

LIDERANÇA NO FEMININO

» SÓNIA SOUSA, PARTNER OF LEGACY CONSULTING IN INTERVIEW



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LEADERSHIP MUST BE REINVENTED

"The experience in Coaching allows us to open up new lines of thought that provides differentiating tips or solutions", explains on this interview, Sónia Sousa, Partner at Legacy Consulting.

Legacy Consulting is a company operating in the Human Resources Consultancy and Training business. What strategy has the company adopted to stand out in the sector?

We respect and follow the Values and Commitments that we defined since Legacy was born in October 2010, taking the challenge and the Client's mission as our own. We provide the tools, tips and other resources to put in place the solution. And the paths generated are always built with the Client.

Another strategy we pursue is to focus on our team development, namely in several activities that we call Learning Sessions, also in the very up-to-date library that we have, and with the specialists that we learn from (in Portugal and abroad) as well. And we travel a lot. We bring to our business very good practices, tools and breakthrough ideas.

We work with the very best business partners in the market: namely in psychometric tools that we apply, on the creative design of every single project, on market studies, etc. I often say (almost) kidding that we are not a training company; we are a consultancy company that "by chance" also provides training. And this framework makes a whole lot of a difference in Legacy's positioning.

And our team is very shrewd, joyful, easy going, embracing Clients in their mission. I would say that this is our accompanying soundtrack. We reinforce that the consultants team should live a lot. We must go out of our world and enter other lives to return even more resourceful. This is one of our greatest fuels. Bringing the words of the leadership guru Robin Sharma whom I get inspiration from: Be absurdly energetic and crazily alive.

Legacy Consulting wishes to intervene within Organizations, in a strategic consultancy approach in the behavioral field, developing integrated projects on Leadership, Business Coaching and Organisational effectiveness. How is the company's approach in these areas?

I would say that beforehand we dive deep into the Client's reality. We develop on-the-job observation, asking to those who know their job and being curious. I wouldn't say that we become "owners" of the Client's reality, but we are somewhat able to speak their business language. Only this way we customize resonant interventions.

Whenever we can, we start with leadership, we get to know our interlocutors, we hear the way they read reality and their teams. At times we are provocative: what if...? and why not? The experience in Coaching allows us to open up new lines of thought that provides differentiating tips or solutions. Above all and while working the leadership subject, we must respect the Client's profile and his idiosyncrasies as well. And from there we expand other resources that are more productive towards achieving a better team management.

In the Coaching process, we get to know the Coachee's story and build from there. We clarify their point A and seek the point B that they want to reach. In between, several questions enable a new awareness, leading us to discover new paths/links, triggering emotions and giving us back frameworks that one had not thought of. These are the "wow" moments for our Clients.

In Legacy's approach, nothing happens by chance: not even words, intention nor pedagogic sequences. At times we become mad at our participants, but with enough time to mend fences at the end of the journey;) and we never leave anyone behind. People widely acknowledge when they feel that on this side there are committed professionals.



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You say that the "legacy" of what each person does and how they do it is the most important value that one leaves in Organizations. How does Legacy Consulting make the most from the human capital?

Firstly, we welcome what each person IS and what he/she reveals to us. How? Creating a pedagogic and an engaging context where they can actually be themselves. From here, when we feel that the Other is ready to receive us in their "home" (their Self), we help them build/strengthen other divisions (I must warn that I am not good with metaphors). The insights provided by our approach and interaction with our Consultants encourage the participant to discover that they have other "spaces" inside them that they can explore more often, and which they may use to be effective in their professional and personal challenges, and also in the pursuit of their dreams.

Each Self we meet in our training sessions, has several nuances, different resources, some more consistently activated and others less so. What if we could reach more resources inside ourselves? Would that make a difference in our lives? Or in other's lives that we come across and/or work with? I believe so.

What main flaws do you see in today's companies and organizations?

Mainly leadership and communication. Both with a huge impact on companies and people management.

At times there is a lack of a long-run vision, because we are "under water" with urgent day-to-day matters. We put the fire out before it "burns" us but then we pay the price in the end of the road, as neither we did take care of the people that are with us daily nor reinvent the strategy. There are amazing people that, regardless the adversity they experience or the obstacles inside the company they work in, are resilient; they carry the company in their hearts. We want to/must be there for them, acknowledge them, because they never fail us. In other words, to give them a safety perimeter. I would say that uncomfortable people produce fewer results.

Leadership must be reinvented, we must be close to those we manage, not fear exposing our fragilities and at the same time having a deep sen-

sitivity and acumen towards others. We cannot rely on what we do not control. We must act on what we control and thus increase exponentially the aimed results. Simon Sinek, in one of his most well-known leadership TED talks, speaks about the Golden Circle and vividly recommends us to start with Why (even before "what" or "how"). That is the place where the leader inspires people, when he shows them a purpose and takes them with him, on a mission that everybody understands as their own. We lack more inspiring leaders (many of them I am greatly pleased to know from my consultancy activity). They are open and approachable leaders who do not lose the drive, are kind enough without losing assertiveness and communicate in the right dose and format(s)!

Women have a markedly feminine leadership and management style, forecasting a new management paradigm. What strategy did you adopt to position yourself and stand out as a leader in the business world?

Interesting question. I don't see myself that way, because my position in Legacy's business has nothing to do with being a woman. In other words: despite being a woman, never crossed my mind to act differently from what I do. I am (I try to be) a leader through what I believe, through the way I live the Values that guide me. I integrate them in the way that I read others and interact with them. It's not a matter of being a Woman, but instead, it is part of my nature. Call it experience, life, education, it is a whole that I carry with me in every interaction. When I ask, I do wait for the answer, when I care for something/someone, I give all my heart, when I acknowledge something, I want to build something better. And that is part of managing people and of managing a business, enhanced by the responsibility of entering every day in people's homes (companies) that in return enable us to relate to their internal dynamics.

There are more and more women in places of leadership, heading their companies. Can women make better leaders in the corporate world?

Diversity must be inclusive, should unite and bring to the table the best sensitivities, the best practices and a differentiating vision of subjects. Hence feminine and masculine leadership have their own DNA. There are great Women and Men as leaders. In synergy, they create a powerful and valuable formula to address teams and companies. I believe that "the best leaders" cannot be attached to gender, but to character, sensitivity and skills. That is why, whatever the gender, I believe that regarding people management, all these dimensions cannot be skipped. ■