



Paving the Road Less Travelled

Dr Suzanne Ravenall, CEO of the Effectiveness Company, believes that excellence should be executed with honesty and integrity. For her, it is the foundation of success and her personal motto. Not one to follow where the path may lead, Dr Ravenall takes the unfamiliar road and leaves a trail for others to follow. Her organisation believes in pushing the existing boundaries to create success and make a difference in the marketplace.

A professional headshot of Dr. Suzanne Ravenall, a woman with long, straight blonde hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a white collared shirt under a dark blazer. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Execution ^{with} Excellence

Dr Suzanne Ravenall, Chief Executive Officer, the Effectiveness Company, believes that living one's life in honesty and with integrity is the certain way to thrive in business. She shares her ingredients to success, and explains why execution is important for business success. Operating in a dynamic and unique environment of business transformation outsourcing, Ravenall says you either innovate or you will never realise real profits.

*Dr Suzanne Ravenall, Chief Executive Officer,
Effectiveness Company*

The Effectiveness Company has been named among the Best Employers for five consecutive years. What do you attribute this recognition/success to?

We are not a massive global organisation with thousands of employees that provide, or are even able to match, all the benefits. However, we are an organisation that believes that pushing the boundaries to the edge and providing ongoing consistency put our people in a position where they understand how they can improve on a day-to-day basis. So, they say the breakfast of champions is feedback. Not something we are all very good at receiving. We believe that people can do anything they want to do if they put their heart and soul into what they do and continue to observe their behaviour and adjust it for the better to achieve a greater outcome every day. Our ability to provide employees with feedback that allows them to transform themselves daily should they choose, surrounded by a challenging environment that observes the elements of what makes a successful business, has earned this recognition. When a defining moment comes along, you can do one of two things, define the moment or let the moment define you.

How does the way you treat your employees benefit the customer?

Do not follow where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

Our key competency is transformation through execution and in order for you to execute well, you have to be attentive to detail. It is about the small things you do on a day-to-day basis that give the customer satisfaction. We can achieve this by continuously reflecting back to ourselves in order to improve on how to do things differently. There is not a day in the business that we don't reflect on how to do things differently, reinvent and improve. Ultimately our customers are looking for transformation solutions that will make things better, faster, more efficient than they were before.

Do you think a woman leads differently from a man, thereby extracting the most out of each individual member of staff?

People often say women are from Mars and men are from Venus! Whilst we are different, I believe that both men and women, over a period of time, must develop a certain set of leadership behaviours and a lot of courage in order to be good or great at what they do. It is not about your gender or your colour, but it is the wisdom and the capabilities you bring to operate successfully. Winston Churchill once said the kite rises higher against the wind. People come in all

different colours and have different capabilities. We should therefore focus on those areas in which leaders should excel and hone those skills and in so doing, set an example for others to follow. Often leadership is about the tough decisions, the right path is rarely the easy one. If we do that, then we may have better businesses all over the world. Be daring, be first, be different, be just.

What is your perspective on what gives you the competitive advantage over other players?

We are a business transformation outsourcing (BTO) organisation and we operate in an industry that is worth about US\$450 billion worldwide and of that, if we work on the standard numbers, South Africa gets about 11%. It helps us understand the potential size of the market for BTO. BTO as an industry is right at the bottom of the bell curve, poised for an explosion, demonstrating substantial

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opportunity. The industry has gone through a number of changes over the years and worldwide, BTO is an area that has now become exciting, tangible and a very real need for the South African market to assist in speedy but sustainable transformation.

In Africa there are not many BTO companies, however there are many outsourcing companies. Our core differentiation is in the depth of execution capability and as a result the transformation that is achieved and the areas that we outsource. I like to say we get stuff done, at speed, professionally, with high impact that is sustainable.

Do you face operational challenges in Africa as companies in other sectors do?

We have already gone into the African space and the challenge we have faced thus far is financial. As we travel around Africa, we find that the customers really need you to have a base in the countries in which we intend to operate and, as a medium-sized company, it is quite a challenge. I think every country in Africa has its own conditions and requirements in terms of doing business, as in other parts

of the world. So the key is really understanding what is the right way of doing business in a certain country and how can we adapt to the environment instead of fighting against it. What we have found in our operations, wherever we go, is that the challenges are very much the same. Many of the same aspects trouble CEOs all over the world. The key is the solutions that can be implemented to turn around the challenges presented.

What is your leadership style and what makes it work for you?

I think it all goes back to the fact that there are traits or behaviours as leaders that we should all look to develop. I am an entrepreneur through and through and all entrepreneurs think similarly. What is important to me, is upholding the values that I entrench in my life in our business. Our culture is very important to us and we try to embody this every day. One of our values is honesty and this is something that not all people always like to hear. I am not talking about perception or feeling. We all like to think we are honest with ourselves and the people around us. Watching a Ted Talks recently I was interested to hear that we are generally lied to up to 200 times a day, even small or white lies. What stands out for me is that we live life with integrity. We try and promote that to our staff and we also share it with our customers.

What challenges are inherent with leading such an organisation as the Effectiveness Company and how do you turn these into successes for you and the company?

It has been a tough economic climate for everybody and anybody who survived over the last few years has a strong business. We are, luckily, at a point right now where the business is strong and stable and we have equally strong and stable customers coming on board as well. In order to stay at the top of the game, we have to keep being different and innovative. We need to make sure that our customer experience is at the top of the agenda. If anything, our challenge is to raise the bar for ourselves and ensure that we do well and find better ways to do that.

You have the strategic ambition to be a global distributor of performance improvement in the near future. Can you shed more light on how such a mission is to be fulfilled?

We are in the process of doing that, but being a global business does not mean having offices all over the world. What we have learned over a period of time, is that we have become pretty good at transformation and execution. We are busy with technology where clients will be able to go

online and buy the tools they need. So we would like to offer clients a platform where they can download information on "how to" and then share it with others. We believe in the very near future we will be sharing our success stories in that regard.

Having been in business and industry for almost two decades, what areas do you consider still need to be addressed if the sector is to realise its full potential?

Outsourcing used to be simple but not anymore! You need to keep being innovative to stay ahead of the pack. From an industry perspective, it would be good to see more government incentives for other areas of outsourcing. From a customer perspective, I think we are seeing the long awaited changes. Perhaps BTO, at a point, required the early adopter, those that were willing to take a risk. Each day we are seeing more and more customers that deeply understand the concept and see the real need for utilising services of this nature. It is very exciting.

What have been your key lessons in life and in business, that any leader should live by or follow?

I am of the view that you learn from everybody every day. That applies to the people I talk to on the street to those I talk to in the office and in business. If you are wide awake, conscious and observant enough, you cannot afford not to learn from other people. The challenge that applies to me as to any other person is: 'what do I do when things go wrong?' As I have travelled through life, I have learned that there is a solution to just about any problem that arises; it all depends on how you look at it and giving up is just not an option.

Do you have any parting thoughts for CEO Magazine readers?

Over a period of time, I have seen that if we could extrapolate what the top 10% in the business excel at and convert this into "how to" for the rest in the human race, we can achieve just about anything. We need to focus on how we can change things, what we can do differently to make this country great. How you are involved in helping to bring about change, even the smallest thing every day can make a difference. Having been in this business for 17 years, it has been an amazing time. Bringing new people into the business means the company is going in a positive and new direction and I am really excited for the future. I am starting to take a step back and let the new blood do their thing. I will watch and learn from them.

"Beginnings are usually scary and endings usually sad, but it is everything in between that makes it all worth living"

NEW Trend Labour Market

The concept of Labour Managed Services is set to pioneer another new trend in the South African labour market: by offering a different scenario to the existing provision of labour services across the entire labour spectrum.

According to the CEO of The Effectiveness Company, Dr Suzanne Ravenall, it offers clients the solution of employing and integrating people into their businesses who can be fully active in the shortest possible time. This can be done on contract or on a permanent basis. "Finding the right staff remains one of the biggest challenges for any business today. As an established outsourcing business, we are good at finding the preferred behaviour and equipping these incumbents with skills that they need to be successful employees in the shortest time possible," she says.

She explains: "We currently have the capacity to source up to 600 competent matches of people on short notice per week. The difference is, we up-train all the people we find to the level where they can walk into their positions, without the lag usually caused by a new employee coming in and having to find his/her feet, learn the ropes as it were and settle down into a productive job situation. Effectively we can supply competent resources for any required period that, even for interim management positions. We find that the needs for staff ranges mostly from a week and upwards," Ravenall explains.

"Labour managed services are about the provision of tailor-made staffing solutions, not just about providing bodies. We provide skilled people ready to perform their duties upon entering the client's business. "To be able to do this successfully, we need to understand the skills requirement/s of the people we need to recruit and place in clients' businesses," she explains. "In most instances we complete the role and competency profile for the job on behalf of our clients. It is about sourcing the right individuals for the right role profiles and training them/inducting them prior to placement.

More than placement

Ravenall says there is really no limit to staffing configurations which can be supplied as The Effectiveness Company is

geared for just about any need for trained staff. Asked about training periods, she says that it varies and depends on what clients need them to train staff for – "For example," she says, "If a bank needs banking tellers – we can have them trained within anything from two days to two weeks depending on the skills level. And not just hard, but also soft skills training can be done. Ravenall points to the fact that The Effectiveness Company has a financial services licence, putting them in a position to deal with FICA (Financial Intelligence Centre Act) and FAIS (Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act) requirements with ease.

Hiring is about behaviour sets

"Companies do recruit from within, employing human resource staff members to fulfil this function. This can work well, but, in using an outsourced labour managed service such as ours, clients can tap in to all the expertise and skills within our organisation's pool, providing speed and flexibility.

"We provide interim management staffing solutions as well – by bringing trained managers in to client operations where there is a need or a temporary shortfall, whatever the cause of it may be. As long as we know what people want we can provide them with the required staff to fulfil their needs."

"We can either supply trained staff to be incorporated into a client's business as fulltime staff paid by the client, or otherwise we can offer a staffing solution with a managed services aspect.

She says South African companies should tackle the skills shortage head-on. "In today's economic climate, by partnering with organisations such as The Effectiveness Company, it can alleviate some of the stresses involved with this hot topic. Job creation – sustainable jobs, that is – we are all in this together and everyone can make a difference.

"In terms of what we need - we need people with an attitude of wanting to be able to do a job well – what is often referred to as a 'CAN DO' attitude. If a person is passionate about a job and has the right attitude, success will be the result of sourcing such a person. "Business today have common features, amongst some are; customer-centric and delivery orientation – or it should have. Those who succeed in the long run will be those who pay more than lip service to these concepts, and have staff as passionate brand ambassadors of both."

A portrait of Elmarie Dukas, a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a black blazer with white stripes on the lapels. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light color.

Elmarie Dukas, Executive Officer,
The Talent Company

Talking Talent

Finding Excellence

Talking to Elmarie Dukas, Head of The Talent Company, it is clear that, as with the company which brought it to life, The Effectiveness Company, nothing else but excellence drives these organisations. Their values of integrity, responsibility, respect, empowerment and collaboration are noted throughout their daily endeavours, creating an environment of professional ethics, honesty and trust.

Elmarie has been in the HR & Talent Acquisition field for 18 years and her experience, extensive knowledge of its practices, principles and procedures, makes her the ideal partner for Dr Suzanne Ravenall. Elmarie takes on the immense responsibility of providing companies with properly trained candidates in her daily stride and has already proved her mettle by handling high volumes of open requisitions, recruiting and training top performers across multiple verticals.

With its innovative Talent Acquisition methods and Exclusive Sourcing division, The Talent Company is anything but your standard recruiting company. Specialising not only in talent acquisition, but also talent management, head-hunting, Recruitment Process outsourcing and critical assessments.

The Talent Company's solution includes recruitment (recruitment process outsourcing), assessment, database management, contract administration and reference checking, as well as writing, designing and delivery of induction programmes. Finally, it also encompasses intervention management, industrial relations, performance management, payroll administration, skills levy compliance, terminations, skills development and scheduling and deployment of personnel.

All this opens up valuable management time, which can rather be invested into strategic planning initiatives rather than HR administration. The Company's end-to-end HR outsourcing solution provides single delivery capability to all areas of HR and clients benefit from proven IT software and methodologies, thereby leveraging the Company's competency, people, systems and economies of scale.

Hiring the right people for the job is key to a company's success. With this in mind, the Effectiveness Company provides labour managed services to fulfil customer requirements for trained staff with various skill sets, from engineers to merchandisers to managerial staff.

Companies today find it incredibly challenging to find people with the required skills. In many industries, employees are required to meet specific skills criteria, but finding people that meet the criteria when faced with a national skills shortage is near impossible.

The Effectiveness Company believes in tackling the skills shortage head on. They specialise in finding people with the right attitude and equipping them with the necessary skills to complete the job. When you partner with the Effectiveness Company for labour management services, they build training programmes based on specific skill requirements. The Effectiveness Company's training methods are able to effectively equip people with the required skills in a short period of time, thereby providing the client with skilled employees.

The Effectiveness Company's labour management services will also take care of the recruitment and management of a client's work force. They recruit, train and deploy employees and even take care of payroll functions and labour relations if required. Technical-, personality-, emotional intelligence, SQ-

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and behaviour assessments are performed and can be done on behalf of a client in order to find the strengths and training needs of existing staff members. The company also conducts Competency Based Interviews incorporated with targeted selection methods.

It is no wonder that The Talent Company is trusted and respected worldwide as Talent Acquisition specialists of choice. True to its motto of setting new boundaries, the main ingredient for its success is its culture of self-reflection and providing the customer with an ultimate product and experience. Although the industry has undergone many changes recently, the Effectiveness Company has stayed ahead by identifying a real need in the South African market to assist in speedy, but sustainable transformation. As part of a global industry worth US450 billion, the company and now also, its subsidiary arm, The Talent Company, will continue to pave the way by being daring, different and above all, just.

Pioneering the Road Ahead

- ➔ The Effectiveness Company has been at the forefront of innovation for almost two decades
- ➔ The Talent Company provides more than just ordinary HR services and part of their service is continued skills development of candidates
- ➔ Dr Suzanne Ravenhall, CEO of the Effectiveness Company believes that one should not follow where the path may lead, but go instead, where there is no path and leave a trail.
- ➔ Transformation and execution, as well as providing clients with the necessary IT tools, are what sets the company apart from its competitors.
- ➔ The company's focus is on change and bringing it about and Dr Ravenhall believes that the future is going to bring many exciting projects to the industry.



Predictable outcomes™

Firmly positioned within the Business Transformation Outsourcing space, the Effectiveness Company provides long term strategic & alliance partnerships of measurable financial value.

Operating, Improving or Transforming are levels of executing strategic goals. It's about 'doing the right thing *right*', the first time, every time. The Effectiveness Company works with you to transform the business practices of your organisation in order to achieve your strategic goals, through generic scalable processes and creative organisational solutions. The Effectiveness Company is an ISO certified organisation committed to one outcome - yours.

Business transformation outsourcing is provided in the following areas:

- Human Resources Management
- Customer Relationship Management
- Supply Chain Management
- Enterprise Asset Management
- Back Office Management
- Recruitment
- Labour Managed Services
- B2B Sales Call Centres

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■ Execution ■ Transformation ■ Predictable Outcomes

Making delivery happen!