



WorldLink

Linking people management professionals around the globe

Workplace Megatrends Demand Skilled Leaders

By Henry G. "Hank" Jackson

It's essential that today's fast-moving organizations foster key leadership skills. In the Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM's) 2016 *Business and Human Capital Challenges Today and in the Future* report, interviews with leaders in both HR and non-HR functions revealed leadership shortfalls, especially in skills involving people management, coalition building and political savvy. The findings also highlighted a lack of leaders having a 21st century understanding of global and cultural effectiveness.

Why are these competencies so critical? In both the *Challenges* report and the SHRM Foundation's 2016 report *The Future of Work*, business leaders and HR executives pointed to three key macro trends affecting the way business is conducted today and their challenges to leadership.

First is the ascendancy of digital technology and automation. These innovations tend to be great for industry but can have a devastating effect on employee engagement. Life may be easier for workers in some ways, but increased workloads and productivity expectations can cause stress.

When people can work from anywhere and at any time of day, the pressure to do more, do it faster and at higher skill levels goes on 24/7. Even so, higher expectations and productivity demands have not necessarily meant higher pay. And these days, losing a job to automation is a realistic worry for a growing number of workers.

Great leaders will champion policies such as workplace flexibility ("workflex") that are fair to both the employee and the organization—supporting workers with holistic, flexible work/life policies and paid leave while ensuring continuity, predictability and stability for employers.

The second megatrend is the changing nature of the compact between employer and employee. The basic relationship was essentially built

for business in the 1960s, when employees would spend an entire career at an organization and retire with a pension and a gold watch. Today we have the gig economy, more contracting, frequent job-hopping and the loss of middle-class jobs that once provided decades of stability and economic opportunity for families. Blind loyalty to an employer is out of fashion, as employees increasingly see career development as a "what can you do for me?" transaction. In other words, employees are looking to their organizations as vehicles to achieve their own goals.

Great leaders will support the aspirations of their employees by designing work functions that nurture the career development of their staff as well as focus on the needs of the organization.

These leaders also focus on tools like mentoring, coaching and cross-functional work assignments to build a broad base of skills among their teams.

Finally, the megatrend of the multinational, multigenerational workforce is also changing how leaders must lead. There are five distinct generations in today's workplace, each with different motivations, expectations and working styles. And with global population shifts, workforces are becoming dizzyingly diverse in other ways: Over the next five decades, the majority of U.S. population growth is projected to be

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linked to new Asian and Hispanic immigration.

Great leaders approach their diverse workforce planning by identifying the skills needs of the organization today and tomorrow. They leverage tools like future-oriented job analysis and job redesign to envision how their teams will look from a skills-mix perspective. In addition, they tend to track global immigration trends and their relationship to economic factors so that they can adapt to workforce demands.

It's clear that leaders must be prepared on multiple levels. They must be able to lead teams that can create, innovate and operate efficiently in volatile and unpredictable environments, able not only to adapt and respond to change but also to predict and get ahead of it. This requires constant learning.

WHAT DO TODAY'S LEADERS NEED?

I suggest that today's leaders, regardless of position or industry, must possess four basic capabilities: people management skills, business and data acumen, interpersonal savvy, and a bedrock of technical knowledge and prowess. With an appropriate mix of these skills, the leaders of tomorrow can adapt and, more importantly, learn and respond quickly to challenges and business disruptors. In fact, the need to predict how your employees will react to new situations becomes more important than predicting the trends of business.

This means approaching leadership development very differently. First, leaders need to let go of the perception that leadership equals control. Today, leadership means empowering others to stretch themselves, opening opportunities to build things that have broader applications than the organization's usual functions. And it means understanding that failure is part of the learning process. Leaders can take a page from Silicon Valley and its use of "fail-cons"—conferences that explore the reasons behind the failure of ideas or companies as a way to gain insight on what might succeed going forward.

Leaders must also foster what I call a "culture of fluidity" that promotes adaptability. Successful developers of tomorrow's workforce

actually "bake in" opportunities for employees to adapt. These opportunities could include cross-functional roles, creativity hours—hours dedicated to creative exercises not associated with core tasks or responsibilities—and performance incentives that reward behavior that is altruistic in nature and goes above and beyond the call of duty. Moreover, leaders should recognize those who adopt fluid concepts in

Great leaders will champion policies such as workplace flexibility ('workflex') that are fair to both the employee and the organization.

project delivery and management of others.

Finally, people should always come first. Specifically, modern leaders will have evolved to focus on an engaged workforce just as much as results. When done effectively, the effect on the bottom line is unmistakable. Organizations will enjoy a workforce of individuals who will treat the organization as their primary partner in achieving a joint mission.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE GETTING IT RIGHT?

The ultimate measure of leadership success is a sustainable enterprise leading the way into the future. But from a different perspective, success will be apparent when the organization's key brand ambassadors no longer are the people at the top but instead have become the employees and consumers themselves. When your workforce and your customers are doing your recruiting for you and attracting top talent, your leadership is doing a lot right.

But ultimately, the success of any organization will be measured by its brand and how it contributes to the lives of others, including its community, its workforce and society as a whole. And in my view, these are certainly the most satisfying fruits of excellent leadership.

[Henry G. "Hank" Jackson is president and CEO of SHRM.]

How to Prepare for Disruptions in Technology

By Melanie Padgett Powers

As the tech industry continues to see rapid changes, it's important for HR professionals to understand these changes and how they affect employees. In a new report, *Leading Through Disruption*, consulting company Mercer identifies the "trifecta of transformations" that HR leaders must understand to make smart strategic decisions.

The technology industry is undergoing an unprecedented period of disruption that HR professionals need to understand, the report says.

The report outlines three key disruptors:

1. Exponential Technologies—Artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing and virtual reality—all of which are making it more possible for machines to make judgments and do tasks that once only humans did.
2. Pervasive Digitization—Using digital multisided platforms like Airbnb and Uber, pervasive digitization is upending business models and the relationship between business and consumer.
3. Speed at Scale—Tech firms are scaling rapidly and must remain innovative to compete with the high levels of competition globally.

To remain competitive, HR must embrace these disruptions, "by digitizing HR processes and operations, adopting advanced talent analytics and evolving HR architectures to support tomorrow's enterprise," the report says.

Mercer reports that less than half of tech organizations surveyed use analytics to understand team dynamics and performance, engagement

levers, retention priorities and cost-management opportunities. In fact, HR leaders and employees responded very differently to the question "What does it take to thrive?" HR ranked "promote collaboration" No. 1, while employees pointed first to "reward a wider range of contributions (beyond financial/activity metrics)." HR professionals ranked that sixth out of eight choices, while employees ranked "promote collaboration" sixth. Furthermore, HR ranked "offer more flexible work options" second, while employees ranked that third with "simplify processes/reduce complexity" as No. 2.

"To lead through disruption—and thrive in times of exponential growth—business and HR leaders will need to reimagine their organizational and people strategies," the report says. To access the full report, visit www.mercer.com/our-thinking/leading-through-disruption.html.

[Melanie Padgett Powers is the *WorldLink* managing editor.]

Leading Change by Targeting Mindsets (and Hearts)

By Nic Tsangarakis

Every organization needs to continuously adapt to its business environment. Naturally, responding to external changes requires internal changes, and these changes can range from incremental to transformational. Achieving sustainable change is hard. Arguably, the single biggest challenge in achieving change is changing people's behavior.

People change what they do not only because they are given information that can shift their thinking, but also because they participate in experiences that influence their feelings. Both thinking and feeling are important and necessary. During change, the aim is to evoke feelings related to urgency, optimism and belief, while reducing uncertainty, complacency, cynicism and fear.

Leading change in a way that targets both the minds (analysis) and the hearts (emotions) of those involved greatly enhances the probability that organizational change will be successful.

FIVE ACTIONS TO CHANGING BEHAVIOR

In working with our clients in designing change programs, we introduce five actions that lead to desirable behavior change. We start by looking at the changes the client has implemented in the past few years.

These changes are then placed into two categories: successful and less successful. What we (and the client) notice is that the greater the number of these five actions that are implemented, the more successful the change. This is not to say that all the actions must have been implemented, but the more the better. What, then, are the five actions?

ACTION 1: UNDERSTAND THE 'WHY'

People need to understand the reasons for the change. A feeling of urgency must be created so that employees understand (at an intellectual and visceral level) that things need to be different in the future and that personal shifts and adjustments are required.

Below are a few tips on what can be done:

- Incorporate appropriate information about the organization's market and competitive realities, weaknesses, threats and/or opportunities in establishing the need for the change initiative.
- Use data from customer satisfaction surveys, employee engagement measures, budgets, productivity metrics, process cycle times, etc., to explain the change.
- Show people the need for change with a visually compelling, attention-grabbing and memorable experience that they can see and feel.

ACTION 2: CREATE A VISION

We recently worked with the leaders of a medium-sized law firm to build a desired future for their organization that can be used to guide every employee's actions and decisions. The vision (which has a three-year time frame) describes the leaders' desired future state in very specific terms. It outlines goals that require stretch but that offer achievable outcomes leaders want to implement. Guidelines for taking action in this area include:

- Create a vision of the future that is so vivid and compelling that it appeals to both the hearts (emotions) and minds (logic) of those that need to be influenced.

- Conduct a gap analysis by illustrating that current reality is different from the future state.
- Formulate associated strategies bold enough to make the vision a reality.

ACTION 3: MODEL THE DESIRED CHANGES

Leaders must walk the talk. They need to consistently model the desired mindset and behaviors required. Leaders (at all levels) must communicate the vision and strategies so well that they create both understanding and gut-level buy-in. Here are a few tips on what leaders can do:

- Be aware, by asking for honest and frank feedback, of the discrepancies between what is being espoused and the decisions and actions being taken.
- Create mechanisms for frequent two-way communication and dialogue, keeping communication simple and heartfelt, not complex and technocratic.
- Use metaphors and analogies to create images that will help with understanding and acceptance of the change.

ACTION 4: CREATE SHORT-TERM WINS

Sometimes referred to as "the low-hanging fruit," quick wins build momentum for the effort. One of our clients, a post-secondary education organization, decided on a number of longer-term strategies that will transform its institution, but leaders also carefully planned for shorter-term wins to energize stakeholders. For example, they planned to keep track of and proactively publish a handful of measures that clearly indicate progress made. Actions you can take include:

- Plan for early wins that come fast, easily and cheaply (even if they seem small compared to the bigger vision).
- Make these wins as visible as possible to as many people as possible.

ACTION 5: EMPOWER ACTION BY EVERYONE

Finding ways to bring vision and strategy to people's daily work creates the conditions for them to take action on the right things. A top-down leadership approach is augmented with a bottom-up approach in which autonomy and self-directed action occurs. Here are guidelines for what can be done:

- Provide feedback and coaching that can help people make better vision-related decisions.
- Directly address the people who continue to undercut the change.
- Provide recognition and appreciation (and, if possible, reward systems) that inspire employees, promote optimism and build self-confidence to encourage workers throughout the organization to take appropriate action.

TAKE FIVE TO THRIVE

These steps are designed to enable organizations to touch both minds and hearts. Regardless of how many of them you apply, remember that they must complement each other and fit into the organizational context.

Making the change successfully requires sticking relentlessly to the process and tenaciously reviewing progress made on these five actions, as well as embedding the desired behavior into the cultural fabric of the organization.

Nic Tsangarakis is co-founder and principal of Kwela Leadership & Talent Management in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

After an Earthquake: Mexico and the Will of Its People

By Pedro Borda

On Sept. 19, Mexico was hit with a magnitude-7.1 earthquake in the states of Puebla, Morelos, Oaxaca and Mexico City. We were all witnesses to Mexicans of all generations who came to help—getting there on cars, bikes or motorcycles or by walking. Everyone who participated helped experts from the United States, Japan, England and Spain who worked day and night to find people buried under buildings. We are sorry to report that at least 500 people lost their lives.

Many families lost everything. But the solidarity of young people coming out to help brought tears to our eyes and was a great lesson in the dynamics of social relations when a major tragedy occurs. One image that circulated around the world showed a young man in a wheelchair picking up debris.

Rivaling the government's aid efforts, members of the general public took it upon themselves to help out. Millennials did an outstanding job by organizing teams. Social networking was a huge help to locate missing persons. The speed of these communications was surprising. Isn't it amazing how a huge negative event brings out the best in all of us?

In the eyes of HR, there is no doubt in our minds that Mexicans have great abilities and, in the face of challenges, become creative, take on leadership roles and never get tired as they help their fellow citizens. Today, as executives responsible for talent, we have the opportunity to transform the energy and will of our people to help us become a better nation for present and future generations.

TRAGEDY FOR MEXICAN HR ASSOCIATION

Unfortunately, the Mexican HR Association (AMEDIRH) faced tragedy, as we lost our five-story building due to the earthquake.



Thankfully, our 25 employees and their families were unharmed.

We are currently housed in a rented building of approximately 311 square feet (95 meters), which means we literally work right next to one another.

Here's what is happening now: Two experts confirmed that our building is a lost property and has to be demolished, the sooner the better. The insurance company has agreed to pay our insurance policy. After the authorities give us the OK to demolish, the land will be put up for sale. Then we can start looking for a new home.

Many of our employees were displaced and are living far from their homes. We asked them to vote on a new working schedule, and they all decided to start at 7 a.m., AMEDIRH has agreed to provide our employees lunch every day in our present location, paying the total cost. The 25 employees eat together, and we have invited board members to come eat with us.

Our managing director aimed to have our operations working again in just three days, which was accomplished to the surprise of all. No workshops, seminars or committee meetings were canceled. Now, we are looking forward to a new beginning.

[Pedro Borda is director general of AMEDIRH.]

Four Principles for Putting People First

By Natalie Michael, CPHR

There are many competing priorities for a leader's time: customers, products and new innovations, among others. Yet organizations that put people first send a clear message that they value their employees. The best organizations and leaders actually spend the majority of their time on people and their development.

Although the actual practices for putting people first may change depending on market conditions and cultural realities, here are four principles that stand the test of time.

PRINCIPLE 1: HAVE A CEO WHO FOCUSES ON PEOPLE

Focusing on people is a wonderful notion that is too often merely given lip service. To bring this idea to life requires a clear message from the CEO that people are a priority, even when it may be personally inconvenient.

Catherine Roome is president and CEO of BC Safety Authority, an independent, self-funded organization mandated to oversee the safe installation and operation of technical systems and equipment across

British Columbia in Canada. Modeling the importance of putting people first is important to Roome. She personally meets with every new employee, seeing it as an opportunity to connect with them and to communicate what the company values mean to her.

"I want to work for an organization where I can be myself and express my



Putting People First continued on next page

views,” Roome says. “I let every new employee know that they have a voice and I value authenticity, and I invite them to share their ideas.” She reinforces this by seeking employee feedback in many ways, whether it be through 360-degree feedback tools, surveys or town halls connecting the company’s rural offices throughout British Columbia.

PRINCIPLE 2: INVEST IN CULTURE (AND CONTINUOUSLY ADJUST)

It’s hard to separate putting people first from culture; this can be tricky because culture and people are so dynamic.

Progressive organizations recognize that they need to invest in culture, while at the same time constantly adapting their practices, depending on what is happening in the economy and industry.

Ross Chilton, president and CEO of Community Living Society, a crown agency that provides funding for services that help adults with developmental disabilities, has had to recently rethink what it truly means to focus on people in a climate where tenure is declining due to financial pressures from rising housing costs.

“In the past, employees stayed with our organization on average for a decade,” Chilton says. “Now it is more common for employees to stay for three to five years because they need to earn more to pay their housing expenses. Given this, we have adjusted our expectations and strategically thought about what kind of employee experience we want to deliver.”

Community Living Society is clear: It seeks people who want to do meaningful work and who care about making a difference in the community, and it finds ways to support them so they can develop and grow. Some new initiatives include doubling the training budget (much to the excitement of employees) and actively seeking out part-time employees who are in school and more likely to stay for the duration of their education because they need a steady job.

As CEO, Chilton is personally involved in the new training programs, enthusiastically communicating the organization’s mission and goals and why he is so committed to the work.

For Roome, focusing on culture involves many things, including recognizing when the organization may be overusing its strengths to its detriment. For example, BC Safety Authority values collaboration, but collaboration can become overwhelming when every employee wants to get involved on a project. After working with a culture consultant, the company put in place checks and balances to make sure it capitalizes on the positive benefits of collaboration without overdoing it.

PRINCIPLE 3: FOCUS ON TEAMS

Putting people first also involves developing people in meaningful ways, often carving out job experiences that give them opportunities

to develop their skills, while also giving them valuable feedback along the way. To do this requires a real commitment and focus on developing people, as well as reviewing the succession pipeline with the same level of diligence so often afforded financial statements.

Now, many organizations are going beyond personal development and making a greater investment in team initiatives. The big idea behind this trend is that teams are the cornerstone of business outcomes and that being on a high-performing team is one of the most enriching and positive levers for engagement. Yet most leaders don’t know how to create the conditions for a team’s success. Part of putting people first is supporting leaders to create high-performing teams and removing the barriers to trust and performance.

Along these lines, Roome says, “I tell my leaders that their top-priority team is their horizontal team, not their vertical team. We emphasize lateral development and even extend this to succession, where we often appoint lateral successors.”

PRINCIPLE 4: EMPHASIZE THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

Putting people first involves paying attention to diversity and creating a workforce that reflects the community in which the organization is embedded. This may involve hiring minorities or people with disabilities, or it may mean hiring people with diverse styles.

I was happy to hear from Chilton at Community Living Society that there is a growing consciousness around hiring people with disabilities and a noticeable attitude shift in society, with more organizations creating opportunities for people with disabilities. There is even a term called “disability confident employer,” indicating an organization is a leader in this regard.

“In the past, HR would often put up barriers to hiring people with disabilities by saying things like ‘Candidates with disabilities have to go through the same hiring channels and follow the same process as everyone else,’ ” he says. “The reality is that oftentimes this equated to an immediate hiring barrier. Now, more and more organizations take a different view, asking themselves, ‘Why don’t we have anyone with disabilities on our staff? What barriers exist?’ And they actively take steps to be more inclusive.”

Progressive organizations recognize that they need to invest in culture, while at the same time constantly adapting their practices.

PEOPLE ARE INVESTMENT NO. 1

Organizations that put people first recognize that doing so is their best investment. They understand that there is a quantifiable correlation between how they treat people and organizational outcomes.

Although organizational practices are always changing, these four principles endure. Bottom line? It pays to create an environment where people feel valued.

Natalie Michael, CPHR, is a partner with Waterfront Partners, an executive coaching firm in West Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, focused on coaching C-suite leaders.

‘Workflex for All’ Legislation Introduced in U.S.

By Mike Aitken

In November, U.S. lawmakers introduced legislation that would expand workplace flexibility and paid-leave benefits for all employees in the country.

Under the Workflex in the 21st Century Act, employers could opt to participate by guaranteeing paid leave and a flexible work—or “workflex”—option, such as a compressed work schedule, telecommuting or job-sharing, to all full- and part-time employees. In exchange, employers would gain predictability by following a federal framework under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) for paid leave and workflex as opposed to complying with a patchwork of state and local paid leave laws.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) helped develop the legislation, which was introduced in the House of Representatives by U.S. Rep. Mimi Walters (R-Calif.). SHRM engaged a community of HR professionals to develop this legislation in consultation with Walters.

“With the input of many HR professionals, SHRM has worked with Congress to develop an innovative and effective approach to providing paid leave and workflex to employees,” said SHRM President and CEO Henry G.

“Hank” Jackson. “SHRM believes this bill addresses employers’ concerns over navigating a myriad of complex and confusing state and local paid-leave mandates while answering employees’ call for flexibility and paid leave on the job.”

BETTER SCHEDULE OPTIONS FOR ALL

The Workflex in the 21st Century Act would amend ERISA, and, under this new approach, all employees—including those working part time—would gain access to paid leave and a workplace flexibility option, which is not currently guaranteed under existing federal law. Employers that do not choose to offer these plans would remain under state and local paid-leave laws. Employers, not taxpayers or employees, would bear all costs.

“As our personal and professional responsibilities continue to grow, hardworking Americans should have access to scheduling options that will provide better options to help them meet their work and family needs,” Walters said. “Workflex will allow employees the opportunity to spend more time with their families and in their communities, without increasing taxes or creating new mandates. This innovative legislation will provide the flexibility employees need, while working for an employer that understands their needs.”

The amount of paid leave offered would depend on an employee’s tenure and the employer’s size. For example, an organization with between 250 and 999 employees would be required to provide employees with fewer than five years of service 14 paid days off, while those with five or more years of service would receive 18 days.



Around the Region



CANADA Job Growth

Canada’s labor market was booming this past fall. The country experienced its biggest two-month growth in full-time employment, which was combined with stronger wage increases. Jobs increased by 35,300 in October over the previous month. As of October, Canada had produced employment increases for 11 consecutive months, a streak the country hasn’t seen in over a decade. In October, 88,700 full-time jobs were added. The job gains this fall were more than twice that of what economists had predicted.



MEXICO Saving NAFTA

As U.S. President Donald Trump threatens to leave the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexico is preparing a macroeconomic response. For nearly 24 years, NAFTA has been a mainstay of Mexican economic development, with nearly 80 percent of Mexican exports shipped to the U.S. The Mexican government said in November it was evaluating legislative options that would provide investors with certainty about their investments if NAFTA collapses. Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray said his country would work to continue to diversify trade, protect foreign investment and review potential changes to tariff barriers.



UNITED STATES Effect of Automation

Recruiters aren’t worried about the changes automation will bring to the hiring process, according to Jobvite’s *2017 Recruiter Nation Report*. The survey of 831 recruiters in the United States showed that 49 percent have a positive view about how automation and artificial intelligence will affect their jobs, while 42 percent are indifferent. Only 7 percent said they believe their jobs will worsen, while 43 percent believe automation will make their jobs better. The biggest slowdown in the recruitment process, said 56 percent of those surveyed, is hiring managers delaying their feedback and decisions. Forty-three percent said hiring managers take too long to review resumes, and 25 percent said that they’ve seen job candidates who were forced to sit through interviews lasting four hours or more. View the full report at http://web.jobvite.com/FY17_Website_2017RecruiterNation_LP.html.

Sources: Bloomberg, Reuters, SHRM, Voice of America

“This bill’s paid-leave requirements are more generous than all state paid-leave laws,” said Lisa Horn, director of congressional affairs and workplace flexibility at SHRM. “It also addresses the need for workflex for everyone—from new parents to nonparents, from Millennials to Boomers. It will help all individuals achieve a better work/life fit.”

According to Jackson, the modern American workplace is transforming and so should the rules that govern it. “Workflex is the kind of modern workforce policy that enables American businesses to compete for top talent and for their employees to navigate the responsibilities of caregiving and other personal obligations and pursuits as they choose. Rather than wielding a one-size-fits-all government mandate, this legislation is a completely voluntary, opt-in program, and it does not create costs for taxpayers. Everyone wins.”

[Mike Aitken is vice president of government affairs for SHRM.]

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The WFPMA World Congress 2018 will be held in conjunction with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Annual Conference & Exposition in Chicago, June 17–20, 2018.

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HR associations and their members will receive a special rate when registering for the WFPMA World Congress 2018 and will also have access to the entire SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition. Learn more at <http://annual.shrm.org/wfpma-world-congress-2018>.

If you require a visa, please visit the U.S. Department of State website at www.state.gov for the most current information and instructions. An invitation letter can be provided upon request, but only to individuals who are registered and attending the WFPMA World Congress 2018. We strongly recommend applying early.

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<http://annual.shrm.org/wfpma-world-congress-2018#register>

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WORLDLINK

welcomes news stories, announcements of events and ideas for articles. These should be accompanied by a telephone number and e-mail address.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *WorldLink* will be published in March 2018 and will feature the African Human Resources Confederation and HR news from Africa. © 2017. Material may be reprinted with credit to *WorldLink*, WFPMA.

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