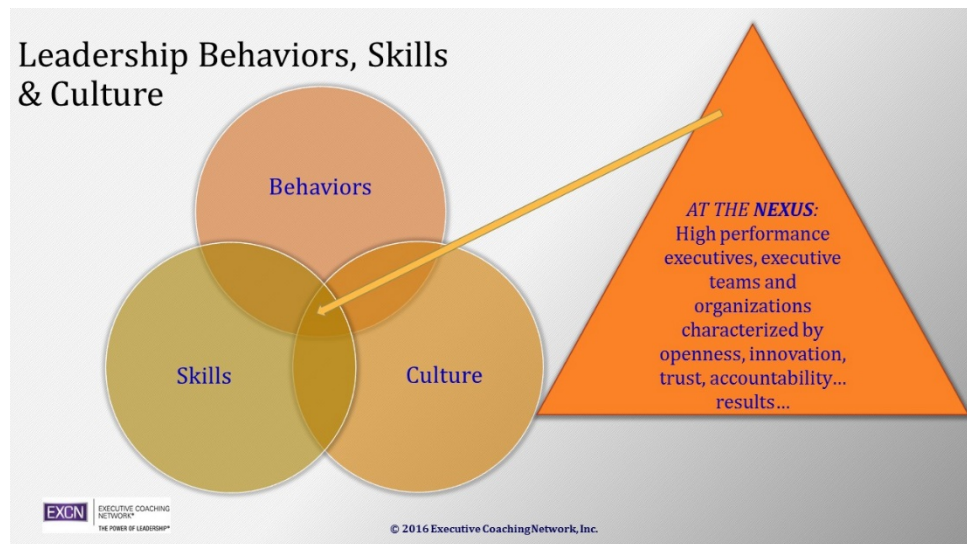


LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: THE NEXUS

I think we have all seen instances of a leader who is technically strong but does not lead in a way that motivates and inspires people in the organization. We see this phenomenon from time to time in our executive coaching practice. In fact, this is one of many reasons an executive might seek executive coaching. Technical brilliance without the leadership underpinnings can result in lackluster results beyond the short term, and in a brain drain from the loss of top talent. In other words, a high level of technical skill is a necessary but insufficient condition of organizational success.

What is needed to create and sustain a high level of performance in an organization, in addition to technical skills, are strong values and leadership behaviors, and a robust culture that reinforces the mission and vision. It is where these three elements—skills,

leadership behaviors, and culture—intersect, that success can be achieved. It is the job of leaders to be competent and live their company values through their behavior.



It is a combination of job competence and leadership behaviors supporting a positive culture that creates and sustains an effective workplace where employees are engaged and customers are advocates. Our philosophy is that leaders must create a culture that nurtures the achievement of business results and build people's positive feelings toward the organization at the same time. While making employees happy is important, we have learned that employees aren't happy working for leaders who bring in donuts but cannot figure out how to turn on the copy machine.

Sometimes the best leaders have to make decisions that cause dissatisfaction among some and a great level of exuberance among others – e.g., a “disruptive” organizational change that ensures easier business operations and more satisfied customers. Also, sometimes leaders have to let go of really talented people who just don't live the values even though they deliver incredible results. It is the leader who knows what lever to pull (among all these variables), how hard to pull it, and when, who will create success and build the future.

If an organization is stuck, a good diagnostic starting point would be to assess culture, leadership behaviors, and skills. Where is the gap? Once a diagnosis is made, a leader and leadership team can start moving toward solutions.

Does your organization have great leaders who inspire the organization? Are they credible? Do leaders have the knowledge and experience they need to lead the organization forward? Does the culture advance the vision and help the organization achieve its mission?