

Dear Colleague:

- I'm pleased to say it's that time again – Spring has arrived along with my semi-annual news update! I write this with much excitement as I celebrate my **second anniversary** – how time flies when you are having fun! Business continues to flourish with individual and corporate clients and I remain very grateful for the opportunities that have come my way. One of my goals has also been to continuously update and enhance my website. If you have not visited recently, please take a moment to do so as well as to view some of my recently published articles and upcoming events at [www.ritaballenassociates.com](http://www.ritaballenassociates.com)
  
- The past 12 months have brought steady and continuous activity in the marketplace. There is high demand for talent and organizations are investing in a variety of initiatives to attract, recruit and develop that talent. Individuals are also investing much effort in identifying challenging opportunities for themselves – sometimes reinventing or repositioning themselves to achieve that success. **Talent acquisition and engagement** remains a challenge in this competitive marketplace. **Learning** is a priority to both individuals and organizations especially in the area of **Leadership Development** where much of my work has been. I'd like to share a few books that I have recently read in this area that are excellent resources that I'd recommend:
  - "Five Gifts of Insightful Leaders", Mark J. Campbell
  - "Creating Leaderful Organizations - How to Bring Out Leadership in Everyone", Joseph A. Raelin
  - "Hardwiring Excellence - Purpose, Worthwhile Work, Making a Difference", Quint Studer
  - "Primal Leadership – Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence", Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis & Annie Mckee
  - "Leadership Essentials – Inspire Liberate Achieve", Tom Peters
  
- Let me share a brief but compelling story of a leader who excelled in developing one of their protégés and in the end experienced ultimate personal and professional fulfillment. A seasoned Finance professional recruits and hires a newly graduated MBA student, mentors, develops and progresses her through various roles throughout their organization. In addition, recommends and endorses her for a variety of line roles enabling her to gain cross-functional knowledge and experience. As the years went by, her protégé moves on to other organizations assuming advanced roles and ultimately lands the role of CFO in a fortune 100 corporation.

When asked for her top accomplishments for which she was most proud, her first response without any hesitation was, "the ability to inspire, motivate and develop two staff members through their careers in the same manner that her "mentor" had done for her when she started her career". When she told me this story, I asked if she had ever expressed her thoughts to her "mentor" – her answer was that each time these individuals had reached a new milestone, she would contact her "mentor" to thank HER! The mentor's leadership impact was so powerful that she truly believed that was the reason she was able to be a good leader and pull out the capabilities in others. I have not spoken to this person for many years as she moved out of the area, but her story touched me and will always stay with me.

- Are leaders born or made? This is a recent question explored in one of my Leadership classes at Northeastern. I could provide you with some theoretical concepts and practices in response as well as my own personal thoughts and experiences.....but rather than doing so, I'd love to hear what you think. How would you answer that question – **Are leaders born or made?** .....please email me your thoughts.....
- One of my favorite initiatives over the last two years has been facilitating quarterly “Best Practices Roundtable” meetings for senior level human resource practitioners to share their challenges, experiences, and best practices as well as for networking purposes. The one thing that is consistently emphasized in these discussions is the current focus of the Human Resources’ role as a “Change Agent”. The only constant today is change and Human Resources is the driver of much of that change.... another reason why Human Resources is tagged as a “Career of the Future” .....I’ll bet we never expected to hear that 20 years ago and it does sound good!
- As always, thank you for your continued interest and support! Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you, formally or informally. I look forward to keeping in touch and speaking soon.

Best Regards,  
Rita



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