

# MONTHLY MENTOR

“A” Player human capital leadership by

HUNT EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Volume 15, Issue 1



*For twenty six years, the Monthly Mentor has been a value added service to encourage our employer and candidate clients in their Personal & Professional Development.*



## LeaderShift MOST Important Competency

*By Joe Hunt*

*This Monthly Mentor article is focused on our LeaderShift Competencies series; Solving the Executive Leadership Talent Conundrum. We'll break down a significant aspect of our system and share Level by Level mission critical performance standards and competencies that will help you benchmark, identify, select, onboard, develop and/or performance manage any and all key leadership positions within your domestic or global organization.*



During LeaderShift competency presentations I am frequently asked “Joe, we’ve heard a lot about competencies, but what is the one LeaderShift competency that’s more important than the rest?”

Across all seven Levels of LeaderShift that’s a no brainer. Without a doubt, Resourcefulness is THE most important. At the apex of the pyramid, Resourcefulness is much more prevalent, because it usually takes Level 4 or 5 mastery of Resourcefulness to get promoted into the Level 4 (Vice President). Below this level it’s much less common, but most important for “A” player performance results in virtually all roles.

The next question is often, “How do you interview for and assess Resourcefulness?” Since every position has its own unique set of five or six job specific core competencies and five or six company cultural core competencies, we never want to focus on just one or two competencies. The *LeaderShift* Interview Guides assure systematic evaluation of dozens of competencies because if an executive is rated 1 or 2 on the 5 point interview scale in any of them, that candidate has failed the interview and does not qualify as an “A” player.



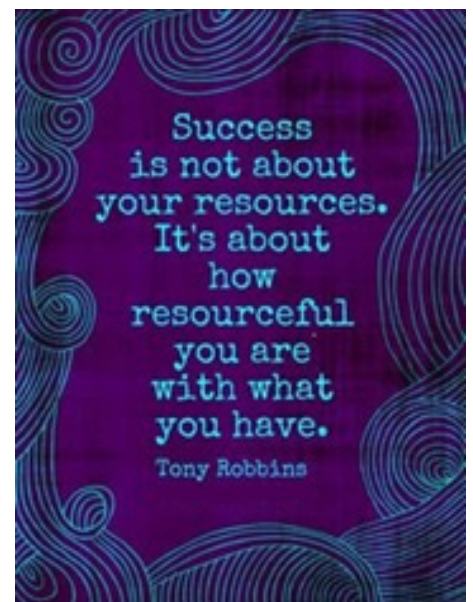
By chronologically reviewing every key success, failure, relationship, and decision, you get hundreds of data points and the patterns that emerge across a person’s career provide deep insights into all the requisite competencies. The higher level the executive, the higher the number of competencies that must be mastered.

“A” players are very strong in Resourcefulness at all Levels. It’s such a powerful competency, that if a candidate has “it,” then it’s almost certain that candidate is very strong in most of the other core competencies. I don’t include Resourcefulness as a top competency in our higher Level positions because it’s typically already mastered and an underlying competency to many of the least common and most difficult to develop executive competencies which include: Managing Conflict, Cultivating Innovation, Adaptability, Strategic Agility, Managing Ambiguity, Vision & Purpose, Managerial Courage, Building Effective Teams and Developing Talent.

## What is Resourcefulness?

Resourcefulness is a combination of drive, passion, analytic ability, decision making, perseverance, resilience, integrity, tenacity, and energy that, when applied, snatches success out of the jaws of defeat. Resourcefulness is figuring out how to get over, around, or through barriers to success, and then doing it.

Resourcefulness is the opposite of coasting, giving up, running to bosses to solve problems, whining, making excuses, and then giving up some more.



Why are “A” Players so Resourceful? I’ve conducted thousands of LeaderSHIFT Interviews and Assessments with executives and managers, the vast majority of whom were not born with silver spoons in their mouths and had to work harder than anyone else in order to get ahead. Privileged or entitled young professionals usually turn out later to become “B” and “C” players, because they never were motivated to become Resourceful. Less privileged people tend to be more Resourceful because they had to learn Resourcefulness in order to survive. They became “street smart” to avoid getting pushed around and to accumulate successes that equated to wins. They didn’t expect others to wipe their nose, do their school projects, fight their battles, or rescue them from other troubles ranging from money to people or even legal challenges.

At some point — maybe in high school, college or maybe when they turn 40 — most “A” players figure out that while life is tough and can be brutally unfair, if they work hard, develop good people skills and if they become Resourceful, they can soar with the eagles.

Having that epiphany and becoming aware is not enough though. That doesn’t automatically make people an “A” player. The key to every “A” player’s success is Resourcefulness, which is not just understanding how to figure things out but doing it — overcoming huge obstacles to succeed, in their career, relationships, finances, fitness, and all aspects of life. “A” players are learning agile self-correcting success machines. “A” players fail at a lot of things; everyone does. With Resourcefulness they learn from their mistakes, get back on the horse and learn how to bounce back from every adversity, setback or failure.

### **How to assess Resourcefulness in LeaderShift.**

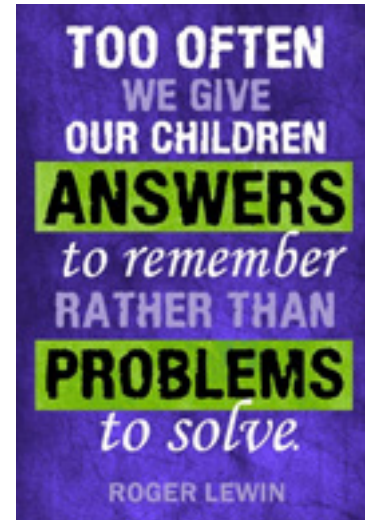
Every moment in every aspect of how you evaluate a candidate, keep your antennae attuned to indications of Resourcefulness ... or lack of it. For example:

- When you review the candidate’s work history questionnaire and accountability performancescorecard, pay attention to recent year’s boss ratings to determine the candidate consistently meets “high” Expectations or Exceeds Expectations. Work history will show job stability and consistently increased responsibility and compensation.
- As you conduct the Screening Interview, amongst other questions I like to ask “What are you looking for that you don’t have now?” “A” player candidates say they want a job with challenge and the opportunity to grow, whereas “C” players are primarily motivated by compensation, which can sometimes be masked by expanded responsibility, so you may have to dig a little.
- In the In-Depth Performance Interview, “A” player candidate’s show they were repeatedly Resourceful in achieving results. Resourceful people exude passion, don’t just give up, figure things out on their own, are flexible, try new things, whereas “C” players have accomplishments mainly achieved by others or only as part of the team. “C” players tend

- not to admit mistakes or if they do, they show a pattern of poor Learning Agility and don't learn from mistakes; they tend to blame the down economy, bosses, lack of resources, circumstances beyond their span of control or some gleaning generality. What's vividly clear is their mediocre results.
- In the 360 Reference Interviews, when you're talking to former bosses, constantly look for signs that the candidate was independent, anticipated challenges, prevented problems, quickly fixed problems, had Energy and Drive, that's Resourcefulness... or whether the boss had to do a lot of the "figuring out" and too much time was devoted to fixing problems the candidate should have taken care of or caused.

**Resourcefulness** is not a competency that always jumps at you after the interview when you're reviewing your notes. During each interview you must constantly ask yourself, "Does that example, what I'm seeing, what I'm feeling, what I'm hearing, in a Screening Interview, Competency Interview, or In-Depth Performance Interview show Resourcefulness, or lack of it?" And during the 360 Reference Interviews you should constantly look for evidence, or lack thereof, Resourcefulness.

This is particularly a problem with Millennials/Generation Y. As a whole this generation which now makes up the majority of the workforce has been enabled by their Generation X and/or the last of their baby boomer parents and grandparents giving them everything without actually having to earn it, being rescued from virtually all troubles, and being told what to do vs. having to figure things out for themselves. While Googling or YouTube surfing is a form of Resourcefulness, it disables the necessity of Critical Thinking. With six Millennials/Generation Y children between the ages of 17 and 30, I have to admit I'm guilty of being a cause of Lack of Resourcefulness in my kids as described above. Fortunately, I wised up stopped my rescuing behavior and forced Resourcefulness. Several rallied, but the jury is still out on a few of them. Maybe this article will propel them over the edge to accelerate the development of Resourcefulness?




---

Joe Hunt is a Managing Partner at Hunt Executive Search/The Hunt Group, a boutique executive search firm that provides human capital solutions to consumer goods, life sciences and diversified industrial space.

---

## CONTACT J.B. HUNT:

212.861.2680 | 800.486.8476 | [info@huntsearch.com](mailto:info@huntsearch.com)

---

[Retained Executive Search](#)

[Executive Assessment](#)

[Private Equity Advisory](#)

[Executive Coaching & Outplacement](#)

[Human Capital Consulting](#)

[E-Dossier](#)

[Video Presentation](#)

---

