

Lack of Leadership?

Measuring the impact of 'leadership' has always been a challenge, especially when soft skills are taken into account. It's a bit like the old saying about advertising, "only 50% of it works...trouble is I don't know which 50%". The Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation is the best method I've come across, http://www.mitchellphoenix.com/readandlisten/Kirkpatrick_and_Mitchell_Phoenix.pdf

Evaluating leadership and management training requires effort and needs to feed into business planning, appraisal processes and recruitment. There is also the tendency to lump all sorts of soft skills training under the banner of Leadership, making true judgments over efficacy difficult. There is also a distinct link between leadership and management that needs to be addressed. Perhaps the \$900 billion was well spent with not enough emphasis on management skills. I strongly sense that it is lack of strategy rather than lack of leadership that is the problem. There are plenty of dynamic, committed leaders out there who come unstuck by strategy, which is another skill that needs learning.

We also need to consider at what levels the budget is being spent. Most of it will be going to the junior/middle ranks who are then perceived to have been 'trained' as leaders. They receive no more input on their way to the top where they then divert budget back down the organization "because they need it more than I do". Senior executives also have the "I've done that" attitude and the experience colors whether they value leadership training or not. What they fail to realize is that they were trained for then and not for now. The different demands on leaders at the top of the organization need to be emphasized and learned.

Leadership is seen as separate from strategy when in fact it should be part of strategy. If "lack of leadership" is so often the cry why is leadership not a strategic imperative? My view is that most leadership training is not directly connected with the overall success of the business and that its power to deliver secure results is not truly understood.

When organizations understand the power of visible leadership day to day at all levels, sharing common values, principles and language they will reap the rewards. This means working on the culture of the business. The culture of an organization is a reflection of the strength of leadership.

It is not "lack of leadership" it is lack of strategy.