

Comment

Take charge of your personal leadership

By Shawn Cumberbatch

More employees need to take responsibility for their personal development. Rosalind Jackson, a well-respected human resources (HR) practitioner with more than 40 years' experience, is in no doubt about this.

"Personal leadership for me is having the presence of mind to do serious introspection and reflection on you. What your strengths are, what your areas for growth are, and being honest with yourself and putting a personal plan in place to make it better," the managing director of HR advisory firm Caribbean Catalyst Inc. told **BARBADOS BUSINESS AUTHORITY**.

She was speaking ahead of her organisation's workshop titled **Personal Leadership**. It will be held on June 13 and focuses on "the mindset and attitudes required to demonstrate leadership of self in the workplace, for one's own progress and development".

Jackson, who along with Caribbean Catalyst Inc. senior consultant, Althea Browne, will be facilitators of the workshop said the interactive exercise would combine the insights of international leadership expert Cy Wakeman "with all of our neuroscience in leadership and our own experiences".

"During COVID-19, I said let us develop something specifically for all employees to understand that they must own their progress. So it's very focused on you the individual and giving you tools to stop blaming everybody else and start owning your progress," the managing director explained.

Issue of personal leadership

Jackson said the issue of personal leadership should not be taken for granted.

"If you are in a job that you hate, and you don't like the people you're dealing with, you're not going to do a good job. And if you stay there because you need a paycheck, which I understand, and you do that indefinitely, then you are really ruining your chances of progress," she said.

"So when you're in a situation like that, just take an honest look at (yourself) and assess the situation and say, 'Okay, I may have to do this for another few months, but what am I going to do to prepare myself to get out of this situation?'"

"When you say, prepare yourself, people immediately think go and do another certification, but it is more than that. To succeed in anything, you have to have the requisite knowledge, you have to develop that knowledge into skills, and do it with the right attitude, so that you produce excellent results. So it's for people to take that personal stock," she said.

Jackson said there was also an important role in this regard for leaders of organisations.

"There are a lot of bosses who feel that they're now in this slot in the organisational chart where you can't tell them anything, and they don't necessarily lead people. You have to be efficient with processes – also, but effective with people, because we're not machines, we have a heart and



Rosalind Jackson
(FP)

soul. And if you don't help people switch on their heart, they are never going to get good work out of it," she said.

At the end of the day, however, her view was that people had to take personal responsibility for their development, regardless of the development programmes their employers had in place.

She said: "You have to take leadership now of yourself, and ask, 'What are my personal goals? How do I use my current situation as a stepping stone? And how do I get out of this? Or how do I even develop new knowledge, skills and attributes that would make me an obvious choice, if a promotion opportunity arises?'"

"People want to be promoted on tenure, but you need to be promoted on the knowledge, skills and attributes you have demonstrated. And being a good technician is not necessarily being a good supervisor. So if I am a very good technician, I should take it upon myself to educate myself in terms of supervisory skills. So you can pay to do a course and there's so much you can learn online now."

Responsibility to develop myself

Jackson added: "So if I take responsibility to develop myself, and demonstrate that I can connect well with people and influence people in a positive way, then when a supervisory position becomes open, I should be the obvious choice. Now, if they pass me over, then I am brushing up my CV, we have to take responsibilities for our own progress.

"Yes, it helps if you're in a culture that has a strong people development orientation. What I've always done is to help leaders and managers understand that when they say, our people are our best asset, and they treat them badly that doesn't make sense. If your people are your best asset, you should have a continuous talent development programme at every level," she said.

"But if the company you work for doesn't do that, you should develop your talent and find your way in the field that you are in."

Jackson said the target audience of the upcoming workshop was "people who are just below supervisory level, supervisor, or manager, because if you're a manager who believes that where you sit on the organisation chart gives you some power, you'll find you're wrong".

She elaborated: "It's any individual who has got two or three years experience under their belt and want to progress their career and their development so that they get more job satisfaction. We spend the majority of our waking hours on the job, and if we are not getting sufficient job satisfaction, then we become disenchanted and get into a mental space where it is hard for you to push yourself."

Jackson also argued that sometimes individuals had to leave their place of employment to fully develop themselves elsewhere.

"You have take risks in life. If you never get out of bed, you would never achieve anything. If you don't see any real growth in the company, then you owe it to yourself to have a personal strategy of how you are going to work your way out into a better, more progressive environment where you can develop," she said.