

## A STUDY ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: BUILDING GREAT LEADERS

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### **Abstract:**

*Leadership development expands the capacity of individuals to perform in leadership roles within organizations. Leadership roles are those that facilitate execution of a company's strategy through building alignment, winning mindshare and growing the capabilities of others. Leadership roles may be formal, with the corresponding authority to make decisions and take responsibility, or they may be informal roles with little official authority (e.g., a member of a team who influences team engagement, purpose and direction; a lateral peer who must listen and negotiate through influence).*

*Leadership development is thought to be key to business success. A study by the Center for Creative Leadership holds that 65 percent of companies with mature leadership development programs drove improved business results as compared to 6 percent of companies without such a program. Similarly, 86% of companies with leadership development programs responded rapidly to changing market conditions whereas only 52% of companies with immature programs were able to do so.*

### **Introduction:**

Leadership development refers to activities that improve the skills, abilities and confidence of leaders. Programmes vary massively in complexity, cost and style of teaching. Coaching and mentoring are two forms of development often used to guide and develop leaders.

According to Baldwin and Ford (1988), the success of leadership development is influenced heavily by the quality of the programme, level of support and acceptance from superiors, and the characteristics/learning style of the person being developed.

Some commentators differentiate between leadership development and leader development, the former being used when referring to development programmes focusing on collective leadership in an organisation and the latter on individuals.

Leadership development is a common process in succession planning, which aims to produce high-calibre leaders to take over senior positions when they become vacant. High-performers are typically identified for these leadership development programmes, which may be longer-term and broader than programmes focusing on tighter end-goals.

### **The four C's of Leadership development**

1. **Competency:** being operationally and technically skilled at what the organization does. As one progresses up the leader chain in any organization, competency evolves, and how the

whole “system” operates becomes more important than hands-on technical knowledge, but the competency gained early on enables the senior leader to have that respect whenever he or she is on the plant floor.

2. **Commitment:** placing heart and soul into the enterprise, and most importantly, its people. The cautionary note, however, is to keep one's life in balance (family, personal interests); not running the organization ragged all factor into commitment.
3. **Courage:** the intellectual and moral courage, much more so than physical courage, to simply take the “hard right over the easy wrong.” Finally,
4. **Candor:** always articulating what you, the leader, believe to be truthful. This leadership skill becomes harder and harder the more senior a leader becomes, but at the end of the day, you must be able to look into the mirror and respect what you see.

### The Keys to Developing Great Leaders

A study from BTS and the Economist Intelligence Unit titled Cracking the Code: Secrets of Successful Strategy Execution showed that companies with great leaders significantly outperform their peers. Yet it is a well-known fact that most corporate leadership development programs are ineffective. We have identified the common culprits behind why most leadership development initiatives fail to support company strategies and business results, but more importantly we have defined the success factors and a new approach that helps companies and their leaders achieve great performance and execution.

We believe it's time for business leaders to take back the investment and development of their leaders – arguably the most valuable asset of their business – at every level: executive, high potential, mid-level, front-line and newly hired. And we know that when you “Define Great, Assess Great, Experience Great and Execute Great,” you can move the mean on leadership performance and strategy execution in your company.

### 6 Strategies to Improve your Leadership Effectiveness

To be a great and effective leader, you need to be very clear on your vision, and what actions you need to take to turn your vision into a reality. And, like an organization or a team, to be an effective leader, you need to focus on the few key areas that will have the highest impact on turning your vision and goals into a reality. Although this word is offensive to some, ultimately, we are talking about winning. And, as any good coach will tell you, to win, you need to be willing to learn and then practice what you learn. The more you are willing to learn and the harder you are willing to practice, the more successful you will become at achieving your vision and goals.

Although some people believe leaders are born, after dedicating 25 years to understanding leadership, I am more convinced than ever that strong leadership requires continuously learning, regularly accepting feedback, and consistently practicing what you learn. If someone feels they know all there is to know about leading people, arrogance creeps in. This

is bad news because arrogance is usually received as condescending and people are less inclined to follow those whose communication style is perceived as condescending.

Like an athlete in preparation to win the game, leaders need to constantly hone their craft to become more effective. Here are six ways to become even more effective in your leadership approach:

1. Find great mentors: Who are the people you know or work with that are followed? The difference between leaders and managers is that leaders may or may not have a title but they always have people who are motivated to willingly follow them. Who are the great leaders who truly care about your success and have the guts to tell you the truth?
2. Clarify your leadership vision: If you were to die, what would you hope people would say about you as a leader? I would hope people would say I have a clear vision of a positive future; that I deeply care about and value our staff and our clients; I am grateful and generous; that I believe in people and the significant contribution they make to achieve our vision; that I have a strong desire to achieve our client's goals and win; and last, that I did all this with a great sense of humor and didn't take myself too seriously. Clarifying your vision will help you determine what areas you need to improve and what areas will require more practice.
3. Be committed: Every coach will tell you that hard work tops talent, anytime that talent doesn't work hard. Every day, you will be faced with operational tasks that take your time and effort. Operational tasks are easy give you instant gratification as you cross them off your list. Leadership activities almost always take more thought, can be frustrating because people are involved, and often don't have immediate gratification. Great leaders are committed to staying focused on doing the right thing and accomplishing their leadership vision.
4. Build your Emotional Intelligence: Your IQ is all about how intelligent you are. Your Emotional Intelligence is all about opening your mouth, building strong relationships and achieving your goals. In the leadership business, it boils down to this: if we gave your direct reports a choice, would they choose to follow you? A great example of this is when a leader leaves one organization and moves to another; pay attention to how many of his or her direct reports choose to follow. Another great test for emotional intelligence is whether or not your family, friends, boss, peers and direct reports feel comfortable telling you the truth about your leadership and communication style. Collecting informal feedback on a regular basis, participating in a 360 Leadership Development Assessment every 12 to 18 months, and, most importantly of all, taking action on what you learn from the feedback will all be good practice, helping you to improve your leadership.
5. Treat people right: Everyone would agree that treating people right is important. What is discussed a lot less is that different people want to be treated differently. Some people need more praise and recognition; others want to produce results by working as a high performing team; still others tackle their daily job by getting stuff done and crossing stuff off their list. If that does not complicate things enough for leaders, some people want you to tell them exactly what you want them to do, and then just leave them alone. Figuring

people out, and treating them like they want to be treated, will be a big part of a leader's success.

6. Learn from your mistakes: I recently went to a retirement party for a client. At his party, the client made a strong point about mistakes and leadership when he said, "The best leaders are the best learners." When you think about the ability to practice and learn, then mistakes aren't really mistakes. You have only learned a new way that doesn't work.

Leadership takes practice. Leadership isn't something you practice once and become a master at. But how much practice does it take to become a great leader? Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *Outliers*, gives us the 10,000 hour rule. Based on Gladwell's research of people who've reached an expert level so profound that others would describe them as great, it takes about 10,000 hours of studying and practicing the art or the task. That would be more than five years worth of full time work, with each hour dedicated to practicing leadership skills. Even the masters never stop practicing.

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