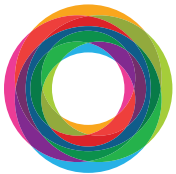


# Why CEOs Need a New Breed of HR Leader

*by Terry Gallagher, President, Battalia Winston*  
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# Why CEOs Need a New Breed of HR Leader

A decade ago, the skill set of the HR Leader was defined by the classic 80/20 rule: 80% HR administration, 20% business. Today, this rule has been completely overturned. A company's HR executive is a critical component of the leadership team. CEOs are increasingly pulling HR professionals to the leadership table, asking them to play a more strategic role and requiring that they have a firm understanding of the business and its long-term goals.

This trend speaks to the changing nature of the HR leadership function across industries. Businesses are becoming more attuned to the importance of internal culture to recruit and retain talent, and, consequently, HR leaders must serve as the CEO's business partner and align their talent development strategy with overall business imperatives. As HR professionals participate in organization-wide decisions, they're required to more fully understand the business and think beyond the bounds of what would traditionally be considered "HR territory."



## About Our Firm

Founded in 1963, Battalia Winston is one of the world's largest woman-owned executive search firms and is consistently ranked as one of the top fifteen executive search firms by Kennedy Publications. The Firm is headquartered in New York City with offices in Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Edison, NJ; Los Angeles, CA; and Washington, DC. Over the past 50 years we have conducted executive search assignments and established expertise in virtually every major industry and functional area. Clients range from early stage companies to Fortune 10 global enterprises.

If CEOs want to see their businesses thrive, they need to ensure that they have the right partner in the HR leadership role. The new breed of HR leader must be proactive, strategic, and able to identify the employees that are driving (or could be driving) growth. CEOs hoping to bring in a new HR partner should target candidates that can tackle the following mission-critical assignments:

### ***Aligning Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Development Programs with Strategic Goals***

In order to develop an inventory of talented employees that will help propel the business to success, the HR leader must

- Understand the strategic goals of the company and its vision for the next 3-5 years in the changing competitive landscape
- Recruit talent with the skill sets to accomplish immediate and near term goals
- Implement professional development programs that will help existing employees continue to be valuable – relative to the organization's goals – well into the future

Most HR leaders understand that professional development is important to retention – It's well-documented that employees want their employers to invest in them. However, the best HR professionals will carefully tailor their professional development programs to their organization's strategy and objectives to make certain that they're helping employees grow into not out of the company.

### ***Understanding a New Type of Change Management***

The pace of change, especially for growing businesses, is faster than ever before. Rapid advancements in technology, the healthcare



Terry Gallagher, President

Terry joined Battalia Winston in 1991 as Senior Vice President and General Manager of the New Jersey Search Practice and was later promoted to Executive Vice President and Partner in 1994. In recognition of his contributions to the growth of the firm, Terry advanced to become President of Battalia Winston in January of 1997.

Terry was previously Partner in Charge of the Northeast Regional Search Practice and National High Technology Industry Partner for KPMG.

Terry's primary focus has been in recruiting Board Directors, CEO's, General Managers and C- Suite executives for a range of industries including: Business and Professional Services, Industrial Products, Insurance/Financial Services and Technology.

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overhaul, and increasing globalization mean that companies of all sizes must constantly adapt.

For HR executives, change management no longer consists of updating benefit plans or rolling out a new policy – it's an ongoing, everyday process. HR leaders need to focus their efforts on not only properly communicating changes, but in proactively developing a company culture that embraces change.

A corporate culture that embraces change is more likely to be innovative, creative, and able to retain top talent. To foster this type of culture, HR executives must, again, have a keen understanding of the business and its goals, but must also be able to identify internal influencers and build high-functioning teams. While they must recruit talent whose skill sets lend themselves to adaptability and flexibility, recruiting talent is only half the battle – combining talent into effective teams that can collaborate, influence, grow, and adapt to constant change is just as critical.

### ***Succession Planning at the Senior Level***

As the economy recovers and baby boomers age, we're seeing a surge in executive retirements. CEOs who have been holding tight during the recession are beginning to pass the baton. They need HR partners who can help them with succession planning at the executive and senior level. This task goes beyond simply finding a replacement. The new breed of HR leader should prioritize succession planning and be proactive, implementing a succession strategy years in advance and developing mentorship programs throughout the organization.

In order to plan for a CEO's departure, the HR executive must be involved in leadership discussions with the Board of Directors and understand the CEO's vision for the future. Likewise, the CEO must trust the HR executive to partner with them to develop viable internal

### ***Leadership Assessment***

Our ability to conduct leadership assessments of our candidates has been a key driver of our success in helping clients engage, select and retain key executives for their organizations. Our methodology to uncover an individual's natural tendencies is a combination of behaviorally-driven interviews coupled with the Caliper Profile, an internationally recognized psychometric assessment tool that has been validated and continually refined by over 50 years of scientific research. We have been able to streamline these components into our core process which gives us a distinct advantage to advise our clients not simply on what a candidate has done experientially, but more importantly, why the individual acted as they did to achieve success, receive a promotion or encounter a pitfall. This invaluable advisory data has helped our clients more accurately simplify the selection process and more quickly integrate these leaders into their organizations.

candidates as prospective succession candidates. In other words, succession planning is likely the culmination of a solid business relationship.

CEOs with this new breed of HR executive will see their businesses thrive. However, as more organizations begin to understand that “HR challenges” are really business challenges (and vice-versa), the HR leader will become more and more valuable, and talented leaders could be poached away. CEOs who want to retain their HR partners should help them chart their own growth within the company and consider moving them into general management roles to further develop the mix of business operations and HR talent skills within their organizations.



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