

Greg Duerksen

President at Kincannon & Reed

Hayes, VA, US

Thought-provoking and riveting commentator on the global War for Talent and how to win it. Audiences find the stories highly entertaining.

Biography

Mr. Duerksen is president of Kincannon & Reed, a boutique executive search firm focused exclusively on the interrelated realms of food, agribusiness, and life sciences. The firm counts among its clients many of the world's most important companies and non-profit institutions, and has placed senior executives in all functions in all corners of the globe. Kincannon & Reed's motto is, "We recruit leaders for organizations that feed the world and keep it healthy." Earlier in his career, as CEO he led the successful turnarounds of a Pepsi-Cola® bottling company in Mexico and of Latin America's largest fertilizer producer and exporter. Prior to these posts, he was Vice President, Marketing & Development of a Fortune 500, a consultant for McKinsey, and wrote case studies for Harvard Business School's acclaimed Agribusiness Program. He has testified twice to the US Congress. He grew up on a farm in South Dakota and entered the business world following failure as an operatic baritone.

Availability

Keynote, Moderator, Panelist, Workshop, Host/MC

Industry Expertise

Agriculture and Farming, Pharmaceuticals, Food and Beverages

Areas of Expertise

Talent, Modern Agriculture, Turnarounds, Leadership

Sample Talks

The War for Talent

There is a growing global shortage of talent to fill key roles in scientific, operations, marketing, general management and others functions at all organizational levels. Economic pressures have led to the elimination of bench strength and many developmental posts. The boom in dual-career professional couples and increasing deference to their children is restricting relocation mobility for many executives. The developed world is faced with an aging population in general plus an ever-dwindling proportion of the younger generation pursuing engineering and related technical education and careers. Emerging economies have the young people, but the education systems do not have the capacity to keep up with the demand. Consequently, with demand rising relative to supply, the price of talent has risen. The solution is simple, but not at all easy to implement: ? Companies need a comprehensive talent acquisition and retention strategy beginning with university-level courting of promising students. ? Talent must be nurtured and challenged through developmental grounding in roles of progressive responsibility ? Aggressive and flexible measures must be employed to incent and retain those key to the company's present and future. ? Lastly, companies will need to continually look to the outside to fill roles not only for which internal candidates are not available, but more importantly to bring in fresh ideas, perspective, and eyes to the organization to help renew it.

Sustainability is the Perfect Word

SAMPLE OPENING TO A PANEL DISCUSSION: The reactions to the word "sustainability" range from visions of heaven to ridicule and disdain, in large part because it means very different things to very different people. Therein lays the problem. For example, to some it means conservation, doing more with less ? what business people commonly call efficiency or productivity -- and taking advantage of all the technological tools available, while for others it means organic and GMO-free. I?m with the former group, so I am confounded when I read a restaurant menu that says ?We serve only sustainable, organic, GMO-free food,? because my immediate reaction is, ?Hey, those are mutually exclusive!? But just so you know where my heart is, as an old farmer and fertilizer industry executive, when I reaad recently the latest US Geological Survey report that shows elevated dead-zone-creating concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorus in many streams, rivers, and aquifers, and at levels just as elevated as in the 1990s, it made me mad. It wasteful, it is uneconomic, it is poor stewardship, it is not sustainable, and it is wrong. Notwithstanding my starting point, in the course of my career I?ve come 180 degrees in my view of the word sustainability, and now see it as perhaps the perfect word, because it can mean whatever you want it to mean. And therein lays the opportunity. Precisely because so many people are confused about what sustainability means, we have a terrific opportunity to define it and communicate what we are doing about it and what?s in it for everyone in the food chain -- from the consumer back to the farm and the input supplier.

Finding the Right Answer is the Easy Part

In turnarounds, you have a few short weeks to solve the business problem. That's the easy part. Implementing the solution through hundreds and thousands of other people is the hard part. It requires extraordinary clarity of strategy and tactics and the communication of both, and then months of follow-up. This discussion outlines a powerful framework for thinking about and communicating turnaround strategies and tactics.

What Farmers Can Teach Harvard Business School...and vice versa

Growing up on a farm prepared me extremely well for Harvard Business School. I see four fundamental lessons that farmers can teach HBS: ? Long-term perspective ? Personal responsibility and honor ? Deal with uncertainty ? Wise financial management There are also a few things farmers can learn from Harvard Business School: ? Work through others ? Robust risk management ? Operations management thought process ? Think big and think globally

Event Appearances

Soyatech Global Soy & Grain Trade Summit
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Global AgInvesting Conference
Global AgInvesting Conference

Animal Health Institute
Animal Health Institute

Contract Pharma Conference
Contract Pharma Conference

World Sulphur Conference
World Sulphur Conference

Education

Augustana College
BA

Harvard Business School
MBA

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