
----- WHAT'S UP, DOC? -----

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"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

THIS MONTH'S THEMES: (1) POST-MERGER INTEGRATION
(2) HOW TO FIND A MENTOR

I'm going to offer a couple of lists this month. The first checklist is for companies planning post-merger integration projects, answering the question, "What are the bases a company needs to cover to implement an effective integration plan?" This list will be Part One of a more complete list; Part Two will appear in a later "What's Up, Doc?" edition. The second part of this month's newsletter offers "How To" advice to help you determine what kinds of mentors would most enable you to ramp up your individual growth. It offers you a process model you can apply for the recruitment of your ideal mentors. This will also be Part One of a two-part "What's Up, Doc?" feature. As always, please forward this month's edition as you see fit, and save it somewhere you will be able to find it in the future, in the event you need to tap into this content at a later date. If you create a folder to store your editions of "What's Up, Doc?," you can create a solid resource library for yourself over time – the equivalent of a graduate course as the editions pile up. And don't forget that you can find archived editions on the Schuler Solutions website.

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THIS MONTH'S QUOTES:

"That which we obtain too easily, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only which gives everything its value." -- Thomas Paine

"There is only one success: to be able to spend your life in your own way."
-- Christopher Morley

"You can't wake a person who is pretending to be asleep." -- Navajo Proverb

1. POSTMERGER INTEGRATION CHECKLIST – PART ONE

PLANNING AND COMMUNICATING YOUR INTEGRATION PROCESS

___ Have you formed your integration plan, beginning with a designation of which key leaders you need to put into your Transition Leadership Group?

___ Have you brought in outside expertise as needed (consultants, training/retraining companies, outplacement specialists, etc.)?

___ Have you set out your integration plan goals as part of your acquisition agreement (forcing you to plan ahead, and creating the conditions for a timely turn toward implementation once the deal is approved)?

___ Have you created a timetable for the communication of your integration related plans for all stakeholders (shareholders, customers, employees, organized labor, management, vendors, etc.)?

HUMAN CAPITAL INTEGRATION

___ Have you identified what individuals, teams or departments in your acquired company you want to keep as intact as possible, in order to derive maximum value from the deal?

___ Have you employed and set forth a process for communicating all chosen and reasonable measures to retain desired human resources (benefits packages, non-compete agreements, relocation assistance, etc.)?

___ Have you created specific plans for integrating key organizational units, such as the Board of Directors, the office of the CEO and/or Chairman, senior management teams, sales teams, support functions (plant and equipment maintenance, accounting, finance, human resource staff, etc.)?

___ If it is your intention to do so, have you created transitional resources (career counseling, retraining, outplacement services, etc.) for any staff who will not fit into the new organizational structure?

___ Have you implemented surveys to identify values, priorities and communication styles among members of both company, to identify potential points of friction that will inhibit smooth integration?

INTEGRATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND HARD ASSETS

___ Have you sufficiently benchmarked and anticipated the probable financial impact of the type of merger transaction chosen, both on operations and on capital markets?

___ Have you prepared consolidated financial statements?

___ Have you valued and combined necessary tangible resources (property, plant and equipment, real estate holdings), both on paper and in reality?

___ Have you fully integrated your plan for the divestiture of redundant assets into your post-merger strategic plan, and created a process to ensure maximum return for your divested assets?

INTEGRATION OF SOFT ASSETS, GOODWILL AND OTHER INTANGIBLE RESOURCES

___ Have you reviewed all of your options for renaming the combined company, and gotten focus group or survey data on alternatives if necessary?

___ Have you taken necessary steps to ensure the preservation of positive brand identity (product name, the coherence of distribution channels, continuity with previous advertising messages and niche targeting, maintaining the integrity of customer relationship management [CRM] systems, etc.)?

___ Have you integrated you mission statements, not only on paper, but in practice, through organization wide training, communications, revision of business processes (including selection and performance evaluations), and the instructional application of necessary decision modeling programs?

___ Have you valued and combined other intangible assets, with a plan for their continued exploitation and leveraging (such as trademarks, service marks, patents, trade secrets and intellectual capital)?

... TO BE CONTINUED IN A LATER EDITION

The content in this section has been adapted from “The Art of M&A: A Merger Acquisition Buyout Guide,” by Stanley Foster Reed and Alexandra Reed Lajoix, 3rd Edition, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1999.

2. HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT MENTOR FOR YOU – PART ONE

As a psychologist, I know that people grow most through positive relationships. More than from reading books or acquiring information, people – be they adults or children – grow most from sustained relationships with trusted, highly able mentors, such as parents, friends or other professionals. That’s a basic law of human growth. With that in mind, here are some things to consider as you imagine which mentors might be best to help you grow and achieve your own life goals.

BRAINSTORM YOUR DREAMS

In what area of your life do you want to grow – professionally, financially, spiritually, etc? Dream a little, without boundaries. What would you like your life to look like in ten years? Who is the person you would like to become?

SET A SPECIFIC GOAL

What outcome would you like to achieve? How will you measure if you have achieved it? If you can’t measure it, you have not made your goal specific enough. What is your timeline for the achievement of that goal? Now, what are the qualifications of the person who would know best how to lead you to that outcome?

IDENTIFY TOP ACHIEVERS IN YOUR CHOSEN AREA

Whom do you know that has accomplished something like what you seek? Do your friends, family members, or other contacts know such people? What about people you read about in articles or magazines, whom you don’t know today, but who might make ideal mentors or referral sources of potential mentors? Make a comprehensive list.

SELECT YOUR TOP MENTOR CANDIDATES

Sort through your list and place each person you’ve identified into a rank order of desirability, based on initial qualifications and expertise. Develop an “A” list and a “B” list, if that helps. Don’t rank people on the basis of

how likely you think it is that they will help you. Just rank them on your initial assessment of their desirability as mentors.

RESEARCH YOUR TOP TEN CANDIDATES

You can learn so much on the Internet now, and also through library research. Find out about the career paths of your top ten. Read or at least skim any articles or books they may have written. Do your homework. Come to know them as well as you can without actually approaching them yet.

SET GOALS FOR YOUR MEETINGS WITH POTENTIAL MENTORS

Be clear about what you would like to learn from your meetings, which can occur over the phone or in person. Be clear also about what you would like to achieve for your life through a potential relationship with each specific person.

ESTABLISH CONTACT AND SET AN APPOINTMENT

You can do this either by phone or by a letter or email. For some people, a personal contact might work best before you send a note or call. Think about what associations to which your potential mentor might belong, and attend some meetings as a guest. Once you get to meet them, you will have an easier time getting a response to your attempts to reach out to them. Also think about people you know who may know your target – people who might help you by bridging an introduction. One way or another, set an appointment, if you can, no matter how famous or busy your potential mentor might be. At first contact, ask for an informational interview, not for a mentoring relationship, and set a time limit for your initial contact meeting.

PREPARE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR INTERVIEWS WITH YOUR POTENTIAL MENTORS

Yes, you are interviewing them, just as much as they may be interviewing you. Take a look at what you've learned about each person and develop a set of ten questions you would want to ask each person. You may have some different questions for different people. Make the questions open ended ("How/Why did you do X?" or "What do you think is most important about X?") rather than yes/no questions. Let your questions show that you've done your research as in the previous step – that gives you credibility. And by being prepared with good question, you can be sure not to waste a busy or successful person's time. Do more listening than talking, and stick to your agreed time limits for the first meeting, even if you don't get all ten of your questions answered.

. . . TO BE CONTINUED IN A LATER EDITION . . .

This process outline for finding and selecting a mentor has been adapted from “Mentoring: A Success Guide for Mentors and Protégés,” by Floyd Wickman and Terri Sjodin, Irwin Professional Publishing, Chicago, 1997.

3. UPCOMING BUSINESS GROWTH SEMINAR

Three of my fellow Wharton School alumni and I have put together the following (terrific!) seminar for CEO’s, business owners and senior executives. Here’s the brief program announcement and description:

The Wharton Club of Washington DC and Microsoft Proudly Present:

“What’s Next for Your Business? How to Grow Smart, Stay Lean and Beat the Competition”

It’s been a tough few years, but experts say the market is gearing up for a rebound. As business begins to recover and grow, business owners and executives face complicated decisions in an uncertain environment. Join us November 19th for a half day seminar that will help you grow your business, take advantage of an improving market, run your company lean and profitably, and outthink the competition. Four seasoned experts will address critical areas of concern: staffing and retention, information technology, marketing and growth strategy.

Date: Wednesday, November 19th, 8:30 AM to 12:00 noon
Location: Microsoft Corporate Offices, Chesapeake Conference Center, 5335 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, DC
Cost: \$39 if registered by November 14, \$49 after November 14
Audience: Business owners and senior executives

For more information visit www.optimalbusinessgroup.com or call (in the United States) 240-499-7920.

TO REGISTER NOW, [CLICK HERE!!](#)

4. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS

BOOK: “Networks in the Knowledge Economy,” edited by Rob Cross, Andrew Parker & Lisa Sasson, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003.

Did you ever wonder how social networks (who talks to whom about what) affect the success of your company? Did you ever wonder if anyone could actually measure social networks and describe how they influence productivity, and even craft strategies to improve these networks on behalf of your business? Since I’ve talked this month about post-merger integration, I wanted to highlight this book as a solid introduction to social network analysis for those in large companies who need to create efficient learning organizations, and for those contemplating significant mergers and acquisitions. A strongly edited book, this resource offers a good start for those of you who want to learn more and get ahead of the curve in an area where new management tools are rapidly developing. Cool stuff.

FILMS: “School of Rock” for silly fun; “Mystic River” for classic tragedy.

Of the two, I admit I liked the silly fun better. I don’t know if you have to be someone who culturally grew up with so-called “classic rock” to truly enjoy and appreciate the over-the-top fun and silliness of “School of Rock,” but it sure helps if you did. Still, there were a lot of real (as opposed to overgrown, like me) kids in the theater when I saw the movie, and they applauded what they saw on the screen many times. To learn what the critics are saying about “School of Rock,” click [here](#). “Mystic River,” the new film by Clint Eastwood based on the book of the same name, conforms to the classic narrative lines of tragedy, and is extremely well acted by Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon, Tim Robbins, Laura Linney and others. A tightly scripted tale of revenge, loyalty, loss and senseless abuse set in working class Boston, the film works as a meditation on the flawed, darker side of human nature, even as it recognizes the almost painful fullness of love among family members who struggle to find the good in their own worlds. Something about the movie felt a little bit too predictable to me somehow, but it’s still a very good piece of work (though some of the depicted scenes are really disturbing, if you let them sink in – be forewarned!). To find out what the critics are saying about “Mystic River,” click [here](#).

5. CHUCKLES

These are supposedly actual signs that have appeared at various locations:

Sign in a realtor's office: "Lots for little."

Sign in a shoe store: "Come in and have a fit."

Sign in a maternity clothes store: "We are open on labor day."

Sign in a non-smoking area: "If we see you smoking we will assume you are on fire and take appropriate action."

Sign on the door of the maternity ward: "Push Push Push."

Sign at entrance of the IRS: "Watch your step."

Sign at the exit of the IRS: "Watch your mouth."

Sign in a bookstore: "We treat you write."

Sign on a front door: "Everyone on the premises is a vegetarian except the dog."

Sign on a scientist's door: "Gone fission."

Sign in a taxidermist's window: "We really know our stuff."

Sign in a podiatrist's window: "Time wounds all heels."

Sign in a butcher's window: "Let me meat your needs."

Sign on used car lot: "Second hand cars in first crash condition."

Sign on fence: "Salesmen welcome. Dog food is expensive."

Sign in a car dealership office: "The best way to get back on your feet - miss a car payment."

Sign over a cannibal's hut: "I never met a man I didn't like."

Sign in a muffler shop: "No appointment necessary. We'll hear you coming."

6. PROMOTE YOUR OWN GROWTH

You don't have to live near the Schuler Solutions main office in Alexandria, Virginia to benefit from my coaching services. Great work can be done for your own growth and development over the phone and through document review via email. To find out more about your coaching options and available coaching plans, just click [here](#) now.

7. ABOUT DR. SCHULER

A. J. Schuler, Psy. D., an expert on leadership and organizational change, provides consulting services, keynote presentations and seminars for client companies. His trademark is highly personalized service that leads to measurable increases in productivity, profit and growth. He also provides personalized leadership education and coaching for highly motivated clients.

Dr. Schuler, President of Schuler Solutions, Inc., has served diverse organizations in the private and public sectors, including The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Sony Development, Nomura Securities and the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

A graduate of the Wharton School of Business, Dr. Schuler has successfully led the profitable growth of a dynamic, international consulting firm while serving as Operations Director, and has successfully coached over five hundred CEO's and corporate executives.

8. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE

If this e-Newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to receive your own FREE subscription, just click [here](#) to become a subscriber. If you believe you have received this message in error, or to remove yourself from this mailing list, just click [here](#) to take your name from the "What's Up, Doc?" distribution list.

9. NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF ETHICS

NEWSLETTER ETHICS: This e-Newsletter will be sent to subscribers only upon REQUEST, though subscribers may forward this letter to anyone they wish. Subscriber identities or contact information will NOT BE DISCLOSED to any other persons or entities under any circumstances.

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“Make each day your masterpiece.” -- John Wooden

P.S. - Remember to send in your comments and successes, and to forward this newsletter to at least one friend! Thanks . . . AJS