

A refreshing CEO

What is the role of the CEO in organizational effectiveness? Well, the CEO — the ultimate cross-over manager — is accountable for everything, with effectiveness being the overarching priority. That is an extraordinary expectation to rise to and only a select few have the skill, will and mental horsepower to do a decent job of it.

Linda Hasenfratz, CEO of Linamar, demonstrated she is capable of rising to that expectation. She has applied herself to the interweaving practices of an effective CEO: develop a strategy and ensure the structure to support it; define the work, including the roles, then integrate the work across functions; establish a talent growth system; and promote and model effective managerial leadership.

It was so refreshing to hear an executive talk about looking “five, 10, 20, 50 years down the line.” As a CEO of a global organization, Hasen-



Michael Clark
ORGANIZATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS

fratz must have the capability to develop a strategy at least 10 years out. Many executives, overwhelmed by the work and lacking depth in their teams, drop down into shorter time spans — causing too many surprises by the slings and arrows of everyday fortune.

Clearly, Hasenfratz has thought

through Linamar’s functional structure. The manufacturing facilities are the organizational spine of the company, with decision-making devolved to them. Head office and all its functions are support services for the plants, which in turn accept accountability for their goals.

In securing the functional structure, she clarifies the work to be done and the roles needed to execute that work. With the roles clarified, she then populates the structure with the right people.

“Double-digit growth is not possible without the right people,” she said. Hasenfratz has established a multi-channel talent development system at Linamar with an emphasis on management and leadership — the “Linamar Entrepreneur Advancement Program” and the “Each One Teach One” programs are examples.

Next, a talent development process must include a framework of expectations for the leadership behaviours being sought.

Hasenfratz certainly demonstrated the Linamar behaviours of passion, planning and follow-through execution, acumen as well as “soft” traits such as communicating and caring. As she said, “Why would people follow you if you don’t care?”

The presentation was a classic demonstration of the role of the CEO in organizational effectiveness.

Michael Clark is director of sales and marketing at Forrest & Company in Toronto and a commentator on organizational effectiveness for the Strategic Capability Network. Forrest is an organizational transformation firm, with more than 25 years’ experience in developing the organizational and leadership capacity in organizations.