

Shaping the development of your next generation of leaders

By Hilary Sayers on 15 June 2016

In your organisation do you have a model of leadership competency needed for your business to succeed? If so, you are probably using it to shape the development of your next generation of leaders. If not, you may be putting your most promising people at risk as they navigate their way to becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

Many organisations struggle with building the depth and breadth of leadership talent they need for the future. They may have identified their best performers, carefully chosen some courses to send them on and developed a list of promotion opportunities. But, somehow it doesn't all come together and there may be a nagging doubt on the return on investment in time and effort.

So, how do you create the conditions where the people who can lead your organisation one day are nurtured and developed? This may seem a simple question, but the answer is complex. Many factors, such as your organisation's culture and way of operating, past development practices and the aspirations of your people need to be taken into account.

A program designed to fit your people for success in your business is preferable unless you want them to broaden their perspective by meeting their peers from other organisations at an executive education forum.

Among the most successful leadership development approaches we have seen, some other considerations stand out. Adults are motivated to learn something if it has value to them. Therefore, a program that will equip aspiring leaders with the skills they need to achieve their career goals will have great appeal.

The way adults prefer to learn is significant. Learning needs to be as practical as possible, giving them tools and techniques for leading and managing that they can apply immediately. If it is delivered in chunks so they can try out the skills and report back on progress, even better.

In summary, the key steps in designing a best-practice leadership development approach are:

- Consider your business goals and challenges and define the capability leaders will need to succeed in that context.
- Develop a program that builds that capability and equips participants with skills and abilities that really matter.
- Include useful assessments to help participants heighten their self-awareness.
- Design the learning so that it integrates seamlessly with participants' responsibilities and work schedules.
- Give participants projects that have significance to the success of your organisation.
- Turn up the intensity of the learning by involving senior leaders in mentoring participants.