Talent Insights - October 2026

The latest on high-impact, high-quality solutions that strengthen leaders, teams, and organizational performance.

A Message from ZRG's President of Consulting Solutions

Leadership Readiness is No Longer a Future Issue

Most organizations invest significant time identifying leadership potential. Far fewer are asking a more urgent question: Are our leaders truly ready for what comes next?

Today's leadership challenges are arriving faster, carrying greater complexity, and demanding capabilities that experience alone cannot provide. Readiness has become a competitive advantage, yet many organizations still treat it as an assumption rather than an outcome to be intentionally developed.

In this month's newsletter, we explore two questions that deserve every boardroom's attention:

- Who is genuinely prepared to lead the enterprise of tomorrow?
- How do leaders move beyond insight and translate learning into meaningful action?

You'll find perspectives on CEO succession and leadership readiness, the critical role leadership plays in shaping culture, and opportunities to strengthen enterprise leadership capability across your organization. We also share a client story that illustrates what can happen when organizations invest in people during periods of significant growth, change, and uncertainty.

My hope is that these insights challenge conventional thinking, spark important conversations, and inspire action. Because in today's environment, leadership is not defined by what we know. It is defined by how prepared we are to respond, adapt, and lead when it matters most.

Igniting bold futures,

Susan Gallagher

Executive Coaching

Closing the CEO Readiness Gap

Once boards accept that readiness must be built rather than assumed, how do they actually get there?

Identifying a succession gap and closing one are two different capabilities, and most boards are better at the former.

In the final installment of our series on how boards drive CEO succession readiness, ZRG's Global Executive Coaching Practice Leader Mary Herrmann shifts focus from diagnosis and reframing to execution: where executive coaching fits in a real readiness system, what separates boards that use it effectively from those that don't, and why the timing of that investment determines most of its value.

Succession confidence isn't built during a transition. It's either already there or it isn't. Learn how to build yours.

Read Part 3: "Coaching Does Not Replace Succession Planning; It Makes Readiness Actionable" >>

Read Part 2: "From Succession Planning to Succession Readiness" >>

Read Part 1: "Why CEO Succession Fails & What Boards Consistently Underestimate" >>

Coaching is No Longer Optional for Today's Leaders

November 6: Coach to Amplify workshop in Irvine, CA

Organizations are asking more of their leaders than ever before. They're expected to drive performance, navigate change, develop talent, and create alignment, often with little formal training in one of the skills that matters most: coaching.

That's why we're bringing "Coach to Amplify" to Irvine, CA, on Friday, Nov. 6, 2026. It's a focused, half-day workshop designed to help leaders build practical coaching capabilities they can apply immediately.

This isn't a lecture on coaching theory. It's a highly interactive experience led by ZRG's Dawn Poteau, Global Executive Coaching Client Service and Program Director.

What leaders walk away with:

- Practical coaching tools for everyday leadership conversations
- Greater confidence influencing peers, stakeholders, and teams
- Proven techniques to accelerate performance and development
- Stronger internal coaching networks

This session is a strong fit for operational leaders, business leaders, people managers, business partners, and anyone responsible for developing others.

Register today >>

Leadership Development

Enterprise Leadership

ZRG's Jodi Blackwood presents on the leadership imperative

At The Chicago Network's recent Launchpad Women's Leadership Summit, ZRG's Managing Director and Leadership Development Practice Leader Jodi Blackwood set the tone for the first session with Enterprise Leadership.

Jodi encouraged participants to think and act as enterprise leaders, building a clear foundation for what it means to adopt and operate from an enterprise leadership lens. Participants reflected on the shifts they can make in their mindset, behaviors, actions, and capabilities to show up as enterprise leaders and develop a plan for making those shifts.

As organizations become more interconnected and complex, enterprise leadership is no longer a next-level skill. It's a leadership imperative. Leaders need to think beyond functional expertise and consider the mindset, behaviors, and capabilities required to lead across the enterprise.

What's one shift you need to make to lead beyond your immediate area of responsibility?

Let's talk >>

General

Will You Be Able to Executive on Your 2027 Business Plans?

Ensure your orgnanization is successful in the coming year and beyond

As 2027 planning accelerates, leadership teams are making critical choices and investment decisions. Many organizations are investing in growth initiatives, AI investments, transformation programs, operational improvements, and expansion into new markets.

But how many are investing in the conditions required to make those priorities successful?

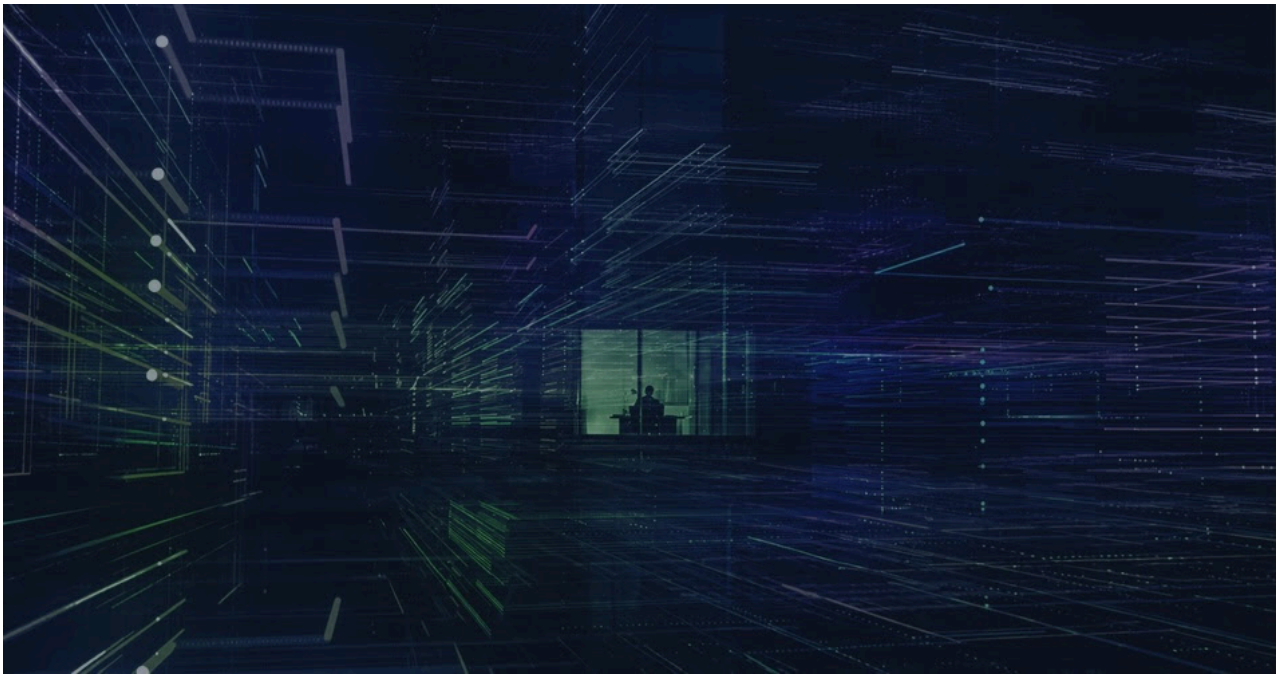
- Leadership alignment
- Faster decision making
- Clear accountability
- More effective ways of working
- Stronger cross-functional collaboration

These can easily be viewed as "people" or "culture" considerations to address after the strategy is agreed. But in reality, they are execution considerations.

When decisions move too slowly, accountability is unclear, or teams struggle to work effectively across organizational boundaries, even the best strategies lose momentum.

As 2027 business plans, strategic priorities, and budgets take shape, leaders should ask a critical question: are they investing only in the strategy, or in the leadership and organizational capabilities that ultimately determine whether the strategy delivers results?

Let's talk >>



The Leadership Balancing Act: Care, Performance, and Accountability

Culture Lab Webinar: November 10

How do you improve performance through clearer accountability while maintaining a culture of care? And how do you create genuine ownership when delivering results depends on multiple teams rather than one individual or function?

In this Culture Lab webinar, Jo Boxer and Mark Young, Senior Partners of ZRG's Global Cuture Practice, will explore practical approaches to creating greater clarity, accountability, and ownership across organisational boundaries, helping leaders improve performance without compromising the culture they want to build.

Register today >>

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