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Bluestone Process Dynamics



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The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the forefront of providing leadership development training and impacting businesses



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Fostering Leaders Today for a Better Tomorrow

ounded by Marilyn Bota in 2006, Bluestone Process Dynamics is on a mission to help businesses teach, coach, and mentor leaders by listening and learning where the client aspires to be, then designing and executing business transformation programs that fit the needs and culture of the organization. Bluestone is comprised of former GE executives and managers, who hold years of experience in different business sectors, have a proven track record of building leaders, leading change and driving business improvement, and are driven by a strong commitment toward customer success. This has played a significant role in enabling Bluestone to establish itself as a sought after resource in the market over the last 15 years. "Our team understands that every business craves for a better tomorrow. And, it is our goal to bridge the gap between 'where you are' and 'where you want to go'," says Marilyn, the President and CEO of the company.

Following is the interview that Manage HR magazine had with Marilyn and Bob Huebner, Chief Learning Officer, Bluestone Process Dynamics. They shared intriguing insights into the company and shed light on how it enables businesses to weather the

unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

What according to you are the key challenges that businesses are facing in 2020?

Marilyn: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the way we work and live. In addition to the fear of contracting the virus, employees are in a constant state of anxiety due to stay-in-place edicts and the changing socio-political and economical environment. Also, they have been impelled to balance between personal and professional responsibilities during traditional working hours. In this scenario, it has become a challenge for leaders to keep their employees focused and help them acquire new skills under the cognitive load of different roles.

How do you help clients mitigate these challenges?

Marilyn: As a learning organization, we are dedicated to finding new ways to help employees adapt to change while enabling them to acquire new skills for their growth. For this, we are undertaking a two-pronged approach.

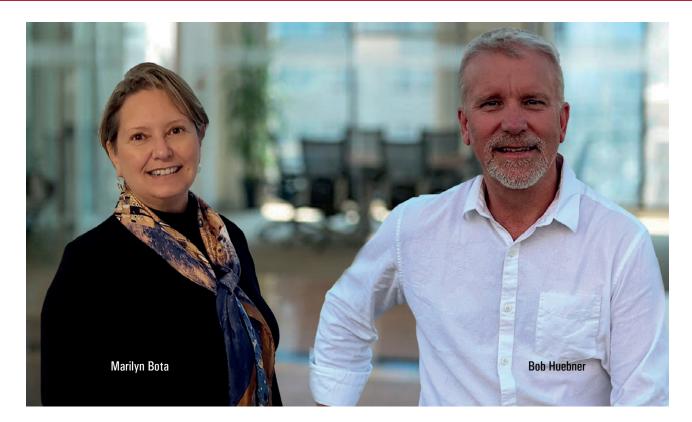


First, we have developed a virtual leader program—specifically for midlevel managers and frontline supervisors (although every leader can use it). Today, the biggest concern for leaders is to keep their team together while the typical connection points have been changed. It is essential for them to build trust among their remote workforce, enable employees to seamlessly operate in a new environment, and build clarity and discipline around processes. For this, leaders have to grow their capability to think critically and adapt by improving their ability to assess and react to change and innovation. Our virtual leader program enables leaders to be more efficient by working on their mindset and subsequently, improving employee performance. All the courses that the program entails are backed by comprehensive research.

Our courses are usually delivered through short interactive sessions and prior to that, we conduct a 180 or 360 assessment. During our sessions, leaders build a personalized action plan that they can put to work immediately. We also have laser coaching to improve retention or one-onone sessions that help leaders enhance skills. More importantly, we adapt to a client's pace while providing the courses. A company can implement this program on a wider level and complete the courses in a single week or over a few months. In all cases, our clients witnessed better collaboration among individuals, which plays a vital role in driving business productivity.

Bob: Secondly, we have sought out expertise for a refresh on diversity and inclusion programs. Recognizing that not everybody should be teaching a sensitive topic like this, we've pulled in an individual who is an expert in this area to help us develop the materials. We have truly put a great deal of effort to ensure that the resources that we developed are best-in-class.

The core of concepts of the course can be conveyed within four hours, but it



can be a week-long affair as well if a client wants a deeper focus. The primary objective of this course is to help businesses rightly assess their own environment to find unconscious bias. More importantly, we take a top-down approach with this course to help senior leaders gain a comprehensive understanding of diversity and inclusion. We are currently doing a director-level program across an organization, and diversity and inclusion is a part of this. In fact, we have moved it up to the very front of the program.

We firmly believe that diversity and inclusion touches on or should touch on everything a leader does because if they are not putting diversity in place, they are missing some great talent and fresh perspective. So, instead of only offering this as a standalone program, we also use it as a thread that runs through a program to make it an implicit part of leadership.

Through all our programs, we bring theory down to practice to quickly drive positive outcomes. Also, our courses are never overwhelming—they are simple and precise. That's why we can seamlessly work with busy managers.

What are the key factors that differentiate Bluestone from its competitors?

Marilyn: We have grown in an execution-focused environment. So, rather than spending a lot of time opining upon different theories and topics, we conduct the right research, check with our experts, and make things happen practically. We are a rare combination of learning and development side and the technical business transformation side, which enables us to be more flexible

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and quickly bring solutions to the table. As a result, we have 100 percent repeat business.

What does the future hold for your organization?

Marilyn: 2020 has been a record-breaking year for us. In terms of next steps, we're going to continue to work on adapting quickly, exploring new approaches for microlearning, and allowing associates to get the information they need in the medium that they're looking for.

Bob: Several sectors like Pharma, BioMed, and financial services are facing tremendous pressures right now. Also, most retailers are witnessing an unbelievable transformation in the way they operate. Things that were going to happen over the next ten years are happening in weeks or months. Manufacturing entities too, are faced with the same plight. The situation demands a new level of crisis leadership. We're closely watching these trends to adapt, learn, and develop programs.