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SPOTLIGHT ON TALENT MANAGEMENT



# THE SOURCE

***New TQ Webcast-  
Please join us!***

## **"The Value of Training in Surviving and Thriving in an Economic Downturn"**

**Thursday, March 12**

**1:00 p.m. EST**

Please tune in for TalentQuest's upcoming webcast, entitled "The Value of Training in Surviving and Thriving in an Economic Downturn." Rick Brandt, President of TQ Consulting Services, and Eric Roth, Executive Consultant, will discuss training as a response to the economic downturn, and the importance to devoting existing resources to the most critical talent management activities that will drive business success.

### ***What you will learn:***

- The value of basic supervisory training and its potential to have a real and immediate impact on organizational performance.
- Practical recommendations on how to turn training initiatives into development programs that will make a lasting difference.
- The importance of talent management in



The Leadership  
Forum  
at Georgia Tech

The 2009 Leadership Forum at Georgia Tech kicked off this year's series with a presentation by Daniel Burrus, a leading technology forecaster and business strategist.

The author of six books, including *Techno Trends*, Burrus is known for accurately predicting technology trends and their direct impact on the world of business. He blended timely and provocative knowledge with humor and motivation, beginning his presentation with a maxim he developed from his personal and professional experience.

*"Whatever your problem is, that's not it. If it were, you would have already solved it."*



### **Future Business Models: Doing More with Less**

In his presentation, Burrus helped participants understand how, by forecasting the future, they can gain competitive advantage by predicting permanent change. He also provided insight into future business trends including the imperative to "do more with less" and the secret to multiplying your time.

Burrus cited an example where a group of oil executives were discussing the challenges and costs associated with creating protection for offshore rigs from above-water threats such as hurricanes and terrorist attacks. He told the executives that their problem wasn't an above-the-water problem. It was an under-the-water problem, because above-water threats could be eliminated by placing the rigs on the ocean floor. Not only would this eliminate severe weather and terroristic threats, it also reduced the need for costly personnel and put the oil closer to the long-distance transportation pipeline. Not only does the deep-water technology exist for this solution, ocean floor platforms are being installed today.

Burrus stated that his ability to arrive at such innovative solutions is

increasing engagement and productivity in this difficult environment.

- Ideas for shifting the 'training imperative in an economic downturn' conversation from 'Can we afford to?' to 'We can't afford not to.'

**To register:**

- Please visit <http://www.hr.com> for a complimentary and quick pre-registration. Please note the registration closes the morning of the webcast. We hope you can join us!

not due to an innate intellectual capacity. In fact, he asserts that this kind of paradigm-breaking thinking can be achieved by all of us if we only know where and how to look. He calls this type of thinking *looking into the visible future*, and says that it is absolutely essential to success in today's global economy.

One fact we can agree upon in business is that competition will increase. Burrus characterizes keeping up with the competition as a fool's game. He challenges us not to keep up with but to stay ahead of our competitors. The tools are there for us. We just have to realize that though the solutions to our problems lie beneath the surface, they are within our control if we learn to look for answers in new places and in new ways. The question is, how do we do that?

Burrus offered the below suggestions for achieving paradigm-breaking thinking, or *looking into the visible future*.

**Be Proactive and Anticipatory:** Often, we're so busy fighting today's fires that we don't make time to think strategically.



- Identify trends that impact your business and your industry. Hard trends identify permanent changes of which we are certain, i.e. the aging of baby boomers and the continuing mobility of and convergence in technology. Soft trends can be equally valuable to identify, but Burrus cautions us not to draw hard facts and conclusions from soft trends.
- Make a list of everything in your business that you are certain about.
- Anticipate the growth opportunities inherent in these certainties and trends.
- Anticipate your customers' future problems and identify a solution for them today.

**Build Trust and Partnerships:** We frequently mistake information sharing with real communication. We share data and information rather than knowledge and wisdom, which provides context and content that leads to action. How much time do we waste in meetings by sharing low-level communications that could be more efficiently transferred via e-mail? This not only wastes time, but it erodes trust when we don't provide overall context or information that is valuable to our audiences.

Establish internal protocols for how information is to be shared and communicated.

Trust and partnerships can also be built virtually if we take advantage of the multiple tools that are available. Burrus shared a story about his nephew who plays a simulated game requiring complex decision-making and collaboration with others to achieve an objective. His partners in the game are globally located. They use VoIP and simple web cameras to enhance communication. Through these experiences, the iGeneration is intuitively learning how to move beyond cooperation into true collaboration to achieve goals. Boomers, take note!

**Shift Thinking from Incremental to Transformational.** Many of the trends that Burrus described are transformational and permanent in nature. They transform how we buy, how we sell, how we go to market, how we communicate, and how we collaborate. Burrus points out that it's now new media vs. old media, or direct mail vs. e-mail, or low tech vs. high tech. It's about utilizing the power of both technologies to turn the impossible into the possible.

Explore the use of Web 2.0 technologies, as well as older technologies, and create a list of 'can-dos' in your business.



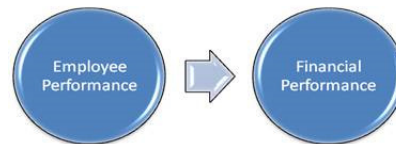
**Which Perceptions Predict Performance Outcomes?  
- by Rick Brandt, Ph.D**

One of the central takeaways that I had from listening to Daniel Burrus is the importance of looking beneath the surface to solve problems and asking questions in novel ways to arrive at useful answers. Innovative thinking is critical right now as the economy continues to falter and there is pressing need to do more with less.

In business, most of us would agree that one of our top priorities as leaders must be to drive performance. Since cash, credit and

resources are tight- and likely to remain so for the remainder of 2009- we must think differently about how to achieve performance targets and how to accomplish our goals with fewer means.

When we think of this challenge from a human capital perspective, the traditional thing is to focus on employee performance. If we can improve employee performance at an individual level, particularly in high value roles (it has been determined that at least half a company's total value is driven by a small number of job roles), improved financial performance will follow. This is why we focus on performance management as well as training and other development interventions; these activities are designed to drive employee performance.



What happens though when these traditional activities and approaches are not working as effectively as we need them to? Let's think about this problem in a fresh way. We know from psychology that perceptions, beliefs and attitudes are key drivers of behavior that lie beneath performance. If we can identify which perceptions are pivotal to performance, then by transforming these perceptions, we can change performance outcomes.



There are many examples of how perceptions and expectations shape outcomes. For instance, last year in a Leadership Forum presentation, Dan Ariely described a study in which 180 patients with osteoarthritis received three different treatment conditions: 1) scope surgery with removal of cartilage, 2) scope surgery w/o removal of cartilage, and 3) placebo-simulated surgery. For two years following the procedures, all three groups were tested for lessening of their pain and the amount of time it took them to walk and climb stairs. The finding was that the first two surgery groups received significant pain relief and improvement in walking. But the startling finding was that the placebo group had pain relief and mobility improvements to the same extent as the surgery groups. Obviously, surgeons who perform arthroscopy were not happy with these results, and attempts were made to discredit the study (which was published in the New England Journal of Medicine). Regardless, it is clear that our perceptions and beliefs can profoundly affect behavioral outcomes.

So, how can we identify the specific perceptions, attitudes and traits that demonstrate the greatest relationship with financial and

performance success? There are tools and methods that exist which allow us to do so. Today's web-based applications enable us to identify specifically which perceptions, among many, that best predict the performance outcomes we want. Once we have identified the underlying perceptions that are known to be highly related to success, then interventions can be implemented to transform and modify these perceptions and beliefs. This new way of examining performance provides another tool to improve desired organizational outcomes.

When it comes to doing more with less, we have to dig beneath the surface and ask the right questions about performance. Do you know what perceptions and expectations are driving performance at your company?

Don't wait, find out now and improve your success outcomes!

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