

# Development and Coaching of NextGen Leaders

**Sattar Bawany**

*“Organizations move their leaders through positions of responsibility and challenge to develop talent and ensure capability for the future. These transitions are known as “role to role” transitions, i.e. a leader who is successfully performing in one role takes on another role with different responsibilities. Successfully assuming a new leadership role is almost never easy. It is more often challenging and daunting—regardless of the amount of experience a leader may have.”*

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**Abstract:** Talent management represents an organization's efforts to attract, develop, and retain skilled and valuable employees. Its goal is to have people with the capabilities and commitment needed for current and future organizational success. An organization's talent pool, particularly its managerial talent, is often referred to as the leadership pipeline (Charan et al. 2000). However, one of the biggest challenges facing organizations today is the greater pressure to develop future or next-generation leaders faster in response to the challenges ahead for business and HR leaders in a dramatically changing digital, volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business landscape (Bawany 2018).

How do organizations develop the next generation of leaders? This article is designed to provide insights into and understanding of the best practices and contemporary approaches to the development of future leaders of an organization with a focus on executive coaching as a development tool.

**Keywords:** Talent management; War for talent; High potentials; Next-Generation leaders; Leadership pipeline; Talent development; Executive coaching, Transition coaching, Onboarding coaching

## INTRODUCTION

Today's dramatically changing work environment demands that organizations have to continuously ensure that there is a robust leadership pipeline ready to be deployed now and in the future. Identifying, assessing, selecting, and developing the next-generation or potential future leaders are, therefore, critical strategic objectives for ensuring a sustainable, competitive organization. The business case for doing so is clear as supported by extensive published research (Bawany 2018).

The high impact and cost of new leader derailing within the first year are staggering. As Michael Watkins (2003) states in his book *The First 90 Days*, "studies have found that more than 40 to 50 percent of senior outside hires fail to achieve results" (p. 8). The reason for most of these failures is not the lack of intelligence (IQ), skills, or experience, but rather the inability of these executives to assimilate effectively into the new culture or new role and make the necessary "mindset shift" as they go through fundamental changes in roles.

Developing future leaders requires an alignment between achievement of business goals and leaders' skills to drive achievement of those goals. To accomplish this, the organization needs to start with the creation of a business strategy, followed by a leadership strategy, followed by a leadership development strategy. It's important to know the distinctions:

- **Business strategy:** The roadmap of achieving the organization's business goals.
- **Leadership strategy:** The organization's plan for assigning leaders in key job roles by defining the relevant competencies including skills, knowledge, and experiences required to achieve the organization's desired current and future business goals.
- **Leadership development strategy:** The organization's plan for the development of current and future leaders at all levels to ensure they, individually and collectively, have the crucial and relevant

competencies and skills, to lead and drive the organization's strategy successfully now and in the future.

Today's businesses face unprecedented challenges operating in a global environment that is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). Leaders are also confronted with increased competition, globalization, demand for growing social responsibilities, and a stream of technological revolutions causing disruption in the marketplace. Hence organizations need to increase their leadership bench strength and also ensure the availability of leaders today and tomorrow to take on the responsibility to ensure the sustainability of the organization (Bawany 2016).

One of the challenges of identifying high-potential individuals is the inherent complexity of making predictions about how successful a person might be in the long-term future. It involves defining what you are trying to predict, assessing a person against the appropriate criteria, and making predictions about future performance. A wide range of issues needs to be considered, including the person's capabilities and motivations and the challenges and opportunities associated with future positions in the organization. This is different from a selection decision where there is a clear understanding of the specific job requirements for the position to be filled.

In essence, the heart of the leadership challenge that confronts today's leaders is also applicable to next generation of leaders who will be expected to lead in situations of ever greater volatility and uncertainty in a globalized business environment, allied with the needs to deal with scale, complexity, and new organizational forms that often break with the traditional organizational models and structures within which many have learned their leadership trade (Bawany 2015).

## WHO ARE THE NEXTGEN LEADERS?

Broadly speaking, next-generation or future leaders are primarily the high potentials

of the organization. A high-potential talent is often viewed as an employee who is assessed as having ability and organizational commitment, aligning to the organization's values, and having demonstrated the competencies and skills as well as the motivation necessary to rise to and succeed in more senior positions in the organization. Each organization will have its own definition of high-potential talent, but in essence, the process and criteria for assessment and identification of high potentials are quite similar between organizations (Bawany 2018).

A robust leadership pipeline is critical to driving strategy and growth so organizations may achieve their goals. But, while many organizations have devoted considerable resources to the development of these next-generation or future leaders, few have a readily available pool of these leaders who are ready to take on greater responsibilities and to meet the daunting challenges of the future. While the severity of the issue varies among organizations and industries, it's clear throughout the business world that the demand for these future leaders is greater than supply and as a result, many organizations face a shortage of leadership talent. The complexity and fast-changing nature of the hypercompetitive global economy have created the demand for new leadership mindsets, skills, and capabilities. With the failure of leadership development programs to develop people fast enough to fill the new and changing roles required for success, many organizations are in a predicament and their long-term sustainability is in question.

Having a robust leadership pipeline remains one of the critical talent management issues facing organizations around the world operating in a VUCA business environment as this would contribute toward the development of a sustainable competitive advantage of the organization. This is achieved by identifying and cultivating emerging talent early while enhancing organizational capability. Developing a leadership pipeline starts with identifying

and then transforming high-potential individuals to a variety of developmental opportunities and experiences (Bawany 2014b).

Organizations are facing unprecedented new leadership challenges, including developing different generations of leaders likely to be from Gen Y or Millennials, meeting the demand for leaders with global fluency and flexibility, building the ability to innovate and inspire others to perform, and acquiring new levels of understanding of rapidly changing and emerging technologies and new disciplines and fields. As experienced leaders, managers, and professionals continue to leave an organization, their intellectual capital and tacit knowledge, unless codified, will be lost, creating tremendous challenges at a time when the market is growing more global and dynamic. This translates to tougher competition in the marketplace, making the search for high-potential people externally more difficult and future success more elusive. Further, there is a sense of urgency for organizations today to accelerate the time to competence, which compounds the challenge of building a strong leadership pipeline from within (Bawany 2018).

The relevant leadership development intervention, including executive coaching and leadership development training programs, may be strengthened, broadened, and deepened to include inspiring and engaging others, as well as cognitive readiness skills and emotional and social intelligence competencies. These capabilities can be addressed by incorporating specific activities and exercises designed to increase awareness of their impact and importance in familiar techniques, such as case studies or applicable business simulations.

Additionally, opportunities for application and practice can be provided in experience-based approaches where participants work to apply the concepts and skills directly to real business issues, while colleagues and facilitators provide feedback based on behaviors they observed during their work together.

We are operating in a hypercompetitive VUCA business environment. The world moves faster today compared to 20 years ago. Companies feel the pressure to decrease time to market and improve the quality of products while delivering on ever-changing customer expectations to maintain competitive posture, that is, be adaptive and nimble. Driving results in high-performance organizations (HPOs) is difficult even for companies that have the benefit of dedicated and knowledgeable employees (Bawany 2014b).

From ongoing research by the Centre for Executive Education (CEE), it has been identified that various next-generation leadership competencies such as cognitive readiness (critical and strategic thinking skills), emotional and social intelligence, managerial coaching and leading team for performance, effective negotiation and conflict management, and cross-cultural communication and diversity management are crucial to driving results and achieving organizational success in an HPO operating in a highly disruptive and increasingly VUCA-driven business environment (Bawany 2016).

### **THE EVOLUTION OF EXECUTIVE COACHING**

The history of coaching can be traced back as far as to Socrates (427 BC to 347 BC). Socrates suggested that people learn best when they take personal responsibility and ownership of a given situation (Edwards 2003). The word “coach,” however, originates from “Kocs,” a village in Hungary, where high-quality carriages were produced. In the nineteenth century, English university students began to use this word as slang for tutors that helped them through their academic career. They said they were in a carriage driven by their tutor (Wilson 2004).

Athletes and actors have known the value of coaching for many years (King and Eaton 1999). As O’Shaughnessy (2001, p. 194) expressed,

As anyone who has watched a superbly-fought tennis match will

testify, it is often down to how the contestants play a couple of crucial points. They are both so good at what they do that these marginal. One might even say minimal differences in performance are of crucial importance in defining how someone’s career will plan out.

In today’s competitive world, no athlete should assume that it is possible to make it to the top without world-class coaching support (Burdett 1998). Mike Powell, a 32-year-old American long jump champion, gave credit for his achievements in the long jump event to a five-year scientific training plan, designed by his coach, Randy Huntington (Liu et al. 1998).

It is suggested that what is true in sports in general, is also true in business (O’Shaughnessy 2001). In sports as well as in more conventional organizational models, individual excellence and teamwork are equally important. Teamwork is just as important as individual excellence since it is the ability to move beyond once ego and showing a willingness to put the needs of the organization above personal gain, and a desire to win.

Today, business takes place in a highly competitive international arena, and the only way for companies to become successful is to push themselves to the very edge of their capability. There is only so much an organization can do productively in regard to downsizing, restructuring, focusing on the core business and the like; ultimately the success of the organization depends on the people within it—building a winning team. As a result, coaching has become the secret weapon for many organizations (Burdett 1998).

According to Parsloe and Wray (2000, p.41), coaching can be defined as follows:

Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be a successful coach requires



knowledge and understanding of the process as the variety of styles, skills, and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place.

Coaching first appeared in management literature in the 1950s. Managers began using coaching since it was understood that a manager had a responsibility to improve subordinates' performance through a sort of master-apprentice relationship. Coaching, at that time, often took the form of the manager coaching the employees. In the mid-1970s, sports coaching was starting to make its way and being translated into the managerial situation. Since the 1980s, coaching has been presented as a training technique in the context of management development. Coaching literature nowadays makes a connection with mentoring, career development, management development over a long period of time, and generating team and individual performance (Evered and Selman 1989).

### **THE DIFFERENCES AMONG COACHING, MANAGING, CONSULTING, AND TRAINING**

Coaching, managing, consulting, and training are all related, and sometimes overlap. However, at their foundation, they are distinct in their focus of attention.

A professional coach's primary attention is to tap into the client's own vision, wisdom, and directed action in service of the client's self-identified agenda. The client applies himself/herself to his/her whole life usually including, and often focusing on, their professional endeavors.

A manager's primary attention is to achieving specific organizational results through their direct reports. To that end, they may direct and/or develop those direct reports through performance feedback and may use coaching skills.

A consultant's primary attention is to achieving organizational results (often large systems change) through the application of specific expertise. They may or

may not also be charged with transferring knowledge or a skill set to their client.

A training and development professional's primary attention is to the successful transfer of specific information or skills to their clients. Again, a trainer may well use a co-active approach and coaching skills.

### **LEVERAGING ON EXECUTIVE COACHING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEXTGEN LEADERS**

Executive coaching is a concept that has moved from the world of sports to the executive suite and is designed as a means to help senior executives manage a constantly changing business environment and refine their leadership skills.

Coaching isn't only limited to senior levels. Increasingly, people all over the world, at all levels, utilize executive coaches to help them achieve their full potential. The process focuses on the participant's goals, reinforces learning and change, and increases self-empowerment.

Executive Coaching is one of the fastest growing and most misunderstood professions of this decade. Coaching used to be an "executive perk" for large company executives to help them make better business decisions. Today, coaching is rapidly being recognized as one of the best strategic weapons a company can have in its arsenal.

Executive coaching focuses on developing a top executive's full potential by coaching them to think and act beyond existing limits and paradigms. Executive coaching is a highly individualized form of leadership development and support available because it is based on the understanding that in order to be maximally effective, executives must accurately identify their strengths and areas of development, examine the impact of their behavior on others, and regularly and intentionally reflect on their values, goals, and effectiveness.

The strength of executive coaching lies in the fact that it is almost exclusively an executive development strategy that builds leadership and management strength

because it is ultimately concerned with understanding where the executive is, where it is that they want to go, and the things that they would have to do to get there. It is often lonely at the top for chief executives as they generally keep their own counsel, mainly because they find it difficult to discuss matters with colleagues and cannot or choose not to share their concerns with spouses and families—executive coaching offers a way out of this by providing an opportunity for the executive to have an independent sounding board and strategic partner in a safe and confidential environment.

Executive Coaching can be defined as a confidential, highly personal learning process, involving action learning and working in partnership, combining an executive coach's observations and capabilities with an executive's expertise; the result is that the executive achieves better and faster results-oriented outcomes. It is therefore important to create a coaching environment that is founded on trust because in a normal working day, the executive works in a fast-paced, complex, and pressured environment and there is little time to sit back and reflect on the range of issues facing him/her.

Savvy organizations acknowledge that executive coaching is a proven effective leadership intervention tool of choice for next generation of leaders including high potentials for the continuous development of their leadership skills is critical to organization-wide success.

A study by Manchester Inc. examined the impact of coaching in 56 companies with 100 executives (Manchester Inc. 2001). Their findings suggest that 74 percent of the sponsors and 86 percent of the participants were very satisfied with the process. From the survey of respondents who received coaching, it was estimated that coaching resulted in an average return of 5.7 times the initial investment. Furthermore, coaching contributed to a perception of increased productivity for 53 percent of

respondents, and improved quality of work for 48 percent of the respondents. When asked in the survey, which workgroup relationships improved as a result of coaching, the results indicated that 77 percent reported improvement with direct reports, 71 percent reported improvement with immediate supervisors, and 63 percent reported improvement with peers. Of those receiving coaching, 61 percent reported a significant increase in their overall level of work and job satisfaction.

Executive coaching is typically seen as an ongoing relationship with no set time frame or definitive ending point. For example, the leader may have poor communication skills and is unintentionally undermining direct reports, which can lead to a loss of morale and retention issues. In corrective situations, the executive coach begins by completing a full diagnosis of the situation, through the identification of undesirable behaviors, such as berating or blaming others, will then demonstrate the consequences these behaviors will have on the individual, and the organization. The coach then helps the executive identify practical ways to strengthen his leadership impact, provides direct and objective feedback, and ensures the executive gets back on track and stays on track.

Whether the relationship starts with a derailment situation or as part of a corporate-wide initiative, executive coaching covers a wide range of situations with one common goal: the personal development of a leader through the support of a professional relationship.

On the organizational level, executive coaches help companies avoid costly management turnover, develop their most talented people, and ensure that leaders perform at their maximum potential. In a research published in the *Industrial and Commercial Training*, it was reported that executives who received coaching are more likely to be promoted or received accelerated promotions than those who have not had one-on-one coaching (Parker-Wilkins 2006).

## EXECUTIVE COACHING VERSUS TRANSITION COACHING

Effective coaching is a major key to improving business performance. Executive Coaching focuses on the qualities of effective leadership and improved business results. It is comprised of a series of structured, one-on-one interactions between a coach and an executive, aimed at enhancing the executive's performance in two areas:

1. Individual personal performance
2. Individual organizational performance

When executives are first confronted by being coached, they are not always clear about how best to use their sessions and quite unaware that it is they who set the agenda; in fact, some executives expect executive coaching to be like a one-on-one tailored training program where the executive coach initiates the agenda. Executive coaching teaches the beneficiary to minimize, delegate, or outsource non-strengths by changing ineffective behaviors or changing ineffective thinking.

The up-front purpose of executive coaching is to develop key leadership capabilities or focus required for their current role, but it can also be used as an instrument to prepare them for the challenges of the next level. The whole coaching experience is structured to bring about effective action, performance improvement, and personal growth for the individual executive, as well as better results for the institution's core business.

An executive coach only has one item on his agenda—the client's success. This means going where it might hurt, and keeping a client accountable to achieving their goals. Coaching helps people grow personally and as professionals. This growth allows them to commit completely to the success of an organization. When professional coaches work with organizations, they can turn performance management into a collaborative process that benefits both the employee and the organization.

While many executives are familiar with executive coaching, and may even have enlisted the help of external coaches at some point, few understand the right type of coaching approach required to address the challenges faced by leaders in different transition situations.

What if there was a proven process to support new leaders in their role while significantly increasing return on investment and ensuring a positive economic impact for the organization?

One such process is transition coaching; an integrated and systematic process, which engages and assimilate the new leaders into the organization's corporate strategy and culture to accelerate productivity (Bawany 2007).

Transition coaching encompasses the goals of executive coaching but focuses on a specific niche, the newly appointed leader (either being promoted from within or being hired externally). Leadership transitions are among the most challenging and difficult situations executives face. Take the case of a leader who might enter a new position thinking he or she already has all the answers; or just the opposite, the leader might lack a clear understanding of what to expect of the role. The goal of transition coaching is to reduce the time it takes for new leaders to make a net contribution to the organization and establish a framework for ongoing success.

Those promoted from within will have to be mindful that a smooth and effective assimilation of role-to-role transition is critical to the organization or business performance. The organization depends on leaders to execute and meet objectives and has bet that internal candidates are better valued at less risk. Organizations understand that successful transitions ensure future capability. Transition Coaching is the key to achieving this.

Many newly placed executives fail within their first 2 years in the position for reasons ranging from their inability to adjust to a new role and develop strong

relationships to a lack of understanding of the business imperatives. What new leaders do during their first months in a new role greatly determines the extent of their success for the next several years.

An unsuccessful transition can negatively impact an organization through poor financial results, decreased employee morale, and costly turnovers. So rather than risk this sink-or-swim gamble, organizations can improve the process of transition coaching.

If organizations use the right transition strategies when onboarding a leader, they will not only help prevent failure but will also create additional value by accelerating the new leader's effectiveness. Transition coaching engages the new leader in the organization's corporate strategy and culture to accelerate performance.

### **THE POTENTIAL PITFALLS OF LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS**

The biggest trap that new leaders fall into is to believe that they will continue to be successful by doing what has made them successful in the past. There is an old saying, "To a person who has a hammer, everything looks like a nail." So too it is for leaders who have become successful by relying on certain skills and abilities. Too often they fail to see that their new leadership role demands different skills and abilities. And so they fail to meet the adaptive challenge. This does not, of course, mean that new leaders should ignore their strengths. It means that they should focus first on what it will really take to be successful in the new role, then discipline themselves to do things that don't come naturally if the situation demands it.

Another common trap is falling prey to the understandable anxiety the transition process evokes. Some new leaders try to take on too much, hoping that if they do enough things, something will work. Others feel they have to be seen "taking charge," and so make changes in order to put their own stamp on things. Still, others

experience the "action imperative"—they feel they need to be in motion, and so don't spend enough time upfront engaged in diagnosis. The result is that new leaders end up enmeshed in vicious cycles in which they make bad judgments that undermine their credibility.

New leaders are expected to "hit the ground running." They must produce results quickly while simultaneously assimilating into the organization. The result is that a large number of newly recruited or promoted managers fail within the first year of starting new jobs.

From the extensive executive and transition coaching engagements over the past 20 years by the CEE and our panel of executive coaches, we have discovered many newly promoted leaders in transition fail due to one or more of the following factors:

1. They do not fit into the organizational culture.
2. They don't build a team or become part of one.
3. They are unclear about their stakeholders', in particular their bosses', expectations.
4. They fail to execute the organization's strategic or business plan.
5. They lack savvy about maneuvering and managing internal politics.
6. There is no formal process to assimilate them into the organization.

A proven assimilation process is critical as it provides support to the newly hired executive and helps the organization protect its investment.

### **SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR THE ASSIMILATION OF NEW LEADERS**

Successful new leaders redefine their need for power and control. Team members normally value a certain amount of freedom and autonomy. People want to influence the events around them and not be controlled by an overbearing leader. When the manager is an individual contributor,



he or she is close to the work itself and they are the master in control of their circumstances; their personal performance has a big effect on their satisfaction and motivation.

The situation is different when they are promoted and become a leader. Their personal contribution is less direct; as they often operate behind the scenes. Leaders create frustration for everyone when they try to be involved in every project and expect team members to check-in before beginning every task. World-class leaders delegate. They learn to trust. This means giving up some control. Leaders learn to live with the risks and know that someone else may do things a little differently. Every person is unique, and they will individualize certain aspects of their work. When leaders don't empower and delegate, they can become ineffective and overwhelmed. In turn, team members feel underutilized and therefore less motivated.

Finally, leaders learn to transition in other critical ways. They learn how to live with occasional feelings of separation and people don't always accept their decisions when faced with gut-wrenching situations. Leaders have a view of the big picture in mind. But the challenge for leaders lies in balancing the needs of many stakeholders: owners, employees, customers, and community. Because of this challenge, team members can feel alienated when unpopular decisions must be made. Leadership can be hard. It is impossible to please everyone all of the time. While the need for belonging and connecting with the group is important, leaders know the mission and vision take precedence. Sometimes a leader should make waves, champion change, and challenge people's comfort zone. Leaders may not always relish conflict, but they are not afraid of it either. Leaders are guided by standards, principles, and core values. Leaders focus on what is right, not who is right.

Leaders know they can't make people happy. People have to take ownership and

control of their own happiness. Leaders do not focus on personalities factors. At times, the individual self-interests of a team member may be in opposition to the interests of the group. Leaders concentrate on shared interests and the team goal. Consequently, the driving force behind a team is a leader who treats team members with respect, while keeping the vision in mind. People are different and you have to treat people differently yet fairly.

### **WHAT ARE THE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR LEADERS IN TRANSITION?**

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In the various literature and research on leadership transitions and helping leaders to accelerate themselves into new roles, early research ascertained that new leaders gained leverage by putting in place the right strategies, structures, and systems. Transitions could be viewed as an engineer would approach a challenging design problem, advising leaders to identify the right goals, develop a supporting strategy, align the architecture of the organization, and figure out what projects to pursue to secure early wins.

Emotional and social intelligence competencies is an essential building block in a leader's ability to establish the right climate for business to succeed. Leaders at all levels of the organization must demonstrate daily a high degree of emotional intelligence in their leadership role. Emotionally intelligent leaders create an environment of positive morale and higher productivity (Goleman 1998).

The critical skills sets for next generation of leaders to be successful in their leadership roles when in transition include having cognitive readiness skills, critical thinking, multicultural communication, and effective negotiation and conflict resolutions skills. The reality confronting leaders in transition is that relationship with their bosses, peers, direct reports, and external constituencies has been shown to be as great or even greater source of leverage. This realization elevated relationships,

and the energy they can mobilize (or drain the leader), to the forefront about how to help leaders enter and gain momentum in challenging new roles.

This is not to say, of course, that strategies, structures, and systems are unimportant; usually they are critical. But if the new leader hopes to put in place the right strategies, structures, and systems, he must first secure victory on the relationship front. This means building credibility with influential players, gaining agreement on goals, and securing their commitment to devote their energies to helping the new leader achieve those goals.

In the leader's new situation, relationship management skills are critical as they aren't the only one going through a transition. To varying degrees, many different stakeholders, both inside and outside the leader's direct line of command, are affected by the way he or she handles his or her new role.

Inside the new leader's direct line of command are people who report directly to the leader, as well as employees from other groups. While some may feel apprehensive about the new leader's arrival, all must adjust to the leader's communication and managerial style and expectations.

Outside the new leader's direct line of command are senior executives, peers, and key external constituencies such as customers, suppliers, and distributors.

The new leader will likely have no "relationship capital" with these individuals—that is, there are no existing support or obligations on which the leader could draw upon. The leader will need to invest extra thought and energy in gaining their support.

Note that the leader's immediate boss may have strong ideas about what the leader needs to do, and may have a leadership style markedly different from that of the leader.

Leverage through relationships is an essential foundation for effectiveness in a new leadership role. Put another way, leaders negotiate their way to success in their new roles.

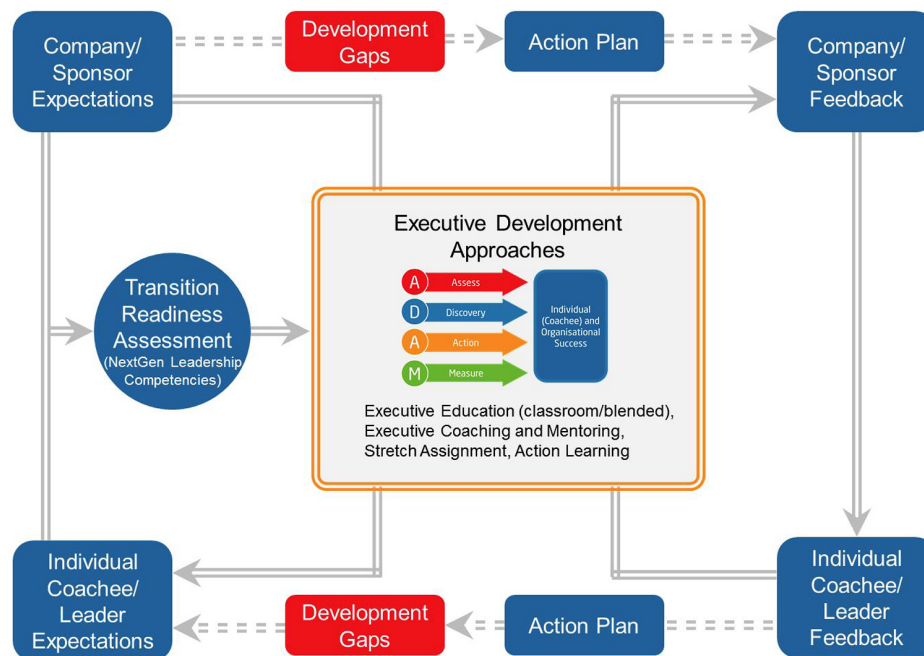
Negotiation is a critical skill as negotiation success means proactively engaging with the leader's new boss to shape the game so that the leaders have a fighting chance of achieving the desired goals. Too many new leaders just play the game, reactively taking the situation as given and failing as a result. The alternative is to shape the game by negotiating with the leader's boss to establish realistic expectations, reach consensus on the situation, and secure enough resources. This will lay the foundation for the new leader's success.

### **TRANSITION COACHING APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEXTGEN LEADERS**

Transition coaching has three overall goals: to accelerate the transition process by providing just-in-time advice and counsel, to prevent mistakes that may harm the business and the leader's career, and to assist the leader in developing and implementing a targeted, actionable transition plan that delivers business results (Bawany, 2010).

While many of the issues covered by transition coaching are similar to those included in executive coaching, such as sorting through short- and long-term goals and managing relationships upwards as well as with team members, transition coaching is focused specifically on the transition and designed to educate and challenge new leaders. The new leader and coach will work together to develop a transition plan, a roadmap that will define critical actions that must take place during the first 90 days to establish credibility, secure early wins, and position the leader and team for long-term success.

The transition coaching relationship also includes regular meetings with the new leader as well as ongoing feedback. Frequently, the coach conducts a "pulse check" of the key players, including the boss, direct reports, peers, and other stakeholders, after 4 to 6 weeks to gather early impressions so that the new leader can make a course correction if needed.

**Figure 1: The Transition Coaching Approach**

\* The Transition Readiness Assessment for the NextGen Leaders includes 'cognitive readiness' competencies, which include critical thinking skills; emotional and social intelligence skills; developing others with managerial coaching; cross-cultural communication; effective negotiation; and conflict management skills.

The entire transition coaching process (refer to Figure 1) developed by CEE provides new leaders with the guidance to take charge of their new situation, achieve alignment with the team, and ultimately move the business forward. Organizations make a significant investment when they recruit and hire new leaders, and they have much to lose if a new hire does not succeed, possibly several times the hire's base compensation.

### THE ADAM COACHING METHODOLOGY

The ADAM coaching methodology (see Figure 2) developed by CEE consists of a proven four-step process that is firmly grounded in leadership development best practices.

#### Assess

- A series of psychometric assessment and information gathering from a series of stakeholders' interviews, including the

immediate manager of the new leader being coached (known as the coachee), will be conducted.

- The primary objective to determine how the coachee's performance links to current business goals.
- An assessment of individual skills, styles, values, and leadership effectiveness forms the basis of the action plan.
- Gather background on the situation, identify the purpose of the coaching engagement, and discuss expected outcomes.
- The coach will conduct an in-depth coachee interview, including life and career history, self-perceived behavioral and leadership strengths and shortcomings, and desire to close the gap on weaknesses and further develop the strengths.
- An initial tripartite coaching session between the coachee, sponsor (the coachee's immediate manager), and the coach will be held with the objective to obtain the senior management's commitment to the

**Figure 2: ADAM Coaching Methodology**

## A.D.A.M. Coaching Model



coachee and the degree of confidentiality to be followed.

- Provide an overview of the coaching process, timetable, and parameters of the engagement.

### Discovery

- Meetings are scheduled to review the assessment data.
- The coachee will be provided with feedback based on the results of the assessments that have been undertaken.
- Development objectives are discussed between the coachee and the coach to link the feedback received with the agreed business goals and professional objectives.
- Based on the key objectives identified, coaching activities and timelines are developed jointly between the coachee and coach.
- The coachee, with the support of the coach, will develop an Action Plan that will enable coachees to determine what to do to close the gaps in their leadership capability.
- The coach and coachee form a working alliance where the coach provides the

stimulus and environment for the coachee who will write the action plan.

- The plan is formalized and shared by the coachee with the sponsor for agreement and support of the action plan and expected development outcomes.
- The sponsor will sign off the Development Plan to ensure that there is alignment to the business objectives.

### Action Plan

- The coachee will implement the Development Plan by taking well-defined action steps and regular feedback during scheduled monthly coaching sessions with the coach, which enables the coachee to move toward measurable goals.
- “Shadowing” or observation of the coachee at work (as needed and if appropriate).
- Specific actions are taken to develop the key skills and knowledge agreed to in the development plan. These actions may include:
  - Behavior modification and efforts to use new behaviors.
  - Building new skills and competencies while refining others.



- Developing key relationships within the sponsoring organization.
- Communication strategies for successful networking and being an ambassador for the sponsoring organization.
- The sponsor and coach communicate, in person, by phone, or through email, to discuss specific situations and maintain focus on the objectives of the development plan.
- There is also an opportunity for contact with the sponsor to monitor progress, as defined within the parameters of the sponsoring organization's/coach confidentiality agreement.

### Measure

- A full evaluation of the coaching process and engagement based on the agreed success metrics at the beginning of the assignment yields objective measures of business results and professional outcomes for both the organization and the coachee.
- Periodically, and at the completion of the coaching program, the coachee and the coach will discuss progress against the plan and determine action plans as appropriate.
- A final tripartite coaching meeting will be held, where the results of the coaching engagement will be presented to the sponsor.
- The recommended next step for the continuous professional development of the coachee will be discussed and agreed upon with the sponsor.
- The consistent ADAM coaching delivery methodology ensures that every coachee receives the same degree of insightful business analysis, personalized consideration, and performance-driven priority.

### CASE STUDY ON TRANSITION COACHING OF NEXTGEN LEADER

The following Case Study illustrates how the ADAM coaching methodology has been successfully applied in the development of the next-generation or future leaders.

### The Situation: Leading in a Multigenerational Workplace

A high-potential manager belonging to Generation X (born between 1964 and 1979) was promoted to the role of vice-president of operations at a major pharmaceuticals organization. The manager was armed with a solid record of success in his previous role where a hands-on, controlling style with staff direct reports was an effective managerial tool. However, in his new position where he faced broad operational responsibilities, the manager needed to lead cross-functionally by bringing together departments throughout the organization including finance, marketing, distribution, and technical operations. The makeup of employees from these various functions is those of Generation Y (born between 1980 and 1995).

With significantly more Gen Yers under his leadership, the manager's communication style was soon found to be confrontational and abrasive and often prevented him from building trusting relationships with his newly formed management team. His style also jeopardized negotiations with existing and potential key business alliances.

Several of the senior management team members perceived that the manager as unwilling or unable to adapt to his new role. It was soon apparent that if left unchecked, the situation could impact the manager's career and the corporation's strategic objectives. Not counting the loss of productivity, the staff replacement costs alone are expected to be substantial.

The Human Resources team recommended to the CEO that an external executive coach will be a useful resource toward addressing the managerial challenges faced by this newly promoted manager. The CEO, upon reviewing the business case put up by the HR Business Partner, agreed to the engagement of an executive coach.

### **Coaching Strategy: Assessment, Feedback, Development of New Behavioral Skills**

During the first stage of the coaching process, the manager completed a group of assessments including 360-degree leadership effectiveness to provide objective information about his communication and leadership style. Feedback from peers and direct reports, combined with constructive communication from the CEO, provided a clear insight into style, competencies, and behaviors. This data enabled the manager to see the impact his behavior had on others, and how it could impact his success in building relationships and reaching business outcomes.

A developmental plan was written by the manager and reviewed with his executive coach to address gaps in areas of communication and strategic leadership. More effective techniques and approaches were role-played with the coach, and the manager was encouraged to use these new behaviors in the team and individual meetings with his boss, peers, and direct reports. He also began to use them with business associates outside the organization. The coaching goal was to increase the manager's effectiveness in all his business endeavors and to increase his ability to improve the organization's success through leading and engaging his team in a much more effective manner than before.

### **Results: Tremendous Improvement in the Leader's Communication Style Observed**

Key sensitive strategic alliances were successfully negotiated, resulting in considerable new and sustained business opportunity.

The manager was better able to communicate with and facilitate information transfer among his team. Over a duration of 3 months, he was able to transform them into a high-performance team.

A follow-up 360-degree leadership assessment was conducted where a positive change in the manager's leadership style was perceived at all levels and stakeholders.

Due to the success of this coaching intervention, executive coaching is being used more broadly as a tool to enhance leadership development among the next-generation and future leaders including the high-potential talents throughout the organization while nurturing external business alliances resulting in the achievements of both tactical and strategic objectives of the organization.

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS**

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1. What assessment processes and coaching activities/techniques are best suited for the development of the next generation or future leaders including high potentials talent?
2. How can executive and transition coaching best relate to other forms of leadership development for next-generation leaders such as job rotation, task force assignments, and classroom-based executive education?
3. How long should transition coaching engagement last? How frequently should executive and coach meet to achieve the desired outcomes with specific issues and within particular organizational contexts?
4. How should the organization monitor the executive, the coach, the coaching process, and coaching outcomes with the view to assess the effectiveness of the coaching engagement?

### **CONCLUSION**

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The development of next generation of leaders includes the process of transitioning them effectively into a leadership position. This could be smoother if new leaders develop a sense of optimism, and monitor and manage their outlook and perspective. Executive or transition coaching,

leadership training, executive education, tools, and systems are very important. However, without the right outlook, new and even veteran leaders will experience serious difficulties and unrest.

The new leaders need to reflect and examine their own leadership attitude and perspective. Develop an intentional plan to work on areas that need improvement. Whether a manager is moving into a new position or looking to get back on the road to success, executive or transition coaching work to bring out the best in the new leaders through the support of a professional relationship. Both relationships are built on a foundation of trust and confidentiality. The ability of coaches to provide leaders with an outside resource that can also act as a sounding board helps them become the successful leaders they were meant to be.

Organizations must clearly define the purpose of coaching, gauge the process, and evaluate results. Coaching is not just about providing support. Ultimately, coaching should deliver what any business needs—real results.

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