

Prague Business Leaders Networking - Event review

Leaders need self-awareness, empathy and the personnel desire to develop and improve themselves. These were, according to the panel at last night's PRAGUE CONNECT leadership series, the key ingredients which go into the development of the new 21st century leader. The panel, moderated extremely well, by the Pepper de Callier of the Prague Leadership Institute, consisted of three proven leaders with a depth of experience and insight from different organizations. Mr Pavel Kavanek, CEO of CSOB; Mrs Renata Mrazova, CEO, ING Insurance and Mr Tomas Visek, Managing Partner, McKinsey & Co. All three were asked by Pepper to share their thoughts on Executive Leadership Development and speak about why, according to research, so many programmes do not achieve the expected outcomes.

What I personally liked about the panel was, that when answering they were willing to share personal stories which helped get their points across as well as to connect and engage with the audience (of approximately 50). The panel were in agreement in that there is no lack of technical ability and 'traditional intelligence' among young leaders and potential future leaders of organization, the panel however still felt that more work needs to be done in the area of Emotional intelligence (EQ/EI). Specifically the component of EQ – Self Awareness. It was felt that too often, leaders start to believe the hype about their own abilities and are not able to step back and see the bigger picture. Solutions for this dilemma put forward by the panel included getting a wide perspective on the world, perhaps by living, studying and working aboard. Mr Kavanek even shared a story of how on one development programme he was 'dumped' in the desert in South Africa. One outcome of this experience, as described by Pavel, was a 'Tipping Point' moment. A moment when he saw 'something' completely different and which has had a significant impact on his character and ability to lead.

Pepper in my opinion moderated exceptionally well, not only did he ask incisive questions, he listened carefully to the answers, added an interesting statistic, comment or quotation, and then came back to the person giving their answer, asking for clarification on one or two of the points. This is important! When people answer, they answer often from their own perspective based on their own view of the 'world', and when we listen we are of course listening with our 'world view'. And sometimes there is a mismatch. There were a few answers which, after Pepper received the answerer's clarification I saw and understood something differently.

One interesting question which came from the audience was to do with intuition and the importance of intuition in making decisions. There was mixed reaction from the panel as well as from the audience. Mrs Mrazova even shared a story where she is in a quandary. Her intuition says YES but the data say NO. Which way should she go? What do you think is the correct way?

One thing I will be looking more into in the coming months will be the topic of Neuroleadership to see if I can gain any insights to help with the Training and leadership development programmes I design and run.

The perfect event organization, by Markus Klos and his team at Prague Connect, meant that everything ran smoothly and I am sure that the audience will have gained a lot of new information as well as made one or two new useful contacts, so their investment in time and money will prove to be worth it.



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