Leading Leaders

"When you think about COVID, when you think about social unrest, when you think about the impact on the economy and even the political realities of the U.S. right now, leaders are going through a lot."

So says Executive Coach and Los Angeles Talent Management Consultant Lacey Leone McLaughlin.

COVID has put enormous pressure on CEOs and business leaders. The impact of the pandemic has been unimaginable for everyone, including leaders who are supposed to have it all "figured out," as McLaughlin says.

She experiences first-hand on a daily basis the struggles leaders face – challenges that have been enhanced three-fold. "Right now, it's hard to lead, and it's hard to deliver results in a meaningful way," she says.

And that's where her specialization comes in.



Lacey Leone McLaughlin

When Lacey Leone McLaughlin launched LLM Consulting Group, executive leadership training and coaching was not that common of a practice. Today, it's essential – and welcomed in every imaginable management circle from Wall Street to Main

With almost 20 years of experience in the coaching and consulting world, McLaughlin has helped leaders and teams improve in multiple facets of their work. Her work is a combination of working 1-on-1 with leaders, multi-person teams, and "programmatic work."

If it's a single leader, she's working on a business challenge, "whether that's structure, leadership, business, whatever they are trying to do better." If it's a team, she's working on maximizing how they come together and operate more efficiently. If it's programmatic work, it may be working with a production team to see "how they, as a content creators in the industry of entertainment, can harness their unique skillset to bring great content to the masses."

Sounds intriguing right? "Never a dull day. Never the same day," she says with a smile.

McLaughlin started her career in coaching and consulting in the early 2000s when thought leadership was "in the first inning."

Questions such as "how do we connect thought leaders with their community?" had not been answered. "I was determined to figure it out," she says.

That led to the launch of her company, LLM Consulting Group, in 2008. McLaughlin focuses on leaders "making transitions to new, bigger, and more complex roles -- in organizations that are going through large-scale transformational change."

Since the start of LLMCG, the industry has exploded in popularity, value, importance and impact.

"Leaders and companies today care about and are willing to invest in how leaders lead -- and they're willing to invest in their development," she says. "It impacts their bottom line when they are leading their people in a real way."

Think about a boss you had with poor leadership skills. Did he or she make you want to work *harder* and do *better* at your job? Likely not. Most of the time, people who have poor leadership skills give their employees less of an incentive to do their best to benefit the company.

The new generation in the workforce is a huge reason for today's sensitive and complex environment.

"Leaders have had to change because the expectation of what a good boss looks like -- and what a good experience looks like has changed," McLaughlin says.

Young individuals looking for jobs today demand to understand who they're working for, "what they value, and what they believe in," she says. "Leaders are held accountable in a very different way and if they aren't doing those things right, they lose talent, they are less competitive, and they lose business."

Leadership development is essential in today's accountable, social, #MeToo movement environment, which has flipped the workforce and leadership upside down. Prior to the movement, McLaughlin would be working with a leader in their office, yet aside from leadership and HR, no one knew who she was or what she was there for.

"But now, the work I am doing is something that leaders are excited about and proud of, rather than secretly doing in the background so no one would find out about it. Something that was once done behind the scenes is something that executives are asking for today and some are even including it in their contracting."

This means significant changes and advances for the future of all industries – but specifically for those in which the development of leadership once mattered less, such as the entertainment industry.

"I'm thrilled to be a part of the positive changes in the entertainment and media industries. It's an absolute joy to be part of the process that is bringing real change to leaders in the entertainment space. In entertainment, people are creating content that the world consumes," McLaughlin says.

"It's important because it's saying something; it's important because they're setting the stage on what the industry looks like in years to come, which is very different. It's exciting to help people think about how others are adapting and adjusting to meet the demands of a very complex environment. It's amazing and inspiring to see how many career-defining moments that are created -- opportunities for leaders to stand up and be brilliant, do the right thing and ultimately lead courageously and with a little bit of grace."
— By Leslie K. Hughes, California Business Journal.

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