



Robert H. Rosen

EDITORS' NOTE Bob Rosen (bobrosen.com) is an organizational psychologist and best-selling author. He founded Healthy Companies over 20 years ago with the singular goal of helping top executives achieve their leadership potential. With support from a multiyear grant from the MacArthur Foundation, Rosen and his colleagues began an in-depth study of leadership. Since then, he has interviewed more than 400 CEOs in 50 countries from organizations as diverse as Ford, Johnson & Johnson, Toyota, and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Rosen graduated from the University of Virginia and subsequently earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Pittsburgh. He is a sought-after CEO advisor, teaches in executive education programs, and has been a longtime faculty member in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at George Washington University's School of Medicine.

COMPANY BRIEF Healthy Companies (healthycompanies.com) was founded in 1988 by Bob Rosen. Its mission is to transform the world's organizations, one leader at a time. Rosen and his team have distilled a very personal approach into *The Grounded Leader Model*, which is the basis for the firm's work. Every day, Healthy Companies advisors coach executives on optimizing their performance, helping organizations navigate through change, and guiding senior teams on how to build productive relationships with their boards, with each other, and with their employees. They also implement leadership development and coaching programs at all levels within organizations. Many of Healthy Company's best practices can be found in Bob Rosen's best-selling books including *The Healthy Company*, *Leading People*, *Just Enough Anxiety*, *Global Literacies*, *The Catalyst*, and his latest New York Times bestseller, *Grounded*.

What led to your initial vision for this company?

We started out helping CEOs and executive teams create their legacies and execute their strategic agendas. It was primarily a CEO coaching and executive team development business.

Creating Cultures of Leadership

An Interview with Robert H. Rosen,
Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Healthy Companies International

But as the CEOs were dealing with the reality that the world was changing faster than their ability to adapt, there was a huge talent gap within their organizations and they needed to close it. The question was how to create cultures of leadership at every level. So we have evolved by going deeper into the organization and bringing knowledge and coaching advice to more leaders at more levels while still working with the top executives.

Is the model generally consistent from client to client or is it customized?

CEOs need to manage four strategic agendas successfully: the human agenda, which is about the values, leadership, and culture; the operations agenda; the marketplace agenda; and the finance agenda.

The very best CEOs drive their companies with the human strategy. We help the CEO figure out who he aspires to be and what his desired legacy is, and what it's going to take to execute his vision and strategy in the organization. Every company is different in terms of how they grapple with that issue.

Sometimes it has to do with transformation and change; sometimes it has to do with talent development and succession; sometimes it has to do with executive teams; and sometimes it has to do with building a healthy, high-performance culture.

How do you build the relationship with companies?

Our relationships tend to be multiyear – we're partnering with the CEOs and their executive teams. Clearly, they're building their internal capability, which is what they should be doing. But it's always valuable to have an outside expert voice and resource.

I spend my days coaching 12 CEOs of multibillion-dollar companies. The work involves touching base with them once a month and running CEO Roundtables. It's all about the personal world of the CEO and the connection between their leadership and life. We deal with their relationship with the board, how they build a great executive team, and how they are executing their business strategy and culture.

What are the key ingredients for you in building trust with your clients?

The CEO issues are fundamentally the same across industry, company size, and geography, but each CEO's personality is different.

I'm a psychologist by profession, so I'm very interested in who they are as human beings, because they're people first and CEOs second. This means they have to have their

personal needs for achievement, recognition, and legacy met, as well as to enhance their ability to learn and be successful in their jobs. And they each have their own blind spots.

CEOs are very conscious of their time, because they don't have that much of it and they have a lot to do. I try to make it a rule to add value every time I touch CEOs in some way through intense questions, provocative statements, or sharing best practices from another industry. So when they spend time with me, they're certain to get something from that experience.

The bottom line is trust: they're buying trust and friendship.

Have the books you've written been important from a business perspective?

I have always tried to shine a light on leaders who are successful, and to find that kernel of success that other leaders can learn from. My most recent book is called *Grounded* – I didn't want to write another leadership book. Rather, I wanted to write a paradigm-shifting book that got us to look at leadership in a different way. In many ways, our leadership model is broken because we are obsessed with what leaders do in the short run rather than focusing on how leaders create long-term value.

Great leaders are grounded by six roots: physical, which enable them to deal with speed and agility; emotional, which enable them to be confident and resilient in a world of uncertainty; intellectual, which enable them to adapt and learn and thrive in a complex world; social, which enable them to be real, authentic, and collaborative in a transparent world; vocational, which relate to their learning, mastery, and need to achieve in a very competitive world; and spiritual, which is about their higher purpose, their generosity and gratitude, and their ability to succeed in a globally connected world.

At Healthy Companies, we use a 360 assessment that measures leadership character and performance. The more grounded they are, the higher-performing they are. But to everyone's surprise, the spiritual roots of leaders are the most predictive of leadership performance. When leaders are grounded – at any level – they are able to tap into a higher purpose, forge a shared direction, unleash human potential, foster productive teams, seize growth opportunities, and drive high performance.

The true secret to success is this: Leadership is personal and who you are drives what you do at every level of business. ●