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Context to the nugget

Michael speaks about the business case for Transition Advisory support when leaders take on a new role (internal or external transition). While it is understood that it is lonely at the top, it is worth recognizing that it is lonelier when you are settling into a new context when leaders do not have an asset of relationships to count on (yet) and don't have meaningful feedback loops that gives them a sense of how they are doing.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): How should leaders and organizations think about return in an investment when it comes to transition support where that me sort of get to the core of it? Everybody says they do transition we have a program but in your experience what do they not account for or what do they get wrong when they think about getting help around transitions?

Michael Watkins (MW): No absolutely so I get up on my soapbox regularly and say organization should be accelerating everybody taking their role whether they are ...side moving inside because the research shows pretty consistently that you can get people up to speed an about half the time for, we have fact that we have bought half the time. If you do the right things right things meaning providing the right kind if support, using the sort of frame work and tools so this is enormous benefit and if you multiply by across many transitions that are going on the organizations and some research suggested that a quarter or more leaders are taking their roles in large organizations each year. And that pace is only increasing that's just it's a huge benefit at both the individual and the organizational level. And then across you know there is also particular research document reduction and derailment Rates for things like people on boarding. Improvements and retentions and engagement if you get people sort of connected to the organizations early. So there is rock solid business case basically for doing this and it continues to surprise me when organizations don't do it

DJ: In your experience what are the sort of the nuance of transitions at organization often miss out when they think about supporting leaders a lot of them with the right intent set up some sort of program but what are some pieces in your mind which often gets missed which are critical?

MW: So there are a few different layers to that. That I mean this organizations still don't really provide this on boarding support and then they made you the cosmetic staff let's find out that. A provisioning people but they don't really do the work at integrating people into the organization and so it continues to be for those people who sort of sink or swim. A kind of experience to some degree and that's surprises me because there has been so much attention paid to on-boarding and documentation or the value and thoughts about how best to do that and so that's find of astonished I get some level. But there if you look at the broader landscape about transition there are still many

organization that don't really don't provide much support for people making significant internal moves. And again research have been done shows on average the amount of support even the internal moves is far lower than that given to people on boarding forgot this the power of those transition are an else we sort of go through increasing competition for high potential talent organizations are pushing people further faster which is creating more risk by them making those kinds of transitions but still it doesn't seems the connection doesn't seem to have been made that you should be investing in helping those people be successful and it's not that hard to do. So, this for me and sort of me up on my soap box continue and try to make the case for investing and everybody making transitions in organization.

DJ: What's being your experience in sort of alerting people to the value of transition support? Have you grappled with this issue?

MW: Not for sure, I think what's the antidote to that is good research the basic is as lucky as you may have people who get it right and just do it naturally or the situation really is a ... one I'm coaching a CEO right now I think health care system in the US internally promoted previously the CFO, very accomplished leader and I was right at basic to by the board and help him make a successful transition and I am having to work to find ways to find to add value because he is so good. Now he is still appointing and I able work with me because I was able to comment and sort of confirm that they put the right foundation on various interact with the board, we ensure the board and so on. So he see's value in it. But when things go like that when you cover heavily accomplished person it's a transition it's not really huge in some senses because he is kind of playing a leadership role anywhere before this. It can become less obvious to that sort of support is really reliable. But for every one of those there are dozen where people just really struggle unnecessarily and in some cases they fail. So anecdotes are always dangerous to keep at that the antidote is to look across the landscape and say on average what does the impact to this went to you as an organization at you to decide to make the investment of doing it.

DJ: With highly accomplished leaders who were who have good people skills, who can read the political context well, have relationships and so on. In those instances, what's the delta value add that a transition coach like you bring what are the axes of value-add just to tease out the nuances here?

MW: I appreciate it's a great question right, I think there are circumstances and which it's very modest the value which you add. Although when I am finding in these situations is that even for people I the scenario you described. As it takes on for example at CEO role, they really do discover that they don't have many places to go to have conversations, take advise, may discover pretty quickly that there are still skill sets. May be its managing the board, maybe it's managing at external stake holders. But they haven't fully developed and s it's really very rare that I don't find, I can add more value even with the paying for that service but some time it's more subtle I guess in sometimes it's just more obvious what the work that you need to do.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In work with leaders during transitions, I find two or three elements where the leaders often see value in a Transition Advisor

1) A lot of the recruitment or an internal move often feels like courtship where people are selling you a role and focused on you accepting the opportunity; They are focused on the 7 out of 10 reasons why the role makes sense for you; No one really spends time on the 3 out of 10 reasons why

this might be challenging. Working with somebody to shine the light on the watch outs as the leader comes in is often helpful

2) The second element that is often prevalent is that there is significant sub-optimality in the feedback loop for the incoming leader. As the leader is settling in, while people are forming their opinions and observing the leader through the microscope, very little of these observations find their way back to the leader. Some of this feedback could help with early course correction for the leader and settle in quickly especially when the stakes are high

3) The final element is often about creating the mind-space for the leader to be thoughtful about the various elements of transition (settling into the culture, getting into a good rhythm with the boss, taking ownership of the team and so on). I have noticed that leaders often get thrown into the deep end and don't have the mind-space to zoom out and look at the bigger picture as they settle into a new role. Having somebody to run that as a project for them often keeps the discipline of the various elements of settling into an organization

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End of nugget transcription

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Michael Watkins - Nuggets

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive’s / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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Podcast Transcript [45.01 Michael Watkins - ROI of transition support](#)

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