



WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

Mary M. Walczak: Welcome to all. Dave Van Wylen and I are here with Paul Erdahl in his office at Medtronic. Paul, can you tell us a little about your role here, and about your educational and experiential past?

Paul C. Erdahl: I'd be happy to. And first of all, let me say, I'm very happy to have this opportunity to meet with all of you and to talk about leadership development today, and to have David and Mary join me in my office at Medtronic in Fridley, Minnesota. So, it's a great chance to have this conversation and dialogue.

Walczak: Thanks, Paul. I know when Dave and I talked with you before this conference call to prepare, you described a little bit about the different leadership programs that you have in place at Medtronic for these two tiers of people in leadership roles. Can you tell us a little more about that?

Erdahl: There's actually a multi-dynamic approach. On the one hand, we talk about talent management within the organization: how do we insure we have the right people in the right place at the right time to meet our business challenges. So, moving talent around the organization, developing people through job assignments, is a critical part of our leadership development portfolio.

Rarely, in fact, never in my experience here, have we had anybody who has just stayed in one kind of primary track as they've moved through their career at Medtronic. It's very important that as we continue to develop leaders we look at a multi-dimensional perspective. It is important to make sure leaders have a breath of understanding about all of the various business needs and challenges that we face and how to work in different kinds of environments.

But that said, within our broader portfolio of leadership development activities, we really have four buckets:

- ◆ **"Talent job assignments:"** making sure people get a range of experiences as they develop in their career.
- ◆ **Developmental relationships:** coaching and mentoring relationships that are established for an emerging leadership talent, to make sure that each has a chance to work one-on-one with somebody to gain insights and talk about critical issues, about challenges that they might be facing.
- ◆ **Performance feedback:** for any effective leader, it is critical to ask, "How well did the organization perform under their leadership?" So, performance feedback, whether it be through a management relationship, an annual performance evaluation cycle, through 360 feedback from peers and others that they work with closely, is a critical part of providing guidance to any developing leader.

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The goal of Café Scientifique is to spark and sustain local conversations about matter of import to colleagues with responsibility for developing leaders— students as well as faculty in STEM fields. These conversations cut across boundaries of career stages, disciplines, and academic spheres of responsibility.



Erdahl Background Information— p. 10

WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

- ◆ **Leadership programming:** in terms of training and education. While this gets a lot of attention as being a primary area of focus, it's actually something that supplements the experiences people are getting on the job.

Our hope is that most of that training and education is occurring at critical transitions or points in a person's career, so that they can understand what the new dynamics are, the new issues they're facing, and have that opportunity to discuss and develop the particular skills that are critical to them at that point.

Walczak: You talked a little bit about different types of leaders in the organization and the kinds of skills you're looking for. Do you have a personal definition of leadership?

Erdahl: There are many definitions of leadership, of course. Within our organization, the way I would define leadership is the ability of an individual to inspire, motivate, and focus the energies of others towards the achievement of a desired goal, whatever that goal might be.

We all know leaders and know there is no one template for what makes an outstanding leader. We look at different individuals: great leaders are not necessarily always extraverts; there are great leaders who are introverts. There are leaders who are big thinkers, others who are taskmasters. There are leaders who are highly organized and those who seem a little chaotic. Depending on the circumstances, the place, the time, all these characteristics can be highly effective in being leaders.

So although we know there isn't one standard for what leadership "looks like," it is necessary to really engage people. One question we often ask in our leadership development programs is: "Why would someone follow you? What is it that you bring to the table that would engage others so that they would actually move down a path with you toward some goal?"

And so we really ask people to spend a great deal of time finding out and understanding their own personal strengths and capabilities, and understanding how they might apply those in the circumstances they find themselves in.

Medtronic is a very diverse organization. Obviously, we have outstanding engineers and technical talent, individuals who understand medical technology better than anyone else out there. Their leadership style is very different than that of our business leaders who come out of a background that isn't highly technically-focused. So how they work with each other and how they engage the groups they're involved with differs. It is important to respect and appreciate that.

But at the end of the day, leadership is about being able to engage and inspire, and to move people with some plan towards some goal. That's my off-the-top-of-my-head definition of leadership.

Walczak: Well, you talked about how there's not a "one-size-fits-all" kind of list of leadership characteristics. Are there things that stand out that are always present in your experience with leaders that you have worked with and helped to develop over the years?

Erdahl: I think there are. There are some characteristics we look for and some characteristics we hope to develop. Based on some research, and as we try to evaluate the performance of leaders within the organization, there are really four critical areas that we focus on:

- ◆ One is **thinking or judgment;** that's absolutely critical. It is a requirement of leaders to be able to be strategic in their thinking. Be able to think ahead. Be able to envision a future state. It's something that not everybody has.

Increasingly, it is about having a global perspective. Medtronic has operations in 120 countries around the world. It's increasingly important for leaders in our organization to have a global perspective; it's not just "here's how it work in Minneapolis," but "here's how it works in Mumbai." Here's how it works in Shanghai, and how do we bring those different kinds of cultural perspectives to bear?

We also talk about the need for a certain level of business acumen in terms of ensuring people understand the business dynamics, both internally and externally in terms of markets, as well as business operations, so that thinking and judgment becomes critical in terms of decision-making.



WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

- ◆ The second bucket, and maybe one that's equally as important, if not more important in some ways, is **interpersonal capabilities**. We ask people: How do you engage people? How do you identify and institute or drive change within an organization? How do you develop talent? How do you work well with others? I can't overstate this enough.

As much as I have known and worked with a number of really talented, really bright, very articulate people on a number of issues, this can be a significant derailer for people if they cannot get people to follow them.

If you don't have the relationship capabilities to ensure that you're building those relationships, that you're communicating effectively, that you're helping people to understand the reasons behind change or growth or whatever it might be, that's a significant area for leadership development.

- ◆ These characteristics aren't in any particular order; all become important, especially in a dynamic organization. So the third area to highlight is really around **personal skills**, and when I say personal skills, I'm talking about integrity. I'm talking about responsibility, accountability, a willingness to develop oneself in the role.

One of the scariest things is when you have a leader who thinks they know everything, and perhaps the best leaders are those who recognize they don't know much at all. So, in knowing what you do not know, it is critical that leaders gather the right people around them to ensure the knowledge they need to go forward is there.

We also talk about courage. It's a tough role to be in, at least in our organizations, but I think in any organization, to have the courage to take a stand, to have courage to put a stake in the ground and to stand behind it.

There are a few things as frustrating as a leader who changes his or her mind on a regular basis; you start down one path, and then you start down another path. So, I think having the courage to stay the course, having the courage to align with one's convictions is critical.

- ◆ The last bucket that I would identify as being critical for leaders is actually **getting the work done**. It's the results, execution, planning, and orientation toward achieving the objective.

And especially in our industry, it's also about having a focus on ensuring that the outcome is a high quality outcome. For us it is about aligning with customer needs and making sure we continually manage the performance— not just of individuals— but of the entire organization toward that end.

So those are the "four buckets:" the thinking, the people, the personal, and the results are the areas we focus on as being critical to effective leadership.

Walczak: When you started, the first two resonated with me in terms of your background in psychology and personality testing. So my next question is, "How do you determine whether someone in the organization that you've hired has this leadership potential?"

Erdahl: That's a great question, one we discuss a lot. Predicting the future is one of the leadership development challenges. As soon as we master this and we can predict where people are going to be or what they're capabilities are going to be down the road, we'll be in a much better place. So, it is as much an art as it is a science.

We do have this discussion fairly regularly in what we call our "talent reviews." Senior leadership comes together to talk about those who are demonstrating high leadership potential within the organization.

There are people we think we should be investing extra time, energy, and resources in to develop them to leadership levels within the organizations. There are three or four critical aspects of leadership potential:

- ◆ One is certainly **past performance**. As we all know— and my psychologist friends out there know— past performance is often the best predictor of future performance. While it's good to have positive intentions about things, it's even better to look and identify people who have been successful in the past.



WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

- ♦ And the second one really akin to that is **learning agility**. We ask: To what extent do people have the capability to step into new roles, new responsibilities, and stretch assignments, which technically they're not qualified for because they haven't done it before, and yet show the ability to learn, adapt, and grow, and apply their knowledge and experience, whether it comes from academic background or a business background? How do they leverage that experience and apply it in new situations?

Learning agility is absolutely critical and it's probably the most important characteristic as we look for new leaders within the organization.

- ♦ The third component is really around **personal motivation and aspiration**. There are very, very talented people who really don't want to be in leadership roles, and sometimes we see those people and we recognize that they have potential.

But there's the old joke about how many psychologists it takes to change a light bulb. The answer is none. The light bulb has to want to change, and if these people don't want to do these things, it's really tough to lead a horse to water.

What we look for is that personal aspiration, that motivation. With that motivation comes the capability to overcome challenges, obstacles, and so forth.

So, how do we assess this? We have done it subjectively, very much based on a conversation, based on conversations with specific individuals trying to assess these kinds of things. It involves looking at their track record of performance and having the conversation about learning agility. How do they demonstrate capability in a situation they haven't been in before?

Increasingly, the notion of multi-dimensionality is coming up... how do we insure that people have a breadth of experience?

More and more we are asking: are there tools that will help us do that? Are there organizations out there that have developed tools around potential? More and more, we're aware that a lot of subjective opinions do not make up an objective opinion.

We do use some assessment tools with senior leaders, looking at cognitive and interpersonal skills and other capabilities, and find them to be very useful. These tools are often better predictors than we are. I believe there's literature out there stating that interviews are one of the poorest predictors of actual on-the-job performance. So, increasingly I think some of those tools and processes may be helpful. We're not using them currently, but we are exploring that going forward.

Walczak: Good. So, suppose you've identified a person within the ranks at Medtronic who people agree has leadership potential, but they haven't risen to that level yet. What kinds of strategies would you use to help that person move in that direction, assuming that they're interested?

Erdahl: Just this past week I was in California with our policy committee (our CEO and the top 10 or 12 people in the company). We talked about the criteria needed for the most senior leadership levels in the company. We talked about the breadth of experience, and what's interesting is there's been a shift, at least within our corporation, over the last few years.

Increasingly, the notion of multi-dimensionality is coming up more and more. This is in contrast to a functional approach where individuals focus on marketing, sales, engineering or R&D, and all such things. Typically, people have developed within those siloed kind of functional areas, versus across the entire company.

Now we are asking: how do we insure that people have a breadth of experience? And so when we look at somebody we've identified as a high potential person who might be in their early 30s at Medtronic, we say, this person, if they stay on this course and they stay interested, in 10 or 15 years could be running one of our major businesses.



WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

So we identify experiences within the organization that we think somebody should have, and then try to make sure that their job assignment, their career path, allows them an opportunity to step foot into each of those different areas. We also augment those assignments with training, education, mentoring, coaching, and other performance feedbacks, so that they're getting assistance along the way.

Walczak: Could you say more about mentors?

Erdahl: Our hope is that most of our managers within the organization are being developed to be effective coaches and mentors. There's a lot of informal mentoring going on all the time across the organization, and that's something we support and encourage.

That said, we do have formal mentoring programs we run internally. Here we focus on ensuring our senior leaders are mentoring younger talent. We identify top talent early in their careers and match them up with senior leader-mentors. We encourage these relationships to be structured and focused, so it's not just let's get together for coffee.

And it's driven by the mentee, by the way, not by the mentor. The mentee is to make sure they have goals and objectives for that relationship that come forward in the discussions.

David Van Wylene: We have a question from Western State College.

Dale L. Orth: You said it was frustrating to have a leader who changes his/her mind frequently, but at the same time you've talked about the need to consider change, listen, and have a lot of people involved. Those two concepts seem to contrast with each other a bit. We were wondering when a leader decides it's the right thing to do to stay the course and when it's important to change, and then how explain that change?

Erdahl: That's always a difficult situation. One of the challenges is there's always more information to gather; there's always more points of view. There's always differing opinions about how to approach something. One of the things that can drag a leader down is if they allow such conversations to go on and on. You are never going to have a 100-percent consensus. It is one of the leaders' responsibilities to make those tough calls and decisions.

Our former CEO, Art Collins, who recently retired from Medtronic, used to say he would rather be 80 percent confident he's making the right decision and then move forward with it, rather than waiting until there was 100 percent agreement on a decision. One decision might be a better decision than another, but we have to be ready to make decisions that we will continue to tweak and evolve as we go forward.

To answer your question about "when do you change, when do you stop or go back or go in a different direction," again, my experience has been that you do that when it actually will be harmful to the organization to continue to go forward. This is the notion that "first do no harm." And if we find our self in a situation where continuing to go forward on a path may cause more harm or more difficulty, then you really have to stop and say, "You know what, we maybe need to change course on this."

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Those are difficult situation to deal with. But at the end of the day, the old saying, the buck stops here, is relevant. A leader needs to have that ability, that integrity, to be able to weigh all the information, and then make those kinds of decisions. So, I don't know if that's a clear answer, and unfortunately, again, it's not one of those things that there's any black and white kind of advice.

For myself and some of the situations I find myself in, it is stopping and saying, "Okay, if we continue down this path, is it doing harm? Is it taking us in a completely wrong direction?" If so, then, we have to change course, and those are always very difficult decisions to make.



WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

Van Wylen: A question many participants are asking is the extent to which you think the leadership issues you face in the business world are applicable to the academic world.

Erdahl: That's one of those questions I should turn around and ask you, based on what I've shared. But I'm pretty confident that when it comes to leadership, a lot of these issues are shared, regardless of the context you find yourself in.

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With respect to leadership skills, specifically, the key is helping students to be very self aware about who they are.

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I have not been in the academic world for some time, but I certainly know and understand, and from conversations, friends, colleagues, others that I work with and some of the colleges and universities that I continue to have interactions with, I don't think there's any sort of turf here that isn't shared by all.

There are always questions like, "Where are we going," and "How are we going to get there?" There are always questions like, "Is this a consensus decision or is it something that really requires leadership?"

There is always change happening and driving that change requires leadership to ensure that it's effective. Having the people at the helm who can do that effectively, who can do that in a way that truly engages and motivates people, requires outstanding leadership, no matter the environment you find yourself in.

Van Wylen: Marlene Moore asked a question about mentoring.

Marlene Moore: Well, since it has already been addressed, I'd like to ask about another specific part about the academic world, and that is transferring what you know about the business world to our education of students. Do you have ideas for how we might look at leadership development within our student bodies?

Erdahl: A great question, and this is one I'd love to spend a lot more time talking about, because you all are working with talent that we need in the near future, and it's not that far away.

As a father of two teenagers right now, and I'm looking at my kids and hoping that I'm getting them on the right path towards being productive citizens and leaders in their own right some day, I think that one of the biggest challenges we have is about developing talent for the future. The demographics are out there that today's college students are going to be in great demand in the workforce.

In fact, as we look at numbers internal to Medtronic— and I know it extends across our industry and others— the baby boom generation is on the verge of retirement. The demand for talent is only going to be increasing and the availability of qualified talent seems to be going down. And so as we look to the colleges and the universities, having talent and developing students as leaders is going to be absolutely critical.

So, my perspective— and as a St. Olaf grad, I know we talked about leadership. In looking back, if I were to do anything differently from my own experience, at the top of my list would be global experiences.

Whether it be language capabilities, traveling, learning, or studying abroad, these experiences are absolutely critical. I know that this is something that catches our eye when we look at resumes. That's key. That's going to be critical for us— the world is going flat on us, and we're going to need to continue to have people who have awareness, at the very least, and any experiences they can have would be much, much better.

Many of your schools do that, and I know looking at colleges with my son recently, those certainly are some of the highlights that I see and appreciate greatly. With respect to leadership skills, specifically, the key is helping students to be very self aware about who they are, what their skills are, what their strengths are, what their capabilities are, how they want to shape and influence the world as they graduate, and how they step into that.

Back to those four areas that I talked about at the beginning: opportunities for students to work on projects and lead projects or initiatives as undergraduates is going to be key. Making sure that they learn from those experiences.

One thing I look back on, while we always certainly got evaluated on the outcome of our project, I don't know that we studied the process. This was apparent especially on those group projects that many of us probably still cringe at, in terms of one person did all the work and others didn't.

WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

Why was that? And what was the difference between the individuals on that team? If one person really did do all the work, that's the person I want to hire as a leader some day.

Although, the question is: were there individuals in the group that not only had that motivation and aspiration to succeed, which is important, but who were the ones who actually made the team work, were able to align people, and get people working more effectively together?

It may not be the person with all the knowledge. It may be the person who had the skills to keep the group moving forward. Now, in a lot of those teams and situations, I know there are ambiguous roles, but sometimes there's opportunity there to really leverage that kind of learning.

The other thing I was going to mention is that notion of multi-dimensionality. I mean, when I graduated from St. Olaf, I wanted to be a psychologist. That was all I wanted to be. I wanted to be a therapist. I never thought outside of that box. I never really challenged myself, and it wasn't until I was challenged by the organization I was a part of to look at that differently, that I thought any differently— my identity was associated with being a psychologist.

And I do think— and correct me if I'm wrong or if you have opinions on this— I think colleges and universities are very, very tied to specific identities. I'm a chemist. I'm a biologist. I'm a psychologist. I'm a professor of this, that or the other thing, and often we don't think of ourselves in that multi-dimensional kind of prospective. That's something that increasingly you need to develop in others.

Van Wylen: Kira Banks from Illinois Wesleyan has an important question.

Kira Hudson Banks: Yes. So, given that you were just talking about diverse experiences and making sure that our students get those diverse experiences, so many institutions have diversity as an important part of their vision and mission statements and are working to attract diverse students and faculty. The question I have then is what kind of mechanisms do you have in place to help individuals of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds navigate leadership?

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We really, truly need to look at the unique issues that women and people of color face.

And so, in particular, I have in mind the research on mentoring and advancement that has been highlighted. Often times, individuals of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds can be overlooked for positions of leadership, but at the same time, in some situations, there's a large expectation, given the small number of people of color in many institutions. What mechanisms do you have in place to navigate those dynamics?

Erdahl: A great question. We certainly have been focused on diversity and inclusion as an organization for some time. The reality and the challenge that we continue to face, even though we've been talking about it is that we haven't seen the dramatic kinds of changes that we had hoped.

So, what I can tell you, even in this year, we are doing some of the things you alluded to. We have targeted mentoring and coaching programs for women and people of color within the organization; we are realizing that our old ways of managing some of these situations haven't worked, and we perhaps haven't been as aggressive as we need to be.

It's a challenge, and I just had this conversation with one of our high potential women a week ago. We have this new program, a mentoring program for women and people of color, and she was a little hesitant to be involved in that because she didn't want to be treated as special or unique or different. She just wanted to be part of all the other programs, which is the approach that we've generally taken over the years.

What we're discovering is we really, truly need to look at the unique issues that women and people of color face. And what we understand is when we put mixed people in a group with a lot of white males or other kinds of situations, we really do not gain an understanding and appreciation of what some of those unique issues are.

And I would add to the list, we also focus on people with disabilities. We focus on gay/lesbian, bi-sexual/transgender individuals, which is quite frankly, one of the groups that is probably least talked about within the organization, and yet, in terms of the challenges that they face, they're monumental.



WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

So, we need to be more explicit about our focus, and we need to continue to provide that kind of support. In our work here as we start to look at people in our leadership pipeline, we need to realize that women and people of color tend to hit a ceiling, for whatever reason, whether it be baked in bias that we have or old traditions.



True leaders are all about continuing to improve the circumstances or the situations of their organization.



It's an organizational issue for us. We've got to break through that. We can't just assume that it will happen by chance. So, that's a critical issue for us, and it is at the top of our CEO's list, and we do have a number of goals and objectives around that.

Walczak: Thanks. One of the questions that we wanted to ask you about is if you think back on your history and your past to where you are now, when was the time when you first recognized yourself as leader? Do you have a clear incident that happened or a particular point in your life, in your travels that had that light bulb go on for you?

Erdahl: I don't know that I ever thought of myself as being on a leadership development path by any means. I think it was kind of just who I was.

What's interesting to me is when I started at Medtronic, I was very much in an individual contributor role. I didn't manage anybody. I was a consultant working across the organization, working with people, and, in fact, I remember very much having a mindset that I liked working with people and with the managers and the leaders of the organization, but I wouldn't want to ever be one.

And it happened somewhat by default, that I fell into this role, and then I discovered all the challenges about it being easier to preach some of these things than it is to actually do some of these changes. And yet at the same time, the excitement for me— and when I really became aware of it— is that it allows me the opportunity to develop the ideas and thoughts about where an organization, this organization, needs to go, and then to be able to start working with people to make those kinds of things happen.

And I think that absolutely the most critical piece is, to go back to that again, is true leaders are all about continuing to improve the circumstances or the situations of their organization. This involves identifying those people at all ages and levels who should be engaged, and helping to develop them.

Van Wylen: We have a follow-up question from Western State College. Is someone out there who can ask Paul this question?

Katherine Wiese: This is a follow-up to your comment that it's not possible to have a 100 percent consensus in decision-making all the time. So, how do you handle or deal with a recurring situation when it's the same group, a minority group, whose voices are not heard, thus feel disenfranchised in the process?

Erdahl: That's a tough question. Within any organization, making sure the key constituents are heard, and that their opinions are valued and addressed is always key. Let me answer your question from a different perspective. Often we hear the leader saying that I'm just not finding the right people, and after some period of time we realize no, the right people are there. It's the wrong leader in that place.

And that's where it becomes a tough decision for us. We need to think about leaders who are not necessarily engaging or inspiring their groups or their teams. This really comes back to the notion of adaptability. Really, really good leaders can adapt to different kinds of teams.

And this is where that multi-dimensionality comes in again. If you've only learned one way of doing things, and you keep doing it over and over again, eventually it's not going to work everywhere. Thus, the capability to adapt, learn, and reapply that knowledge is critical.



WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

So, I don't know if I've answered your question. But I think that with regard to a group that feels continually as if they are not heard, either that group needs to move on or the leader needs some feedback through other channels that they're not taking the time to listen and adapt appropriately. That's where an outside third party might be very helpful.

Van Wylen: We have an important question from Lisa Lewis at Albion.

Lisa B. Lewis: I was wondering if there's a standard formula for how much you reinvest in an organization toward efforts like this, in developing your employees. Is there a percentage of operating budget or something of that sort?

Erdahl: It's never enough is what I can tell you. It's interesting that you ask that question, because we're going through our budgeting cycle right now, having these kinds of dialogues.

What I can tell you is it wasn't too long ago— when I joined the company, for instance— we really didn't invest much at all across the organization in developing leaders. Part of it was that the organization was growing, and we had a strong talent pool. There were a lot of people that wanted to come and work at Medtronic. If they didn't work out, we could find somebody else.

As we head into this talent gap going forward, increasingly we need to recognize that it is our accountability as an organization to develop talent. I don't know a number or a percentage that I can share with you, but I do think that we're increasingly saying that the organization has to focus on the development of talent from the inside.

Interestingly enough, we do an employee survey every other year. There was a question on the survey that was "agree or disagree:" I am primarily responsible for my own development. And what we discovered was managers took that as a license to say well, I don't have to worry about it because it's the responsibility of the employee to develop themselves.

We've replaced that question in the last few years with a statement that says: My manager actively works with me to develop my skills and abilities. So, we are changing the mindset of our organization towards development.

The challenge with the numbers in terms of how much we invest is because it's distributed across the entire company. So, it doesn't all roll up into one place. But I think it's increasing. I know we're spending millions of dollars developing our leaders, and that's something that we are going to continue to do going forward.

Walczak: Well, going back to your path and your route to where you are now, were there particular mentors that you had along the way that were influential in forming your leadership style or potential?

Erdahl: There have been a number of people. There are common threads I would say (and things that I appreciate in retrospect, I'm not sure I appreciated it at the time).

First, the people who took risks on me. When I think about leaving my role as a staff psychologist at the hospital and stepping into a role of doing organizational development work, which at the time involved total quality management and training around things that I previously had no interest in or no understanding about, yet there were people that invested the time and the energy and took that risk on me.

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When I started working at U.S. Bank, I remember I applied for the job kind of on a lark, and they offered me the job. I don't think I had any of the qualifications on the job description that they had. So, I think that as I look back, people that took those risks, people who sat down with me and encouraged me, I think that was absolutely critical.

The other side of the coin is there were people who really gave me tough feedback. Even in my internship at the VA hospital, there were points when people kind of hit me over the head with a two-by-four with feedback that I'm pretty sure I didn't appreciate at the time. But as time goes on and I realize some of the experiences that I've had, there was wisdom in some of those moments, and I share some of those stories with managers hesitant to give really tough feedback to people.

WHAT WORKS - A PKAL CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONVERSATION

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT

The most critical feedback that people get can help them to learn from mistakes, learn from screwing everything up, Learn from failure.

We struggle with new hires who all want to be CEO within the next five years. Sometimes you've got to keep those egos in check. You've got to give the people the feedback that says you've got to work hard, that you're not entitled to anything. You're 100 percent accountable for what happens, and making sure that people hear that.

In the business world, at least, effort is great, but if you don't achieve the kind of results that you have to deliver, that's not successful, and so we have to make sure that people get that kind of hard feedback. And sometimes giving that really tough feedback is one of those courageous things that we need managers and leaders to do to make sure that they're being proactive in those conversations with developing talent.

Van Wylen: Jeanne, do you have questions you want to ask Paul or any comments at this point?

Jeanne L. Narum: Well, I thought that was a wonderful way to wrap up some wonderful words of wisdom, Paul. We invite the group to send us reflections on this call. We hope you stay connected to Project Kaleidoscope, Paul.

Erdahl: Happy to do that.

Narum: And I thank Mary Walczak and David Van Wylen for organizing, hosting, and facilitating the conversation, and to all of you for joining us. Goodbye. ■

PAUL ERDAHL BACKGROUND

By way of a little bit of background: I graduated from St. Olaf, then going on to graduate school, earning my PhD in counseling psychology. So, I'm a psychologist by training and background and started my career actually working in healthcare as a staff psychologist at a local hospital here, Abbott Northwestern Hospital. I worked with epilepsy patients, and actually spent about five or six years— early in my career— doing psychometric assessments and diagnostics and working with families and patients in terms of how to cope with chronic disease.

Eventually, I started to dabble in the areas of employee issues and management issues at the hospital, and that led to some career changes along the way. I worked in banking for a short period of time, at what is now U.S. Bank, and worked at Cargill, a large multi-national agricultural organization, also based here in the Twin Cities, and then came to Medtronic. And actually, coming to Medtronic was kind of a coming home for me, back to my interest in healthcare and working with individuals with chronic disease.

So while I don't work directly now with many patients, my goals and efforts, and the mission of this company are very much aligned with restoring people to full health and improving their lives in that way. When I joined Medtronic about 10 years ago, I was an organization development consultant. Over time, my responsibilities have evolved to be increasingly focused on executive and leadership development.

Just to give you some sense of our company and our size, we're about 39,000 employees today, 250 people across the company around the world are vice presidents, and if we go down to the next tier, there's another 850 individuals who are at the director level in the organization. And those are what we consider leadership levels in our organization. My primary area is making sure that those people are prepared and capable of being leaders. In Medtronic, we also talk a great deal about the leadership pipeline. We work to ensure we have talent coming through the organization and leadership for the future.

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