three year commitment to the potential they saw in the organization.

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not only transform organizations,
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Transformative Talent is Both Change-Agile & Catalytic

Rather than clinging to any sign of stability, these transformative human capital leaders are ready to respond to the challenges the crisis has created. They want to create and execute the talent strategies that will drive growth and competitive advantage for the organizations they join.

And when they attach themselves to an organization and a role, or simply commit to a required organizational outcome, this transformative talent typically brings with it not only expertise and experience, but an evident sense of momentum, determination, and even inspiration. Often, like the Level Five leaders identified by Jim Collins, they comprise an unusual blend of personal humility, and absolute belief in the success of the enterprise.

There is a catch, however. The market for top human capital leadership talent remains tight. This type of talent always has options, and usually good ones. So, it's important to know what makes this type of talent tick. They will expect to overcome ridiculous challenges to preserve the core and simultaneously drive progress in an organization. They will identify, engage and develop leaders but they will need the support of top management.

They will expect the executive team to be a part of the transition from the current state to a goal state. And, like their executive counterparts, they may have a limited window within which to show results and to stay challenged. They will need to see progress and support for their efforts and periodically be provided with new challenges within and for the organization.



Conclusion

As with great CEO's, great Organizational Development and Talent Strategists make friends with their anxieties, and view change as an opportunity to stretch their thinking and capabilities.

As you outline your goals for the future, consider the many ways that transformative human capital leaders can help you deliver on your organization's strategic intent.

There is a pool of outstanding, accessible, highly capable and directly relevant talent that may not be visible in the market, and yet is open to considering challenging opportunities, whatever they may be, and wherever they may exist.

*This type of talent always has options,
and usually good ones.*

*That's why it's important to really understand
what makes transformative talent tick.*

Alexander Ross & Co. has been the talent adviser of choice for organizations pursuing strategic change for nearly 35 years. We are a specialist executive search firm that identifies and attracts transformative human capital leaders exclusively in the linked professional disciplines of:

- Organizational Design, Development and Effectiveness
- Change Management
- Strategic Talent Management
- Leadership Learning and Development

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