The Ayers Group
A Division of Kelly Services
A CAREER PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL FIRM
FALL/WINTER 2006

Ayers Report

A Publication of The Ayers Group, a division of Kelly Services
A Career Partners International Firm

The Ayers Perspective

SYNERGIES AND INTEGRATION

Over the years, I've helped numerous clients with the HR aspects of mergers and acquisitions. Now I'm going through the experience with my own firm following our acquisition by Kelly Services in May. And I'm finding it's very different from this side of the process.

No matter how well you do your due diligence before the march to the altar, it's only human to have a bit of apprehension about what you'll discover once the ink dries on the wedding contract and the celebrations are over. I've watched some clients go through mergers, only to find that promises made before the marriage proved empty. Even though I know we're still in the honeymoon phase, that's clearly not the case in our situation.

> "The acquisition of The Ayers Group is a central component of our strategy to provide comprehensive talent-management solutions to our global customers. We are very excited about the completion of this acquisition and welcome the talented management team and employees of The Ayers Group to the Kelly organization."
>
> **Carl Camden**
> **President & CEO**
> **Kelly Services**

I am pleased to report that the integration of The Ayers Group with Kelly Services is progressing very smoothly. Far from unpleasant surprises, we're finding continuous affirmation that we made the right choice. Our new partners are smart, creative, and real team players. Their values and attitudes toward clients are in sync with ours. There is real alignment.

One of the most important things being affirmed is the tremendous synergy among the business-unit leaders and managers of the Kelly organization and Ayers. Two weeks after the deal was completed, there was a gathering of the worldwide leadership of the Staffing Alternatives segment of Kelly's Professional, Technical and Staffing Alternatives (PTSA) Group, of which Ayers is the newest part. It was an opportunity for bonding and leadership training. But most important, it was a chance to learn about the other units in our segment—HR First, Kelly Vendor Management Services (KVMS), and Kelly Management Services (KMS)—and for them to learn who we are and what we do.

We are investing a great deal of time in education about our new partners and the specifics of how the relationship will provide added value for our clients. Kelly's training initiatives have tapped everyone at Ayers in regard to developing our knowledge of the services Kelly provides and every aspect of the organization. We have been meeting the key leaders of the other divisions, getting a feel for each other's capabilities.

One of the most important success factors in this merger is the fact that Ayers complements, rather than duplicates, Kelly's businesses. Our addition to the PTSA strengthens the organization's service portfolio, making it possible to provide a broader, more integrated human resources solution for Kelly's clients and address their needs throughout all phases of the economic cycle.

Ayers' clients will benefit from the combination of the two organizations' strengths and expertise—not to mention our 90+ collective years of experience. And although our ongoing partnership in Career Partners International provides us with a global footprint, we are expanding that further as part of the Kelly organization. We are now in a position to open the door to services we

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PRINCIPLES FOR EXECUTIVE WOMEN

*Following is the second in our new series of articles exploring 10 Principles for Executive Women.**

Be Proud of Who You Are and What You've Done

Carol was the new Chief Marketing Officer at a communication-technology start-up company and the only female in upper management. When we met, Carol realized she was keeping a low profile in her new position because of a negative situation she'd had with her manager at her last company—which she had sued because of unethical treatment. Carol found herself weighing the potential cost of trying to influence the environment at her new company. Her opinion was that women work hard and accomplish much but don't talk about it. She didn't want to become self-promoting.

We discussed the fact that leadership requires creating visibility for oneself and one's team to raise awareness of the efforts that go into achievements. "Laying low" because of her past experience could be preventing Carol's department from getting due credit. We decided that avoiding political situations was wise and that working alone to change the environment might not be worth it, but creating visibility was a good practice.

As she began to review her accomplishments, Carol realized she knew at least as much about the company's business as any employee, but she was afraid to speak up for fear of "getting shot again." We determined that Carol could be more discerning about when she chose to make recommendations so she could decide when to define direction. However, never offering suggestions would deprive the company of value she could be providing.

The environment at the company became chaotic after the CEO was asked to leave. As she watched the men jockeying for position, Carol used her leadership skills to support the few women in the company and her influence to hire more women and act as a stabilizing force. Over time, this focus increased her confidence as colleagues began to see her in a more positive light.

Practicing the "Be Proud" principle helped Carol fully engage with her job and not shy away from debate and participation. She knew this was not a long-term position, given the organization's turmoil, but reasoned that if she could do well here, it would be excellent practice for her next job.

Rosemary Maxwell Lynch, Psy.D.
Sr. Consultant, OEC

Self-Evaluate

Marcia was Managing Editor of a magazine that had become—driven mostly by her expertise—the jewel in her publisher's crown of eight popular titles. Despite this high level of success, Marcia continued to give herself low grades for her efforts. She sought feedback constantly from her manager, peers, direct reports, and even customers. And she also developed a reputation for lacking the confidence required to deliver messages that might be difficult to hear.

As with many behavioral issues, Marcia's was sourced in insecurity. She told me she felt inadequate and too inexperienced to be in her position, which she had inherited two years prior when her former boss quit. She had only worked under him for one year and felt she needed more time before taking over as Managing Editor, although she'd been in the industry for 12 years.

When we discussed her practice of checking in with others to obtain an evaluation of her performance, Marcia realized that it had been a long-standing practice and that she'd had feelings of inadequacy at every stage of her career. It was clearly time to adopt the principle of self-evaluating!

Toward this end, Marcia set goals for the next month, quarter, and half-year. We determined what the results of reaching the goals would look like. She prepared to assess her one-month performance by doing weekly self-evaluations. At the end of every week, Marcia completed an honest self-evaluation of how she had handled interactions and situations while resisting the temptation to get opinions from others.

After two months, Marcia told me the practice of assessing her actions, decisions, and results was very empowering. As she began to trust her own opinions, Marcia began to feel more confident in her work. She did not abandon but changed her practice of soliciting others' feedback. Instead of asking, "How am I doing?" she began to present her perspective first and then ask whether her colleagues agreed. Marcia's assessment became the standard Marcia used to determine how things were going. ■

TRENDS IN EXECUTIVE COACHING

Joan Caruso
Managing Director, OEC
Tel: 212.889.7788
carusjo@kellyservices.com

It's been more than a decade since coaching gained a toehold in the corporate environment, and it has continued to broaden its acceptance. I find it valuable to periodically take stock of emerging trends in the field and validate them against our own experience at The Ayers Group.

1. **Coaching continues to become more of an executive perk.** As I reported in the Fall 2004 issue of the *Ayers Report* ("The Perk That Pays Back"), this trend emerged at the beginning of the decade. Then coaching shifted back to a remedial focus during the economic downturn. Over the last two years, however, we've seen steadily less use of executive coaching for remedial situations and more of a focus on using it to develop and retain high-potential employees and high flyers.

2. **Companies are giving more attention than ever to the coach-coachee matching process.** A 2004 survey* of executive learning methods by Executive Development Associates found "the match between leader and coach to be much more critical than expected." Our clients are asking for more information about the criteria for creating the optimal match. We tell them it's our responsibility to bring in-depth knowledge of our coaches to the table, but the more information the client can provide about a coaching candidate—learning and developmental style, coaching objectives, etc.—the better the match we're able to create.

3. **Anger management has become one of the fastest-growing disciplines in executive coaching.** Undoubtedly fueled by a fast-paced business environment where change, complexity, pressure, and stress are on the increase, the number of requests we're getting in this area is on the increase. I'm very cautious in dealing with these situations, going only to executive coaches with demonstrated expertise in this discipline. With demand for anger management coaching outstripping the supply of trained providers, it's important to vet providers very carefully. Anger management touches on a variety of issues—stress management, emotional intelligence, etc.—and crosses into the realm of psychology. You walk a fine line to avoid a situation where the coach slips into becoming a shrink, and that isn't what executive coaching is about.

4. **As companies increasingly recognize the benefit of coaching, they are pushing it downward in the organization.** More and more of our clients are now offering coaching to high potentials at junior, as well as executive levels. ■

* Koriath, John J., and Underhill, Brian O. 2006. "Top Trends in Executive Coaching," *Choice,* vol. 4 no. 1: 29-32.

For information on how The Ayers Group can help you with your coaching and other organizational effectiveness needs, please contact Joan Caruso, Managing Director of OEC, at 212-889-7788 or via e-mail: carusjo@kellyservices.com.

CEO-Exit Rate on the Increase in 2006

According to *FORTUNE* magazine (August 7, 2006), CEOs are leaving their jobs at the rate of six per business day so far this year. All but 13 of the 728 exits have been resignations. The hardest-hit industry is health care, at 124. If this pace holds, annual CEO turnover will exceed last year's record 1,322.

THE AGE-ADVANTAGED
A Different

The Conference Board estimates that by the end of this decade, 40 percent of the U.S. workforce will be eligible to retire. Of major interest to aging baby boomers—who have made it clear they have no interest in traditional retirement—is the extent to which companies ultimately will look to them to take up the projected slack.

The *Ayers Report* sat down with members of Ayers' Career Transition Services team for insight into the market for age-advantaged job seekers and advice for those who want to continue working in a corporate environment.

The bottom line is this: The generation that upended just about everything and is poised to reinvent the concept of retirement needs a new mindset about job search.

1. Learn to value what you bring to the table. "Understand that, unlike younger job candidates, you're not selling potential. You're selling experience," says Consultant Damon Montal. "Candidates often buy into stereotypes about older workers more than the market does. We hear it all the time: 'Why would anyone hire me when they can hire someone younger and cheaper?' What I say to them is this: 'If the employer can find a 35-year-old with your level of experience and knowledge, then you're right.' I point out that it's all in how you position yourself."

"We work with candidates to help them define the assets that are enhanced by age," says Consultant Donna Schwarz. "After spending some time in our outplacement program and assessing their assets, they no longer think in negative terms. They become focused on the value they can bring to another organization."

2. Position yourself around your assets and value. "Once you understand what you bring to the table, you need to highlight those things," Schwarz says. "Move them up on the resumé, and make them part of your strategy—how you package and market yourself."

"Rethink your resumé," Montal advises. "Focus on the last 10 to 15 years in some detail to establish that you've attained a certain level of expertise. Don't provide much scope to your earlier work life. Something along the lines of 'Prior to 1990, held increasingly senior positions in X at leading financial services firms, including A, B, and C.' By not providing too many dates, you shift the emphasis from age to experience."

3. Do your homework to find the right fit. "The objective is to actively network toward positions that need and value your assets. That means you need to understand the market and how it's going to react to you," says Managing Director Terry Ebert.

Terry Ebert
Managing Director
Tel: 212.889.7788
ebertth@kellyservices.com

What markets offer the most potential for older workers? "It's highly specific to the industry, market segment, and organization," the Ayers executive continues. "Is someone who is 55+ going to get a job on a trading desk, or marketing for an athletic apparel company? Probably not. These are youth-oriented environments."

"On the other hand, professional services firms tend to care more about knowledge, experience, and maturity than age," Schwarz observes. "And there are many corporate jobs—legal, accounting, and finance to name a few—that require the maturity, wisdom, and experience of a seasoned worker. Being over 45 can be an asset for a financial executive, for example. Smaller companies are eager to tap your experience, especially if you came from a larger company. And they can offer a rewarding work experience. Consulting is another area where age can be an advantage, not an issue."

"You need to look at where business growth is occurring," says Ebert. "My generation has developed a variety of interests and built up the wealth to fund them. There's going to be boomer-driven growth in travel, real estate, investments, health, and fitness, to name just a few areas. This will create demand for sales, marketing, and service people who can connect to members of this highly lucrative market. Who wants to buy a home in an active-adult community from a 30-something?"

Ultimately, the Ayers consultants agree, it comes down to culture. "It's a matter of looking at acceptance within a culture," says Schwarz. "You need to find an organization that's the right fit for you culturally as well as functionally."

4. Have a strategy that includes alternative game plans. "Too often, if candidates have something in mind and the market is not receptive, they don't know where to go," says Montal. "Decide what you want, then test the market and see if you can get there. But have viable backup plans in case you can't.

WORKFORCE: PART II
Job Strategy

"Let's say Plan A is your stretch goal, your ideal job. It may be a step above your old job at the same kind of company or the same job at a bigger company. Plan B may be to maintain the status quo. Plan C may be the same position at a smaller company—going from the FORTUNE 500 to a 500-person company. Plan D might be where you get creative, looking at alternatives such as franchising, consulting, commission-based sales, or totally reinventing yourself. How you define the options is up to you, but you need fallbacks."

5. Focus on active search. The Ayers' consultants recommend devoting at least 80 percent of your effort to networking and direct contact and no more than 20 percent to passive search: agencies and ads.

"The 80-20 formula is a good general rule of thumb, but older candidates should err on the active side," says Montal. "If you answer an ad or online posting and your resumé says you graduated in1965, it's not going to generate much excitement in certain companies or in specific cultures. The best jobs are found in the hidden market, which you penetrate through research and networking. In the old days, you flooded the market with resumés. Today, it's about flooding the market with relationships." ■

The Ayers Report *will continue this series on the aging workforce in the next issue.*

To learn more about our programs call:
Bill Ayers,
Vice President & Business Unit Leader
The Ayers Group, a division of Kelly Services
405 Lexington Ave. • New York, NY • 10174
Tel: 212-889-7788 • Fax: 212-697-0682
www.ayers.com

We asked Dr. Peter Olsinski, Director of Consulting Services in Ayers' New York office, to counter some of the stereotypes about older workers with the realities he and his colleagues see on a daily basis in their work with job candidates.

S: Innovation is crucial to competitive advantage and creativity is for the young.

R: It depends on whether you're talking about throw-it-out-and-start-over or build-on-what-exists/experimental innovation. Experimental innovators do their best work later in life, drawing on lifelong observation and experience, trial and error, and hard-won practical intelligence.

S: Older workers have trouble working with/reporting to younger workers.

R: A lifetime in the working world has taught the 55+ crowd how to deal with people of all ages—and especially to respect leadership regardless of age.

S: Older workers are marking time and lack commitment.

R: A major survey shows that the most engaged, inspired, and passionate workers are 55+. Not only is their commitment stronger, they're more involved with work and less involved with raising a family.

S: Older workers aren't up to physical and mental demands of employment.

R: In general, older employees call in sick less often than younger ones. They take better care of themselves because they're more aware of health and mortality issues. Fewer of today's jobs are physically demanding, and technology and medical advances are offsetting the effects of aging.

S: Older workers don't keep up with technology and are unwilling or unable to learn.

R: Rapid change in technology and the business environment requires constant retraining of employees. Research has found that retraining in technology takes hold in older workers as well as younger ones. The former may operate information technology more slowly than younger counterparts but tend to do so with fewer errors.

S: Older workers are expensive.

R: These are people who've climbed the career ladder and tend to be more interested in personal satisfaction than status at this point in life. They know the trade-off may be making less. The fact that some will already have pensions and health benefits means a new employer won't have to enroll them in its plan.

SUCCESSFUL LANDINGS

Job searchers are often reluctant to network among former colleagues. Some overlook or resist the idea of networking "down" among former subordinates. "Whether it's out of pride, fear that former peers won't be receptive, or a mistaken feeling that lower-level colleagues can't be helpful, you have to get over this kind of thinking," says Doug O'Connor, Senior Vice President in Ayers' Career Transition group. "The fastest route to a new employer is often through an old one."

Case #1

After four years as Senior Vice President of Investor Relations for a large publicly-held retailer, the candidate found her job eliminated when private-equity investors bought the company. Working with her Ayers consultant to identify her next move, the executive—who had also worked for a major investment firm—realized she wanted to get back into financial services. With her consultant's help, she networked back to former colleagues at the investment firm. They helped her develop important contacts. The payoff was a Managing Director position at a large Wall Street firm.

Case #2

The former Technology Director for a Wall Street firm found it difficult to generate quality leads. Not a strong networker, he attended an Ayers seminar that helped him identify the problem: he always networked up in target organizations. The candidate began to network among former subordinates now working in new organizations. One passed the candidate's resumé to his superiors at a target Wall Street firm. Within two weeks, the candidate was offered a position comparable to his old one.

Case #3

A Senior Manager responsible for structuring and underwriting credit facilities for commercial real estate lenders was downsized out of an international bank's subsidiary. She worked closely with her Ayers consultant to develop an effective marketing plan but had difficulty networking in the industry. On her consultant's advice, the candidate collaborated with former colleagues to cultivate new contacts. This effort resulted in an introduction at a major domestic bank. Within two weeks, she accepted a comparable position at a higher compensation level.

"Some firms encourage employee referrals and may offer cash incentives for help in attracting quality talent," O'Connor notes. ■

Candidates' names are withheld to respect their privacy. To arrange to speak with any of these candidates regarding their career-change experiences, contact Doug O'Connor at oconndo@kellyservices.com.

Look Who's Turning 60 in 2006

It began on January 1 at one second past midnight with the birthday of Kathleen Casey, hailed as the nation's first baby boomer; it will continue for the next 18 years. Every seven seconds, someone in the U.S. turns 60—an estimated 7,918 a day.

The leading edge of this wave, which is sweeping around the world, contains a cross-disciplinary Who's Who. Some—like President George W. Bush and his wife, Laura; former president Bill Clinton; and Helmut Panke, the CEO who turned automaker BMW into the global luxury brand to beat but was forced into retirement in August—are making headlines. Listed on the right are other notables who turn 60 in 2006.

Business
Michael Milken, Michael Ovitz, Donald Trump

Journalism
Connie Chung, Diane Sawyer, Jann Wenner, Judy Woodruff

Medicine
Robert Jarvik

Music
Jimmy Buffett, José Carreras, Marianne Faithfull, Barry Gibb, Leslie Gore, Al Green, Thelma Houston, Naomi Judd, Donovon Leitch, Barry Manilow, Linda Ronstadt, Edgar Winter

Sports
Suzy Chaffee, Larry Csonka, Reggie Jackson, Ilie Nastase

Art
Alice Aycock, Jamie Wyeth

Entertainment
Candice Bergen, Cher, Timothy Dalton, Patty Duke, Sally Field, Danny Glover, Goldie Hawn, Tommy Lee Jones, Diane Keaton, Cheech Marin, Bette Midler, Liza Minnelli, Dolly Parton, Pat Sajak, Susan Sarandon, Suzanne Somers, Steven Spielberg, Sylvester Stallone, Oliver Stone, Ben Vereen

To have the *Ayers Report* sent to others in your organization, please contact Roberta Martin at martiro@kellyservices.com or 212.889.7788.

COLLEGE DAY 2006

Learning How to Stand Out in the Crowd

The 2006 Ayers College Day Seminar on August 10 drew a record turnout. For the 118 participants, there was quite a bit of good news. First, this year's graduates are finding an even stronger market than graduates of recent years. According to annual surveys published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers*

- Hiring of new college grads is projected to increase nearly 14 percent over 2004-05. Increases are expected across all sectors, with the biggest gains in service, manufacturing, and government/nonprofit. By region, the Northeast seems to offer the most opportunity, followed in order by the South, Midwest, and West.

- Fall hiring of new grads for full-time, entry-level positions is also expected to increase over last year.

- Increased competition is translating into higher average starting salaries, particularly for grads with degrees in accounting, business administration/ management, economics/finance, and all engineering disciplines. Marketing and computer science are among the few areas expected to see slight decreases.

Second, attendees found out that investing a day in the seminar would give them a leg up with campus recruiters and potential employers in this promising marketplace. The annual event is designed to help young candidates differentiate themselves by providing tools, strategies, market insight, and hands-on workshops to hone search-related skills. A cross-industry panel of HR executives and recruiters from American Express, Lehman Brothers, Malcolm Pirnie, Parker Meridien, and Time Inc. provided the employers' perspective.

College Day was offered probono to 2006 graduates and incoming college juniors and seniors nominated by members of Ayers' clients and other constituencies. Developed and presented by a team of professionals from the firm's Career Transition practice under the leadership of Shelli Kanet and Barbara Safani, College Day 2006 was hosted by Lehman Brothers.
Attendees were enthusiastic about the day's lessons. "The panel gave great insight into different industries and real-world knowledge," said one. "The one-on-one resumé prep and brainstorming were extremely helpful," another commented, while a third added, "It helped me pinpoint my weaknesses and sharpened my methods of preparation and application." ■

*www.naceweb.org

THE AYERS PERSPECTIVE

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could never provide before, including specialized recruiting capabilities in law, science, engineering, healthcare, and accounting/tax, as well as non-core business functions (e.g., call-center management, light assembly, warehouse, office services).

Joan Caruso is spearheading an Integration Sales Task Force comprising key members of sales management from all Kelly businesses. A major focus of this effort will be identifying all the services Kelly provides that might be of value to our clients and how best to communicate and provide those services.

So often when there's a merger or acquisition, there is redundancy and people are asked to leave. Because that's not the case here, you are going to continue to see the same faces and work with the same people. The integration is recreating Ayers as a public firm with broadened capabilities and global reach that retains a small-company approach: high-quality, customized service and partnering with clients. We look forward to putting our new capabilities to work for you. ■

Bill Ayers Named GPOIC EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

Bill Ayers was honored as Executive of the Year by the Greater Paterson affiliate of the Opportunities Industrialization Center of America on September 29. OIC, a community-supported network that trains or retrains the un- or underemployed, has been recognized by Congress as one of the country's premier training and development programs.

"I was very pleased to accept this award," the Ayers Group founder said. "Under the leadership of Chairman and President Travis L. Williams, the GPOIC has become a real asset in our metropolitan area."

Ambassador Andrew Young delivered the keynote address at the gala award dinner held at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark.

Succession Planning Recommendations

Effective succession planning maximizes the use of resources across the entire organization. When succession planning is allowed to play out at the micro rather than macro level, that objective is difficult to achieve. One test of effectiveness is to pull back and look at how many of the individuals who have been placed in management positions when openings occur are on the organization's high-potential list. If you don't have a high hit rate, you're not making optimum use of your talent.

Following are some of the best practices I recommend and ways to overcome resistance to them.

Involve the same cross-organizational group in broad talent management and succession planning. One candidate can't fill multiple jobs, yet it's common to find the same candidate on multiple succession lists across a single tier of the organization. Working at the macro level is a reality check. It provides the opportunity to focus and optimize the development of such high-potential individuals for the good of the organization as a whole, and make sure all the succession bases are covered with candidates who are best suited to the positions.

Resistance to group succession planning, especially if it's a new process, often comes from executives who are nervous about looking good to the group. I help them prepare their succession lists and/or development plans and presentations. I may hold a preview meeting where one group member makes a sample presentation. Letting everyone see what is expected reduces tension, discomfort, and resistance so the process moves along better.

Aggregate jobs into pools. In a world where job descriptions change so fast, a narrow position-by-position review can be a waste of valuable time. Job pooling keeps talent management and succession planning fresher, more flexible, and more applicable.

I recommend creating a small number of pools tight enough to have credibility, without aggregating too much—for example, all top-level financial positions rather than all CFOs. If the pools are too large, people will sidestep them and an informal subsystem will emerge to undermine the process.

Setting up a separate succession plan for jobs that have a unique set of requirements and don't obviously fit into a pool could set an unfavorable precedent. A better approach is to include the "unique" job in a pool and footnote viable candidates. You'd be surprised at how many of those "narrow" candidates will prove able to fill a variety of the jobs in the pool.

Members of the succession planning group often resist pooling because they regard their jobs as unique or feel they'll lose control over selecting their own replacements. I have them provide succession lists for their jobs, with the understanding that these will become part of the total input. I may encourage them to identify candidates for jobs other than their own, which they may not regard as being quite so unique. The idea is to use their input to build the new approach rather than forcing them to participate in something they don't buy into.

You can't develop people in secret. It's counterproductive to put someone forward for a job who will turn it down when the time comes. False starts don't move the organization forward.

I recommend holding pre- and post-meeting conversations. The first is a normal development conversation: "Where do you think you have the talent to go? What are your goals and aspirations? What do you think you need to develop to achieve them?"

The follow-up conversation is more sensitive. It shouldn't be, "You're the second candidate for the CFO job in Oshkosh." What the candidate should hear instead is, "You're being considered for a senior financial management position in a major division. It might require development of XYZ to prepare, and involve relocation. Are you interested and willing?"

Do "what if" scenario planning. Once the succession plans are done, scenario planning is particularly helpful for improving the diversity of the top ranks. For instance: "What if we had to replace the entire top team with the first candidate on each list? Would the diversity statistics improve or decline?" This exercise might suggest the need for external recruiting to build a more diverse talent pool for top jobs. It's better to identify that early so the talent can be in place when openings actually occur. ■

Susan Michener, Ph.D., is a senior management consultant who partners with client organizations on talent management, succession planning, retention, high-potential development, executive coaching, and leadership-team building. She is former Director of Leadership Development at Texaco.