



7 PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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7 Principles of Leadership Development

I co-developed a corporation's Leadership University focused on developing **internal leaders** from current staff.

Working with the CEO, the HR director, and staff from multiple departments, we **identified** and **created** classes and consulting around and between each of the principles below.

Through these **7 principles of leadership development**, we began to understand and experience how each principle can support the progress of the organization.

1 Necessary Skilled-Knowledge

- The **necessary skills** all **managerial leaders** need: How to **complete** work, **articulate** guidelines, and **reproduce** practices and procedures.

2 Selection for Leadership

- The **why, who, what, and how** of identifying people who will be involved in leadership development. Knowing that those you exclude sends a stronger message than those you include.
- Choosing how people develop **leadership accountability**. Determine whose work they will be accountable for and why that's necessary for leadership development.

3 Using Current Leaders as Mentors

- Developing a **mentoring process** with current leadership is a way to **create discussion** and a **shared language** of work between the leadership participants and those doing the work.
- Bringing the leadership development to a **practical level** by placing **focus** on what matters, then seeing the work get done, having an **opportunity** to **ask questions**, and having someone with skilled-knowledge answer those questions.

4 Education of Leadership

- Combining **elements of leadership development**, leadership mentoring, individual coaching, and team building into one process.
- The length of each person's leadership **education time** in the process varies. People stay involved until they reach needed capacity, which means they've **mastered** the **skilled-knowledge** areas, and could fill management and individual contributor positions.

5 Strategy for Leadership Development

- **Strategy** within leadership development **focuses** on the whole **organization** and uses **systems-thinking** to see how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Strategy for leadership development focuses on 3 pillars: **long-term, importance, and multi-departmental.**

6 Integrate Executive Leadership & Coaching

- Executive leadership is a **large part** of determining necessary skilled-knowledge and using the Talent Pool Assessment to identify the **vacancies, strengths,** and **gaps** projected over the next 3, 5, 10 and 15 years.
- Getting the **executive management** team involved will ensure mentoring and development are part of the organizational metrics. They will use criteria from skilled knowledge and the shared strategy. These changes would also be part of the monthly, quarterly, six month, and yearly **performance reviews.**

7 The Chance to Lead

- **Provide opportunities** to lead and learn from the experience.
- Work with the management team and participants to develop a **series of team projects** that align with the company's strategic plan. These projects should offer a sufficient **challenge** that's big enough to stretch and small enough to learn from while participants do the work.

With these leadership development principles set as boundaries and discussion points, **you, your team, and your organization** can focus on how to **achieve** sustainable **improvement** of the organization.



1 **NECESSARY SKILLED-KNOWLEDGE**

Here is a shared definition of skilled-knowledge:

- 1 **Skill (S):** An ability, learned through **experience** and **practice**, to use given knowledge without having to pay attention, i.e., what a person has **learned** to do without thinking through the steps involved. (Jaques 1998)
- 2 **Knowledge (K):** Consists of **facts**, including **procedures**, that have been articulated and can be reproduced. (Jaques 1998)
- 3 **Skilled-Knowledge (SK):** The **necessary skills** that are needed for **managerial leaders** to be able to complete their work. They should be able to reproduce practices and procedures based on what they've learned, and articulate these steps to other people.

Defining these terms forced the executive team (and myself) to slow down and be clear in our thinking. We figured out what's not working within the organization and how we can come to a final decision.

You need clear thinking in order to grow leaders and leadership.

Many organizations rush into leadership development planning and lack clear thinking. When they find out they're going in the wrong direction, it's too late.

Symptoms of a rush development:

- **No clear concept** of what leadership is and how it relates to management and the roles people fill with and without leadership accountability.
- **No understanding** of the different levels of leadership and their different training / educational requirements.
- **Ignorance** about the history of thinking about leadership and the history of leadership training. Programs often reflect the latest fad or fashion.
- **Looking for a 'quick fix'** – or instant leadership – creates false starts plus frustration. When it doesn't magically arrive, organizations move on to the next solution.

As you can imagine, this discussion spurred many more questions than answers.

By knowing our high-potential target population for the leadership development process, we were able to determine what **skilled-knowledge** is needed:

- **Analysis** of the organizational structure. How the work gets done vs. how the organizational chart claims it gets done
- Identification of needed **accountability and authority** of the organization's managers and employees
- Interviews with existing managers
- **Observation** of managers and employees involved in the work
- Reviewing job descriptions and determining time-span and complexity of the work
- **Focus groups** to determine what is and is not working well

We gathered all this information and spent two months determining what the leadership development training curriculum would be.

Much of what was not working came from **unclear goals, lacking role clarity of employees and management, old organizational folklore of policies, and a rush into reorganization and training** that did not last.





LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SELECTION

Now that we have an idea of the needed skilled-knowledge,

Who should be involved in the leadership development process?

Whom to involve is a tough question.

The company and I went back and forth.

Below are some things we discovered and learned.

First, we had to identify how anyone can find themselves within a role that needs to exercise leadership. There are

four possible routes – not mutually exclusive:

- 1 **Emergent** – The person who emerges in a group that is **complex** and lacking leadership. Others in the group view and **identify** this person as a **good leader**.
- 2 **Appointment** – A person who is **promoted** or **appointed** into a leadership role. A manager may choose this individual who may have been a team leader or project manager. The **role of management** has **leadership accountability** inherent in the position.
- 3 **Elected** – A person who is elected by a group. This is often **political** and **board-based** leadership.
- 4 **Hereditary** – A son or daughter of a **family run business** is put into the role of leadership.

Since there are different ways people come into leadership, you'll see there are multiple outcomes. Each person needs **different leadership development skilled-knowledge** since **accountability** and **managerial structures** vary.

Choosing who and how they will come to have leadership accountability and **whose work they will be accountable for** is **necessary** for leadership development.

For the majority of organizations, the focus will be on appointment and emergent routes.

We already had ~150 employees identified as high potential. Their direct managers and their managers' manager chose this list of candidates. We vetted each person through a questioning process, and asked each manager the following questions about the employee:

- 1 Do they enable the team to complete its task, while working to **maintain harmony** and **collaboration** among the working team? Share at least three examples, explicit and concrete.
- 2 If they do not serve as 'team-leader' how do you observe them providing **team-building** for the **individual** and support of the **team** leader?
- 3 What is the longest (time-span) task that you delegated to this person? Share how they completed the task and how often you had to **assist** or **correct** their work on this task?
- 4 What **professional knowledge/technical ability** does this person have that will gain the respect of the team members?
- 5 Does this person have the **relevant experience to lead** at the level where you see them leading, following this process?
- 6 Does this person have any extreme behavior that may get in their way of handling the **increased stress, accountability** and **authority** that accompanies leading others?

We asked managers the same question face-to-face and **continued our process.**

Since we had an idea of the necessary skilled-knowledge and the future of the organization, we were able to match the **current** organizational needs with the **future** needs. This was all based on managers' responses.



“...leaders are not colleagues or cattle, and organizations are not leader farms. Somehow or other **individuals** acquire the **ability** and **confidence to lead**. Organizations can create some necessary or at least useful conditions for **leadership growth**, such as careful selection, training, and chances to lead. However, organizations cannot grow leaders.” – John Adair



3 MANAGERS AS MENTORS

Using existing managers who are ‘in the trenches’ as mentors, **creates trust** in the **organization, leadership,** and the **participants.**

What is a mentor?

Mentoring: Discussions by someone who knows the work and has access to resources and knowledge that are helpful to a person in a role within the organization. Working with that person in their role to **understand their potential** and how that potential might be developed to achieve full **career growth** in the organization.

We asked ourselves to look back at our careers.

- Can you **identify** anyone you worked for who **found time for you** as an individual?
- Who **showed interest in helping you** grow as a leader, and shared their experience with you?

Developing a **mentoring process** with existing managers is a way to **create discussion** and a shared language of work between the leaders being developed and those that are already doing the work. Bringing the leadership development to a pragmatic level places the **focus on what matters**; Seeing the work get done and having the opportunity to ask questions and have someone with skilled-knowledge answer those questions.

Working with the leadership development planning team, we decided to look within the organization and **persuade managers** and **high-performing people** to operate as these **internal mentors**.

How did we do that?

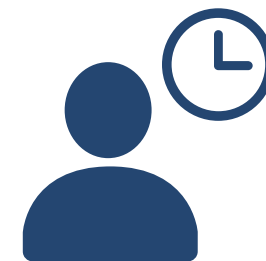
- We did some work and discovered 10 to 15 people who were involved in the level of work that those in the **leadership development process** would eventually work. We found people who were, a) as **busy as anyone else**, and b) still find **time to grow** and develop their staff and others on the team, while c) others go to them for **advice** and find they **add value** to their work.
- We organized a two-hour meeting for the leadership development participants and the mentors, over a shared dinner. The **chosen mentors** shared why they believe **supporting** others and **adding value to others' work** is important and how they personally go about it. We then had an open discussion.
- We invited a peer from another company that has successfully created mentor matches for high-potential employees, and he **shared what worked** and some stories from his company.
- The Leadership Development Committee shared its role is to ensure that the organization **maximizes** every bit of the **potential** of its people at every level. Pointing out that they cannot do this themselves, they are counting on the **managers-as-mentors** and everyone in the room to play their part.

What are the **mentor-mentee responsibilities**?

Each individual mentor and the employee in the leadership development process were asked to **work together** and **meet** through the skilled-knowledge development and training.

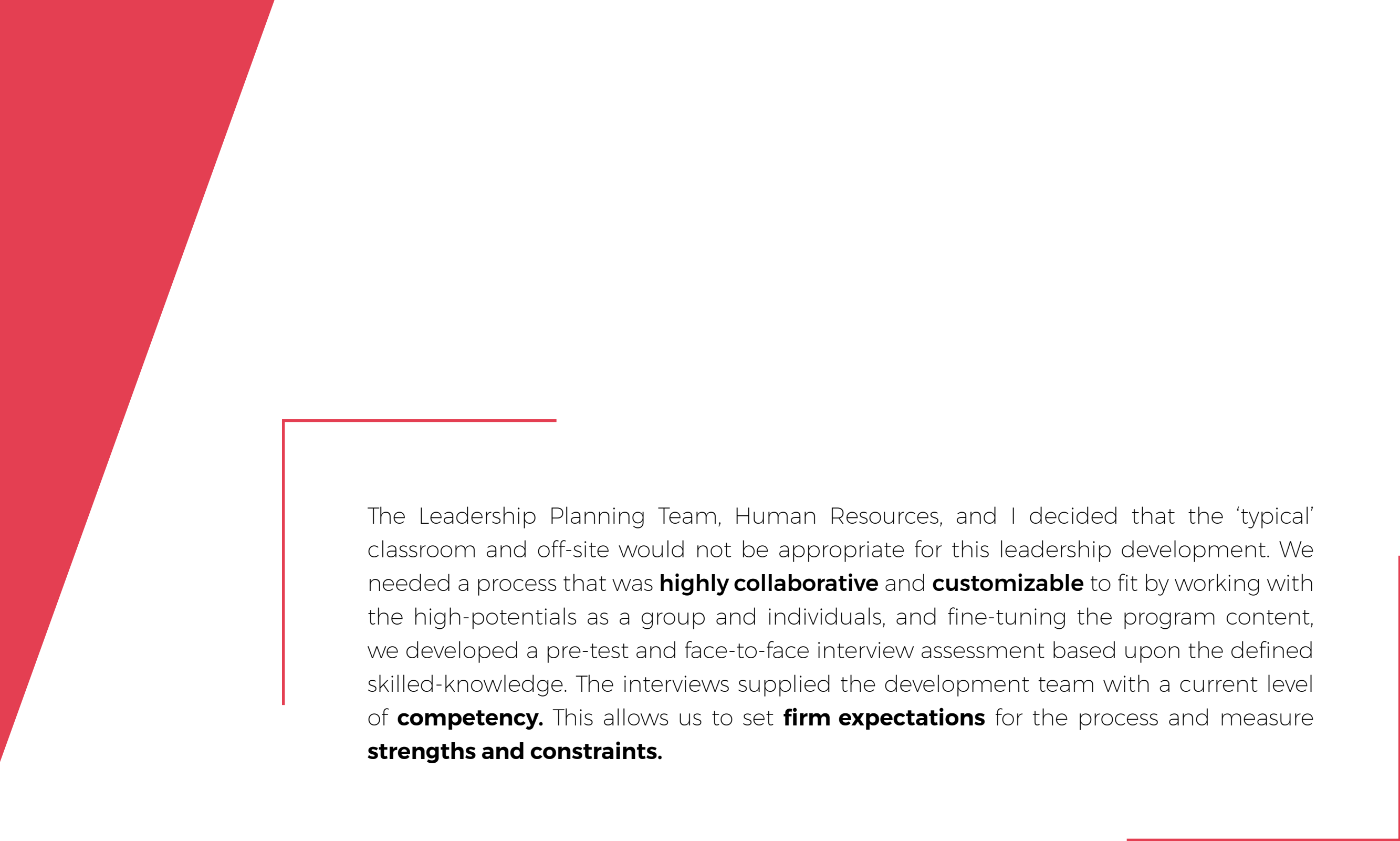
- Set up time to meet and update each other on **what is needed, expected** and **areas for development**. There will always be intentions and expected benefits from the classes and coaching being offered. Overall, the mentor should convey the importance/ worthwhileness of becoming a **better leader** – it is a chance to keep the enthusiasm through the process.
- After each section of the skilled-knowledge, meet **one-on-one** and discuss: a) What has been learned? b) How do you **intend to apply** it in your team context? c) How can I help you? d) What wider lessons did you learn which might benefit the department or company? e) **What more training do you need?**
- Three months later, **check on the progress** and give some further encouragement, the initial excitement can fade without focus and continued development.
- Update Mike and the Leadership Development Committee with some **feedback** on the **value** of the **skilled-knowledge** and how they saw it being applied.

‘To lead is to serve’ Part of your service is to **help** your **team grow**, both as a group and as individuals; this will not happen if you don’t find time to spend with them individually. As the Japanese proverb has it, **‘if he works for you, you work for him.’**
– John Adair



A man with a beard and a blue striped shirt is pointing at a computer monitor. Two women, one in a white shirt and one in a light blue shirt, are looking at the screen. In the background, there is a whiteboard with various notes and a keyboard on the desk.

EDUCATION OF LEADERSHIP



The Leadership Planning Team, Human Resources, and I decided that the ‘typical’ classroom and off-site would not be appropriate for this leadership development. We needed a process that was **highly collaborative** and **customizable** to fit by working with the high-potentials as a group and individuals, and fine-tuning the program content, we developed a pre-test and face-to-face interview assessment based upon the defined skilled-knowledge. The interviews supplied the development team with a current level of **competency**. This allows us to set **firm expectations** for the process and measure **strengths and constraints**.

Next, we gathered feedback from the participants' peers, subordinates, managers and key customers. We then initiated a 360-feedback process.

- Each potential leader **co-created plans** with their mentor(s) and Mike for his or her continued development. The plans were based on first finding **what's working well** and then leveraging that to **improve** the skilled-knowledge areas.
- The plan for development was **co-created** and **presented** to the individual's manager and mentor for approval.

Specific Education for Leadership Elements

- During the leadership-development process, Mike interviewed program participants, their mentors, and managers for **ongoing feedback** every month, gathering data, providing coaching and solution-focused feedback to each leader, and developing real-time field assignments.
- In addition to the personal conversations, we invited program participants into a private website. They received regular **skill-based leadership content** and **discussed** it as a group.

- The leadership development students explored how best to transfer the learning. As they completed field assignments, participants **practiced behaviors** and **reported** their **results**. The reporting and discussion provided the opportunity to share information and best practices, and comment on each other's progress.
- The participants developed **team projects**. Each of these projects had an overarching reach into the organization, impacting both the **financial** and **cultural aspects** of the organization.
- **Training modules** were facilitated regularly during the process — this provided time to reflect and focus on **individual** and **team development**.
- We combined elements of leadership development, individual coaching, and team building into **one organic process**.
- The length of each high-potential's time in the process varied. Each person was involved until they recognized that they had **mastery** of the **skilled-knowledge** areas and showed the **ability** to fill management and individual contributor positions.

“Effective leadership development is too important for the present and future success of a business to be left to the human resources department. **It is a core activity to grow leaders.”** – John Adair





STRATEGY FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT


Strategy within leadership development **focuses on the whole** organization and uses **systems-thinking** to see how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Strategy for leadership development has to focus on 3 Pillars:

- 1 Long-Term** – this leadership-development program was in some sense about the **needs of today**. We needed to **identify** and **build** the long-term tomorrow of the employees and company.
- 2 Importance** – many **urgent** items will (and did) pop up during leadership development. The need to focus on metrics based on the long-term needs held the importance high.
- 3 Multi-Component** – cross-functional-working teams are needed to develop the many pieces that **make up efficient leadership development**.



We used the framing questions below to **discuss, question, tear down, rebuild** and **critically consider** steps we have already put in place, and future steps.

- What are the **hidden assumptions** behind our identified Skilled-Knowledge, those selected to be in the process, the mentors we chose, and our method of education?
 - Is there a **clear, pragmatic philosophy** in what we are doing/ looking to do? Can you explain it in simple and concrete terms?
 - Are we all clear about **what leadership is** and **how it relates to management** within this company? In the future state of the company?
 - Is our strategy aligned with the choice we made that no one should be given a **leadership role** without **training, education,** and **preparation** for it?
- 

- How will we decide on costs, **long term vs. short term** savings, and investments for the **leadership-development process**? Who is responsible for ensuring that our investments are being returned and what we are training people to do?
- Are the people we chose and trained as **mentors** being evaluated? Moreover, are they completing the level or work, and training expected? Are the leadership-mentees **applying** and **showing competence** through the mentoring?
- How is the leadership-development strategy being **evaluated**? What are the **progress** markers? Have we shared these with everyone? Are too many resources being used on too few people at the top of the company?
- How is this leadership-development process strategy going to show how we improved the **identification of leadership potential** in our selection and promotion process?
- What **'research and development'** are embedded in the strategy?

We found that having this **strategy talk**, and **several meetings**, forced the Management + Human Resources + Leadership Development Team to think and think until it hurt.

We answered the questions above, forming a 1-page '**Strategy for Leadership Development**' document that contained **defined terms, measurable milestones**, and **evaluation points**. Sharing this document with all the staff helped get more people on board and make the Leadership-Development Process a point of pride and recognition.

If you are in the top strategic managerial-leader role in an organization, you own the **problem of selecting and developing** the business leaders it needs, not just for today but also for tomorrow. You can share it with others and delegate certain aspects to others, but **you are accountable**. – John Adair



6 INTEGRATE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP & COACHING

This part was met with the most significant resistance by HR and the leadership development team. Some people stated, **“He tasked this project to us, and I feel we don’t need to involve him. He may take over and micro-manage us.”** Their concerns may be a true statement, and the CEO was a large part in determining the needed **Skilled-Knowledge** and working to identify through the Talent Pool Assessment the vacancies, strengths, and gaps projected over the next 3, 5, 10 and 15 years.

Plus, I had been meeting and submitting reports monthly on the progress of the **Leadership Development Process**, and adjusting based on the CEO’s recommendations.

I met with the CEO and told him to also serve as a mentor to his 10 subordinates and **set expectations** for them. This will help mentors work with their subordinates and others in the organization.

We used criteria in the shared strategy and skilled-knowledge to ensure that mentoring and development were part of the **Organizational Metrics**. These ideas would be part of the monthly, quarterly, six-month, and yearly **performance reviews**.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE **WITHOUT** MANAGERIAL-LEADERSHIP COACHING



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE **WITH** MANAGERIAL-LEADERSHIP COACHING



★ The difference is at the point of interaction.

Management commands and subordinates follow, causing separation of management, subordinate and work.

The difference is where the managers and the people they manage interact.

Management coaches subordinates to accomplish goals and objectives. This way, management can best determine the effectiveness of subordinate, be held accountable for their output, and develop an organization that can solve problems and make decisions.

The CEO and Senior Managerial-Leadership were decided:

- The CEO is **accountable** for **follow-up** and **maintenance** of the succession planning and defined metrics of the Leadership-Development.
- The CEO must **publically share** at quarterly town hall meetings what he is accountable for based on the Leadership-Development process.
- Management must visit the courses monthly and share a few words on the **importance of development** within the organization.
- Management should hold **quarterly meetings** with the **internal training and development** staff that work with mentors and teach the skilled-knowledge sections. This will serve as an update meeting and also a way to determine **what is working** and **what can change**.
- Management should **update** the **Board of Directors** and share progress on how projects align with the strategic vision of the organization.

The **Leadership Development Team** found the meeting with the CEO to be very eye-opening. They found the **accountability list** above was useful to show the CEO what is expected.

When we had our 1st town hall meeting, about two weeks after kicking off the Leadership-Development Process, the CEO shared what he is expected to complete and how he will be measured. Sharing that **“We are all in the company to be successful, I am with you on this journey we all have measures to hit and work to do...Let’s do this together.”** There was a palpable sense of excitement and clarity of why we are doing this and that the company is serious about the future leadership development.



7

**THE CHANCE
TO LEAD**

“Organizations **cannot grow leaders**. It is nature or God that grows leaders. All that organizations do is to provide some of the necessary **conditions for growth**, and chief among them is the **opportunity** to lead.” – John Adair



When the Leadership Development team and I met, this started as a DUH! We know that people have to have the chance to lead. Do we need to add this to the process?

After time exploring how the company is currently set up and the future five-year plans, the need became apparent. The company did not supply enough chances and needed to **grow** its **managerial-leadership** and individual contributor roles to align with the growth happening in the organization.

We quickly realized that the **chance to lead** and having **coaching, mentoring,** and **development systems** in place is the most important part of developing leaders.

Provide opportunities to lead and learn from the experience

- Working with the participants' managers, we **developed** a **series of projects** aligned with the company's strategic plan. We partnered with the other six areas of leadership development and the talent pool assessment, focusing on the **individual leader's maturation** of complexity processing.
- After **identifying** the **leadership team projects**, the leadership development team and the managers of the participants explicitly determined what we are looking for and how we will judge the work and application of the leadership development.
- These were all **real projects** that had a **high profile** in the organization; nothing made up or pretend work. The emerging leaders had to feel and be recognized as **contributing**. Through the leadership impact project, the participants saw in real-time **what they were good at**, and **what needed more coaching** and development.

Lessons Learned

- 1 **Leaders grow** through being **challenged** and their **potential** to handle more complex projects.
- 2 If people want to **develop leaders**, they must give others a **chance to lead**.
- 3 The **support of coaches** and **mentors** within the leadership development process are helpful.
- 4 The **most helpful person** to **develop leaders** is the person's direct manager's manager and direct manager.
- 5 **Leaders** at any level **benefit** from having leaders above them in the organization who can **offer encouragement** and **support**; this is what we mean by "managers add value to the work of people."
- 6 It is a **mistake** to think that **promotion** is the only way to develop as a leader.

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