

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our research into the development leaders need over the next 5 years stemmed from our nagging doubts over the continued impact of methods used to develop leaders today.

During numerous conversations with new clients both in the UK and internationally we kept hearing the same story:

"WE HAVE INVESTED SO MUCH TIME AND MONEY OVER THE YEARS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT POPULATIONS. LOOKING BACK I AM LEFT FEELING DISAPPOINTED THAT THE SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS OF OUR LEADERS HAVE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED AND HAVE CERTAINLY NOT BROUGHT THE INTENDED ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT."
HRD OF A FTSE 100 COMPANY

These conversations led us to invest in a research and development programme to look at future trends with a clear aim to move beyond traditional approaches to leadership development and design an innovative methodology capable of consistently producing the levels of leadership capacity required in organisations now and into the future.

Through interviewing 48 senior leaders of large organisations and carrying out a detailed literature review in the field of leadership development we uncovered 6 reoccurring themes which are critical to address when developing leaders into the future. In summary, these are:

1. THE NATURE OF CHALLENGES AND THE ENVIRONMENTS

... in which leaders operate today are very different to those of just 5 years ago; however the methods used to develop leaders have not kept up and many tools and techniques still used today were created to solve the problems faced by leaders 10 years ago.

2. LEADERS ARE NOT DEVELOPING AT A FAST ENOUGH RATE OR IN THE RIGHT WAYS

... to match the pressured changing and complex environments in which they work. To give one very real example, through our work, much of the stresses we see in leaders today has less to do with their workload and more to do with the strain of trying to make sense of the complex environment in which leaders are desperately trying to navigate. We are hearing more regularly during coaching assignments that individuals are secretly feeling they are in over their heads.

3. LEADERS NEED TO TAKE GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT

We know that individuals develop fast when they feel responsible for their own progress. However many programmes typically encourage leaders to believe that someone else is responsible for their development (e.g. the Learning and development department, their manager or trainers / coaches).

4. LEADERS ALREADY KNOW WHAT GREAT LEADERS DO

We find through our programme diagnostics that the large majority of leaders today intellectually know what great leaders do; they know the tools and have got the t-shirt in a number of varying colours! So what is the value of telling them again and why are they not applying what they have learnt?

Our answer to this is that the development of leaders today should not just about acquiring skills and competencies. Leadership interventions need to go further by helping leaders to develop their ability to think in a more complex systemic, strategic and interdependent ways. It's a new set of skills that traditional methods of development miss.

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5. LEADERS ARE GETTING STUCK

Over the last 17 years we have found that at different times leaders tend to go through a personal cycle of making progress, start to plateau, get stuck and then have a breakthrough. Through our recent executive coaching assignments over the last 18 months we have seen a pattern emerge around an increasing number of leaders being in the "stuck phase".

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6. A GREATER FOCUS ON INNOVATION IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IS REQUIRED

During our research we did not come across overarching approaches and models which we thought were sufficient to develop the levels of collective leadership required to meet an increasingly complex future.

FAMILIAR STORY?

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It is a combination of the above factors which leads to the below story:

A group of managers gather in a room and a facilitator teaches new tools, techniques and models around how to become a more effective leader. At the end of the programme, everyone commits to making those big changes back at work. The managers then return to the job and fall into the same old habits they had before the programme. . .

DEVELOPING LEADERS IN TODAY'S WORLD

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Using our findings, we brought together a team of highly regarded and published thought leaders and a number of critical friends to design and create an innovative leadership development methodology which was capable of consistently delivering the levels of leadership capacity required in organisations now and into the future.

The approach we created has gone on to be hugely successful and has achieved targeted sustained changes amongst leadership populations for large complex clients which include one of the worlds most recognised car manufactures, a UK top 10 insurance company and a private healthcare provider who employ over 9,500 employees.

WE CALL OUR APPROACH...

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP MOMENTS

THE ESSENCE OF THE APPROACH IS THIS:

IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES, OUR RESEARCH SHOWED THAT 70 TO 80% OF THE TIME, LEADERS IN ORGANISATIONS DO OK. COGNITIVELY THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT'S EXPECTED OF THEM AND THEY LEAD THEIR TEAMS PRETTY WELL. HOWEVER, THERE ARE CRITICAL LEADERSHIP MOMENTS FOR ALL LEADERS, WHERE WE CHOOSE BEHAVIOUR, GET STUCK, WE MAKE A DECISION OR WE AVOID DOING SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE DONE - AND THE IMPACT OF THAT CRITICAL MOMENT FOR THE ORGANISATION IS INCREDIBLY HIGH.

WE, AT T-THREE, CALL THESE CRITICAL LEADERSHIP MOMENTS.

By supporting leaders to develop their thinking agility, our Critical Leadership Moments approach provides a practical and highly engaging way of helping leaders make sustained behavioural change in themselves and others.

The outcome of this process is deeper and more sustainable development of leaders than a traditional programme.

The approach ensures each individual focuses on their own specific and complex development areas, but in a way which drills into the underlying cause rather than talking about tool, models and superficial symptoms.

INTRIGUED?

If you would like to find out more about our Critical Leadership Moments or would like to discuss your leadership development requirements in more detail please do get in touch – we would love to hear from you.

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