

# The Leadership Pipeline

Building Leaders at Every Level

Background to development

How can a pipeline help?

The right mind set

**Think big** and work smart to maximise investment

**Proactively build** a leadership culture that can Successfully respond to change and challenge

**Develop** a pipeline of leaders from among the ranks

**Facilitate** succession planning, leadership development, a robust selection process to manage talent



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“A major shift in skills, time application and work values must take place”

## The Leadership Pipeline

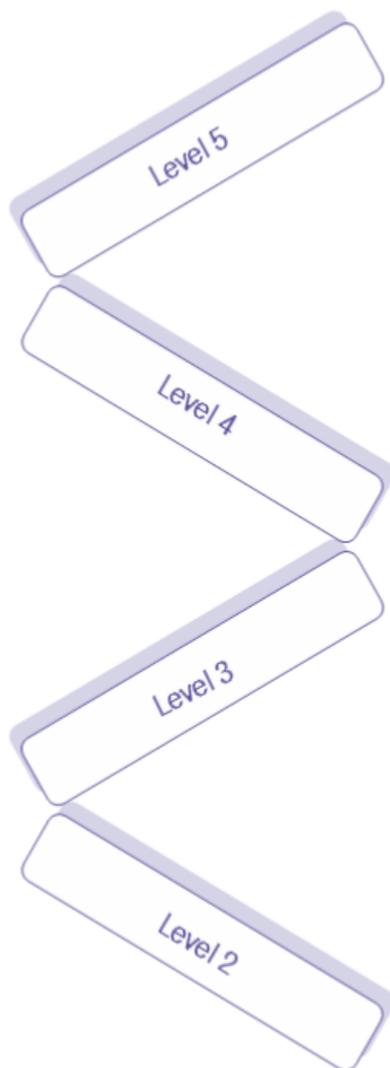
All organisations, whether private or public, face enormous challenges in the current business environment. The highest performers across all sectors recognise that the key to current sustainability and future commercial performance lies in a well developed leadership pipeline.

### How can a Leadership Pipeline help?

Our approach is based on the thinking of Charan, Drotter and Noel when they describe the Leadership Pipeline (“The Leadership Pipeline – how to build a Leadership Powered Company” Jossey Bass 2001). Many of the highest performing organisations have based their leadership strategies on these ideas.

The Leadership Pipeline describes a series of levels which exist in almost all organisations between front line staff and executive directors. People at each stage need to be equipped to deal with the challenges before them but above all it is the transitions between levels where people need the greatest help.

The transition into leadership through its various levels can be long, hard and emotionally exhausting; indeed some researchers have suggested that it can be one of the most stressful life events for an individual, outstripping even the most traumatic family issues. Many organisations will have examples of highly skilled specialists who struggle to make the transition to a broader management role or experienced operational managers who cannot progress to roles requiring a strategic approach.



- Transformational executive coaching
- Action learning sets
- Business exchanges

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- Leadership masterclass
  - Business coaching
  - MBA
  - Action leaning sets
  - Cross functional teams
  - Strategic, operational and development networks

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- Mentor shadowing
  - Transactional coaching
  - Cross functional work groups
  - Structured modular based leadership programme
  - Skill based workshops

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- Structured frontline leadership course
  - Coached by boss in Operations
  - Mentor
  - Competency based training
  - Relevant professional qualifications

## Developing the Right Leadership Mind Set

Successful passage through the leadership transition points requires much more than a set of knowledge, skills and behaviours. Leaders need to develop the right mind set to deal with each situation and each individual effectively. Effective leaders achieve results through the ability to:

- Reflect on and achieve a deep understanding of the complexities of the needs and approaches which must be adopted, focused on: *Quality, innovation, productivity and value*
- Get beneath the surface and analyse what is happening at any point and why
- Know and understand what is happening in the real world context in which they and the system operate
- Manage the many relationships and create the environment, approach and direction which enable organisations to get the right things done, more efficiently
- Inspire and mobilise energy to lead and sustain change

Leadership transition is voted the single most stressful life event one can go through::

Leadership transition	59%
Family issues	48%
Becoming a parent	42%
Health issues	34%
Getting married	31%
Managing teenagers	31%
Moving and divorce	20%

The toughest challenges:

Navigating organisation politics	65%
Dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty	65%
Creating a new network	55%
Getting work done through others	50%
Managing high risk decisions	48%
Giving up my reputation as an expert	47%
Engaging and inspiring employees	44%
Thinking strategically	39%

### Our start point from an individual's perspective

Is to enable individual people to meet the challenges around these transitions. We focus on:

- The questions and fears which they have about going to a higher level
- The signs of failure which will appear if the questions and fears are not recognised and help given
- The business impact of not dealing with these signs
- The type of learning events that will be the most effective

This approach recognises the key issues involved in progressing through the pipeline - and this includes joining it at any point

### Our start point from an organisation's perspective

Is to discuss key questions:

- How can a coherent leadership strategy be developed to meet challenges from the front line to the strategic level?
- What interventions will support CEOs and Executive teams to lead their organisations/business units effectively now?
- What investment will create and sustain the leadership capability needed in the future

The needs, experience, aptitudes and ambitions of leaders in an organisation are not uniform. Therefore any set of development interventions for them must above all recognise these differences and use different developmental approaches at each stage.



Mark  
Client Story

#### Front/First Line Leader/Manager

As a computer programmer for a telecommunications company, Mark derived great satisfaction and success from working on technical problems and finding solutions to them. Mark was a bit awkward and unsure when he was asked to deal with any people issues but quite confident when confronted with technical matters. After three years he was promoted to manage the team of seven of which he had been a member. Mark's company provided him with some training that helped him develop some of the skills he needed as a first time manager. He learned how to design and assign work and HR worked with him on interviewing and selection skills.

#### Role Expectations

The first line manager role required the selection of team members and their coaching and development, together with the planning and delegation of work throughout the team. There was also an ongoing requirement to monitor, measure and give feedback on individual performance.

#### Signs of Struggle

When placed under pressure, Mark became overly involved in the team's work, demanding daily reports and micro-managing every aspect. He sought to impose his own ideas rather than coaching the team to develop their own. Performance dropped, deadlines were missed and the systems that were being developed were flawed.

#### Development interventions

The following interventions were identified to help Mark:

- 360 degree feedback to highlight key development areas
- Ongoing coaching from his own manager
- A 3 day leadership programme

#### Outcomes

Mark realised that his management style was preventing the team from achieving their objectives. Feedback forced him to confront the issues in a way he had never done before. Although he recognised intellectually that he was micro-managing his people, the emotional recognition caused him to change his behaviours.

Through coaching, Mark began understanding how to delegate effectively and forced himself to do so. The combination of the coaching and the 360 feedback also helped him to shift her initial beliefs. He recognised that being a first line manager required a different mind set as well as skill set and asked to attend the 3 day leadership programme to help him develop this.



Kate  
Client Story

#### Functional Regional Manager/Leader

As a senior functional manager in a financial services organisation Kate was a star. Her financial acumen and grasp of the operating nuances within her area made her an obvious choice for promotion to the role of head of a newly acquired company. She had confidence that she could reverse the company's fortunes and use the high degree of control that the position gave her to meet the expectations of the parent company board. This proved not to be the case. Her turnaround strategy was all operational and focused on her technical strengths to make everything work. Whilst some were effective, they were not enough. Her thinking was based on 'doing it better' rather than 'should we be doing it at all?'

#### Role Expectations

The role was highly visible where every decision was magnified. It involved building a business strategy and integrating existing functional work giving due consideration to all business functions appropriately. The position also called for an ability to consider external business factors and to manage the complexity of multidisciplinary approaches.

#### Signs of Struggle

Kate found herself working non-stop and micro managing every area of the business. Her time management suffered through trying to do too much and she gradually became paralysed by the complexity of the issues she needed to handle. She neglected the cultural issues and her approach lead to her team withdrawing offers of help and only doing what she told them to do and she was reluctant to ask for help from above, viewing this as a sign of weakness.

#### Development interventions

The following interventions were identified to assist Kate:

- A leadership programme to enable her to develop more of a worldly mind set and to develop strategic, operational and development networks
- Creation of an action learning set to pre-test her ideas, proposals and decisions with a group of trusted peers
- Involvement in a cross-functional project to prepare for deeper and broader accountability
- A schedule of meetings with each functional head to ask questions, listen and reflect
- The setting of specific goals for each function to serve as an early warning system

#### Outcomes

By learning to acknowledge and embrace the complexity, Kate began to take time to properly evaluate, understand and connect strategic direction, collective individual competence and organisational competence. She worked more closely with her team and became more prepared to ask questions that revealed her 'ignorance' in order to learn. Together they were able to unravel the complexity and make the necessary connections and Kate was then able to shape and embark upon the strategy that the business needed.

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