

Custom Program – Associated British Foods June 2017 | London

In June 2017 the Center for Effective Organizations (CEO) partnered with Associated British Foods (ABF), a diversified international food, ingredients and retail group, to create a customized program offering. With over 60 different lines of business, ABF is a complex organization with each business operating differently, including their HR practices. What is similar, however, is the desire to look at how work is changing and how best to get work done.

This brought ABF to CEO to create a customized 3-day program with John Boudreau (CEO) and Ravin Jesuthasan (Willis Towers Watson) on the Future of Work, Automation and AI. The session took place in London with 65 ABF leaders, both in HR and in the businesses.

The session began with a close look at automation and artificial intelligence. Already, these are becoming more and more a part of how businesses get work done. We looked at both the pros and cons of this wave of automation and AI –jobs being replaced by automation but also increased efficiency and new roles that come from using automation and AI at work.

Next, led by Jesuthasan, the group looked at how to best understand how automation can work, you must deconstruct a role into the individual tasks with the role. This allows you to see the specific tasks that one could consider automating as well as the tasks that continue to require human work.

The following two days, Boudreau led the group in new ways of thinking about work and workers. Is every role equally pivotal? All roles are important, but all may not be equally pivotal as it relates to the organization's strategy. Deconstruction of the role also plays a part here in seeing what exactly the tasks are within the role that help achieve the strategic goal of the organization. John also had the group think outside of the box about employment – are there other ways of getting the job done? Partnership outside of your organization, free-lancers, short term workers and more may be the best way of getting work done in the future.

The leaders who participated were challenged to broaden their thinking about how we can accomplish work in a changing world and met the challenge. Each leader will go back to their teams with more creative ways of thinking about strategy, roles verses tasks and how work can best get done in the future.

“Content was dynamic, insightful, and took you out of usual thinking.” – Annie McCallum, Head of Executive Development, Careers, Associated British Foods

