



**ROSS GROUP
TRAINING**



Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework



**GLOBAL
TRAINING &
DEVELOPMENT**



Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

“A leader is someone who steps back from the entire system and tries to build a more collaborative, more innovative system that will work over the long term.”

– Robert Reich, Author, Professor, U.S. Secretary of Labor (1993-1997)

Two people were out walking in the woods when they came across a large, hungry bear. They immediately turned and started running with the bear close behind. Suddenly one stops, sits down and begins changing his shoes, putting on a pair of sneakers he had pulled from his backpack. “What are you doing?” asks the first person, “You can’t outrun that bear!” The other person replied, “I don’t have to out run the bear. I just have to outrun you.”

Effective leadership development systems are crucial to the enduring success of any organization. Yet often, as in the parable above, organizations are running too fast to stop, design and execute these systems in a consistent fashion. A popular belief held by many executives today is that sufficient leadership development happens informally, “running through the woods” and throwing off advice to high-potentials along the way. In truth, although informal learning is a critical part of the practice and reinforcement of new skills, it is the underlying framework of a development system that sustains top-performing organizations over time and produces effective leaders from one generation to the next.





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

Executive and Board Sponsorship

It takes time and commitment to develop leaders. These are farsighted virtues, and today's corporate leadership is challenged more each year to defend their practice. Western cultures, investors in particular, have grown steadily less patient over the past decade, demanding near-instant returns and gratification. This has placed tremendous pressure on executive leadership to sacrifice long-term growth for immediate gains.

According to a Booz Allen Hamilton study of the world's 2,500 largest corporations, the average tenure of a CEO departing for performance-related reasons declined from 7.0 to 4.6 years between 1995 and 2001. That's not much time for a chief executive to build a sustainable leadership development system, much less benefit from any significant investment. It's no wonder that, according to a Hewitt Associates study, only 56 percent of CEOs in lower-performing organizations actively participate in the development of new leadership.

For companies that do make a consistent commitment to leadership development, the investment pays off. Research indicates that top-performing organizations are 35 to 50 percent more likely to have CEO- and board-level involvement, which is directly linked to higher financial performance.





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

Target Audience: All Potential Leaders

A lot has changed in the past 10 years. Technology now connects front-line employees directly with customers, and critical decisions are happening global-ly in cubicles and home offices. Organizations can no longer afford to provide quality leadership development only to high-potentials and senior management. Companies must positively impact potential leaders at all levels of the organization.

Research has shown that all employees are capable of developing into leaders with varying skills, strengths and capacities. Furthermore, it's significantly more cost-effective to develop a pipeline of future senior leaders internally than through constant talent acquisition.

A leadership pipeline model defines different levels of management and suggests key development activities should happen at the transition points of each level. By laying an organization's unique competency tracks (customer focus, results driven, ethics, etc.) vertically across a pipeline model, it's possible to align the organization's core competencies with learning that's appropriate for each stage in an employee's career.

It's important to note that it is much less expensive and arguably more effective to invest more heavily early on in employees' careers when they're most open to influence and where through sheer volume you can effect the greatest change in the organization. To this end, this model has been modified to reflect the relative proportion of employees an organization can impact at each stage of their development. This modified pipeline model forms the foundation of many corporate universities and represents one element of an integrated curriculum.





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

A Practical, Integrated Curriculum

According to ASTD's 2005 State of the Industry Report, organizations based in the United States provide approximately 35 hours of formal training to the average employee each year. With approximately 17 percent of this time dedicated to leadership development, that equates to approximately six hours per year invested in executive, management or supervisory training. Even middle- and senior-level managers are unlikely to spend more than three to five days a year in formal leadership training.

With such a small amount of time available to cover so many topics, companies have begun to focus on fewer, more critical organizational competencies. Professionals in ASTD's best-performing organizations actually provided their employees with the lowest number of courses per staff member. This most likely indicates an increased emphasis on mastering fewer competencies instead of covering a broader range of topics in less depth. Across the board, it appears that focusing on fewer, more strategic topics with greater reinforcement is affording organizations a greater probability of making a meaningful impact on enterprise performance.

When designing the curriculum for a leadership development system, there are three distinct content elements to address. Although the organization might define any or all of these three elements in significant detail, it is best left up to operating departments and managers to select a final personalized plan for individual employees:





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

Organizational Objectives

Every organization goes through dynamic shifts in its internal and external environments that require ever-evolving skill sets from its employees. In some cases, these shifts are dramatic and require an adjustment in the overall characteristics, values or talents of employees. Examples include the rapid transition from one market or business model to another. In such cases, a CEO will most likely seek to exchange key areas of its workforce for external resources to quickly add more relevant experience to the staff.

When these shifts emerge more gradually, leadership will set an agenda for new employee behaviors that must be enhanced in order to address the changing landscape. These changes are most likely significant enough to mandate a large-scale initiative, either for a line of business, a common employee population or an entire enterprise. A few examples would include developing change management skills to accelerate the integration of a merger, introducing new innovation models when product lines are near the end of their maturity cycle or investing in team-building and partnering skills for a business now dependent on cross-organizational selling or coordination.

These critical organizational initiatives should come from the CEO, must be tackled one at a time, and always go to the top of leadership development agendas for the year.



ROSS GROUP
TRAINING

This material is confidential and proprietary.

GLOBAL
TRAINING &
DEVELOPMENT





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

Organizational Competencies and the Leadership Pipeline

This element of a leadership development curriculum is most common within corporate universities and reflects the “leadership pipeline.” A core set of organization-wide competencies are defined (vertical columns), and then translated into their practical application for employees at different levels of management (the crossing pipes). Organization-wide competencies are defined by a committee of the company’s senior leadership and generally include categories such as develops winning strategies, customer-focused, delivers results, drives change, builds relationships, develops diverse talent, demonstrates excellence and behaves ethically. These virtues are established by each organization as the characteristics that distinguish them from others and support the behaviors behind their competitive differentiation.

Within the different stages of management, these competencies are tailored to meet the appropriate needs for employees at each level of the pipeline. For example, the organizational competency “builds relationships” might mean “one-on-one communication skills” for individual contributors, “team-building” for managers and “managing partnerships and alliances” for business leaders. This interpretation makes it possible to apply fewer, more universal values to specific, tactical roles and job requirements.

The matrix of development areas is then blessed and accepted as the universal curriculum of the leadership “college” within the broader corporate “university.” The limitation—and thus, the challenge—of using this pipeline element alone is that the curriculum often reflects neither the immediate objectives of the organization, nor the personal needs of any one individual. On the other hand, without the pipeline element, organizational initiatives alone are often dubbed the flavor of the month and their perceived value is greatly reduced. Thus, it’s important to integrate all three elements for a sustainable development system.





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

Individual Assessment and Development Plan

There's no better way to capture an employee's awareness and motivation than through an individual assessment and development plan. Although using multi-rater surveys to identify individual skill gaps has been in practice for years, few instruments have taken the critical next steps of identifying a personal development plan that maximizes those strengths.

In their book "The Extraordinary Leader," Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman outline 16 universal competencies within five core values, which form the leadership tent floor of their development framework.

The idea is that once an individual's peers have provided online feedback on his or her capabilities, the system identifies perceived strengths relative to the top 10 percent of all participants. It then helps each individual map out the tactical steps for maximizing the development of those extraordinary talents.

Whether you embrace this particular model or one like it, creating some form of individualized development plan is a critical component of an effective leadership system. Without it, employees are subject to years of participation within a generic curriculum that might never identify, much less enhance, their own unique skills and talents.

In the aggregate, these three elements will present managers and their direct reports with a thorough roadmap for development each year. By working together, they can discuss which components to embrace and which to dismiss, and arrive at a realistic and personalized design. For the manager, it's an opportunity to influence and align the employee's development with the needs of the organization. For the employee, it will represent a balanced diet of what they must learn (organizational objectives), what they should learn (leadership pipeline) and what they want to learn (individual assessment).





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

Diet, Exercise, Laundry and Implementation

With sponsorship secured and a curriculum blessed, it's time for implementation. Although the organizational objectives and enabling competencies will change from year to year, a consistent enterprise adoption process will sustain the development system over time. Like many corporate disciplines, leadership development is an ongoing process that must be practiced at all levels of management. And by integrating this five-step approach into an organization's set of core competencies, businesses become prepared to address any environmental shifts that might come their way:

- **Assessment and Alignment:**
Begin each year by identifying organizational goals and individual skill gaps. With these two aligned, there's a higher probability of the development plan making a real impact on both the emerging leader and the organization's performance.
- **Individual Learning:**
Acquiring new ideas and internalizing visual models of ideal behavior can happen best through individual, self-paced learning. This approach enables learners to focus, proceed at their own pace and access learning activities at their convenience. This saves time and money, and improves retention of the material significantly.
- **Social Application:**
Once emerging leaders have had time to internalize new ideas, it's time to discuss them with others. Think of it like reading the assignment before coming to class. Time spent together as a group, the most expensive time, is best used applying the learning to real situations and resolving specific problems together.





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

- **Sustain and Reinforce:**
Studies indicate that 85 percent of retention is lost if not reinforced within 30 days. Furthermore, research shows that performance improves most when managers hold employees accountable for their growth. For the development to stick, focus less on the learning event and more on ongoing practice and reinforcement.
- **Measure:**
Today it's easier than ever to measure the real impact of leadership development programs. From 360-degree assessments of behavioral change to predictive algorithms projecting impact and ROI, online tools provide the accountability and measurement senior management demands.





Architecting A Comprehensive Leadership Development Framework

An Integrated Performance Development Cycle

In the end, leadership development is a personal act. The architecture of a process and the conceptual framework of a curriculum are abstract designs until human beings step in. And although emerging leaders can learn from multiple mentors along the way, their immediate manager is usually most responsible for their day-to-day development. Thus, the practice of establishing a partnership and enabling a coaching relationship between two people is the final, critical element of a leadership development system.

In this role, managers have a responsibility to translate strategic direction and functional needs into smart goals and individual performance plans for themselves and their direct reports (the results they need to achieve together). Managers then continue to develop their own management and coaching skills. They simultaneously partner with their direct reports to interpret their individual assessments and leadership pipeline assignments, together drafting a personal development plan for each individual.

The combination of these individual performance goals and development plans creates a personalized game plan that the employee can follow throughout the year.

Throughout this integrated performance development cycle, the manager and employee continue to support, coach and hold each other accountable for measurable improvements in behavior.

This comprehensive system, when consistently supported, rewards organizations with a process for generating boundless energy and renewed commitment from generation after generation of new leaders.

It provides the critical “sneakers” for those organizations with enough presence and discipline to stop, put them on and outrun their competition.

