

Leaders Behaving Badly Worldwide

One would think the higher up a business leader goes, the better he or she becomes at effective leadership.

Well, not so fast, according to a study from Bridgeville, Pa.-based Development Dimensions International released earlier this month.

The research, taken from a meta-analysis of DDI's assessment data from close to 4,000 leaders worldwide, finds most front-line leaders lack the fundamental interaction skills and behaviors required to be effective leaders. And senior leaders are even worse.

"Different from survey results, the results gathered from [this type of] data represent a more accurate, predictive picture of what is required to perform effectively as a leader. As such, this report measures how leaders ... are really behaving," says Richard

Wellins, senior vice president of DDI.

Going by the study, *Driving Workplace Performance through High-Quality Conversations: What Leaders Must Do Every Day to Be Effective*, it's not so good.

What's missing, "at every level of leadership," according to DDI's release about the research, "is the ability to facilitate effective conversations, something that should be mastered by every business leader as part of a core set of interaction skills in order to build relationships and get work done. Senior leaders have not mastered these skills and are no better off, even though they have been at it longer."

Indeed, the research shows, 90 percent of executives act before checking their understanding of an issue and are ineffective at inviting



ideas from others. And only 11 percent successfully preserve their colleagues' self-esteem and display empathy that would demonstrate interpersonal diplomacy.

Leadership expert Roxana (Roxi) Hewertson, CEO of Trumansburg, N.Y.-based Highland Consulting Group Inc. and creator of the *AskRoxi.com* website, says business leaders "do not get hired for their leadership skills, but for their results." It's up to employers "to figure out hiring and reward programs that actually encourage" these skills, she says.

—Kristen B. Frasch

