

Ignition & Velocity in Leadership Development

“...the impetus to achieve in the market place is an accurate calibration of the leadership development efforts. People become leaders by doing real work”.

2013

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Context & Background

The Global Human Capital Study¹ has a section which is called “*revealing the leadership gap - future growth at risk.*” The results are frightening and despite the economic slowdown of the last few years the reality of gaps in leadership pipeline still haunt many organizations.

A lot of this has to do with riding the wave and ignoring the changing work environment and emerging global context in terms of its impact on the development needs of middle management. Even if we park the threat aside, there are other reasons why organizations should be investing in such programs.

There is no other way of correcting the “*inverse stocking of capability*” where younger employees coming out of school are more adjusted to the needs of global enterprises as compared to middle and senior management. And finally, it remains the best method of telling employees that you care, and that an investment in their development, makes good business sense.

The Leadership Model

Talentonic’s Leadership model (Fig1) is about creating **ignition** and **velocity** into the process of developing effective leaders for the requirements of the business. The approach is integrated, drawing its relevance from what is needed by the business for its future growth and marrying that with the current status of leadership at various levels.

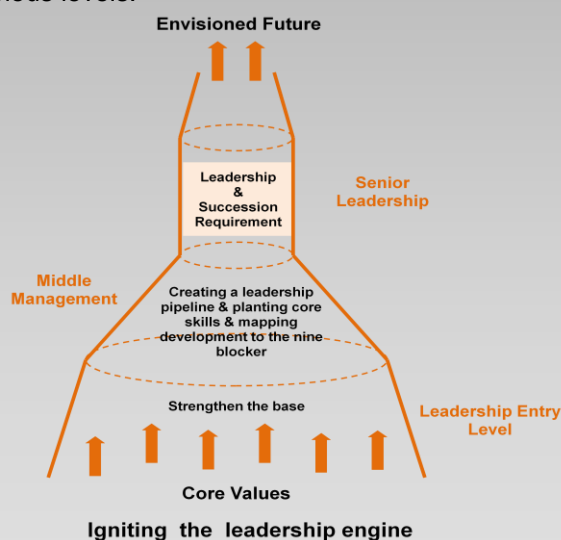


Figure 1: Talentonic Leadership model

Ignition & velocity are principally created by following six core process steps.

1. An understanding of the preferred future:

It is true that “*Without opportunities there are no leaders*”. The process of developing leaders gets its energy and relevance from business plans, achievements, market forces and challenges. This creates the drive to achieve and to find/ develop competent leadership. At the end of the day the impetus to achieve in the market place, the desired market share or the desired business performance is an accurate calibration of the leadership development efforts. People become leaders by doing “real work”.

2. Creating a leadership model

A Leadership model which is aligned to the business model. What is your proposition in the market? What makes you unique? And are you developing the leadership which is skilled to deliver to that promise. What are the current leadership archetypes?

“You want your leaders to be the kind of people who embody the promises your company makes to its customers. In recent years, thousands of

¹ Conducted by IBM in 2010

companies have spent millions on their own corporate universities, yet most have failed to develop true leadership bench strength. That's because in too many cases the approach to leadership training is detached from what the firm stands for in the eyes of customers and investors. Rather training is the same from company to company, regardless of whether the company is a fast food chain or an aerospace contractor. Long-term success depends upon making a critical distinction. A focus on leaders emphasizes the personal qualities of the individual; leadership emphasizes the methods that secure the ongoing good of the firm." - Dave Ulrich¹

For example: A Car Manufacturer with strong focus on product differentiation and innovation. Essentially, premium quality and features ahead of the market.

What leadership does it need?

It needs a leadership, which creates a strong sponsorship for innovation and product development. Removes fear of failure and encourages "market in" processes. Excels in project management and product development functions

and discourages repeatability and routine. If it has more of this leadership, then it will be able to compete better and grow the business.

Is your leadership development delivering your business outcome or result?

3. Develop the core skills required by the business.

Use the above inputs to create consistent content which calibrates with the business and is comprehensive from the standpoint of leadership development. This, truly, creates the leadership development model, provides direction to the program and visibility for the employees about their leadership journey. It creates the "brand" which employees take pride in and powerfully demonstrates the commitment to training.

This development of core skills needs to be at the "self level", "manager level", "business level" and the "transformation level". (Figure 2)

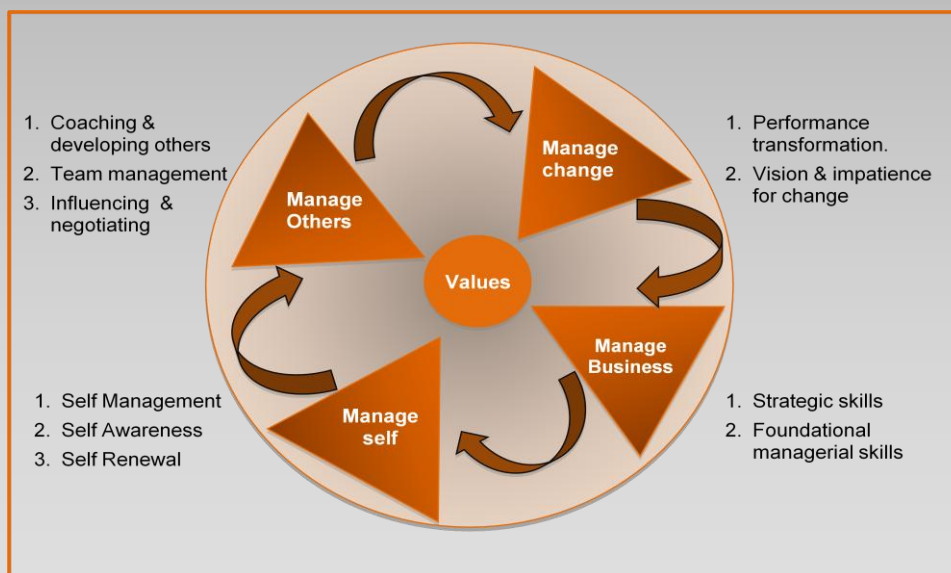


Figure 2: The development framework

¹ Dave Ulrich. Building a leadership brand, HBR July-August 07

4. Delivering the content

There are multiple systems for delivery of development content. These systems of delivery need to be well coordinated with an understanding of the agenda which needs to be covered and how best the content is delivered in an environment where there is freedom to express and adjust.

change momentum is maintained, particularly in organizations swamped with daily operational challenges. This provides practical shape to the core skills and makes use of the multiple delivery systems in a phased manner. Each phase needs to be defined with activity type, timelines and responsibilities

Delivery mode	Description	Duration/Frequency	Location
Training sessions	Leadership development programs on the four modules in larger groups.	3 days once in every six months	Off site
Workshop interventions	Introduction to tools by experts in smaller groups at location.	4 hours a week	On Site
Coach / supervisor review	Follow up discussions & reflections with an experienced coach	1 hour a week	On Site
Individual learning	Additional readings, take home tasks	1 hour a week	On site

Figure 3: Content Delivery

6. Respond to the needs of the career model

Patching leadership development into the career model is critical. What are the alternate career models which the organization offers? More commonly, these will be

- (a) business leadership
- (b) functional leadership &
- (c) technical leadership

The challenge here is to match the organization need with the career aspirations of employees. While this is a challenge which sits outside the scope of conventional leadership development, it nevertheless needs to be addressed.

Can the leadership development journey be seen as delivering only a pipeline of business leadership? What about delivering operational and technical excellence?

More of the talked about challenges of leadership step from problems of succession at the CXO level and therefore ignore the development efforts required for alternate career paths However, development of alternate career paths will sometimes require a reengineering of HR policies.

5. Tightly project manage the program

Tight program management (Fig 4) to ensure that the

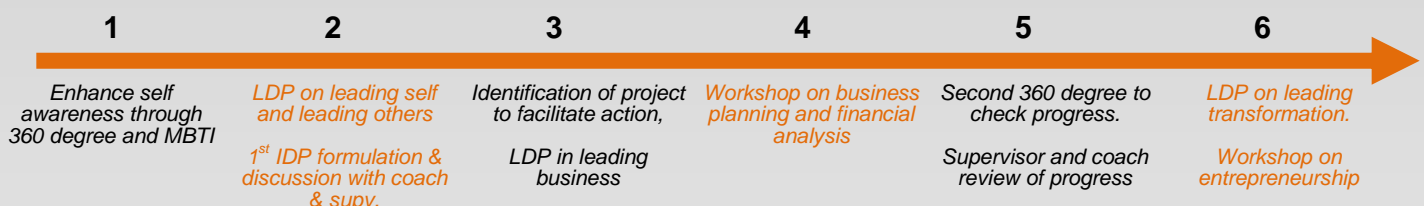


Figure 4: Project steps

The challenge lies in how the enterprise assigns value to the career paths. From an employee standpoint this “value” manifests through

- (a) designations and organizational hierarchy
- (b) compensation & reward
- (c) membership of organizational governance structures
 - Executive committees, which are perceived to carry influence at the policy making level.
 - Technical leadership is the one which feels left out of this value chain with the focus on developing a broad based business leadership.

7. Review internal PMS & TD processes







Having a strong history of performance management & talent identification processes certainly adds velocity to the leadership development program. It helps in two ways.

- (a) It ensures a number of definitional issues about performance & potential have already been dealt with.
- (b) Also, the leadership team is calibrated on issues of talent and a fair amount of consensus already exists.

This certainly helps as you launch the program. Sometimes organizations will depend upon external assessment support to drive this process.

Summary & next steps

In summary, follow the following steps to march with velocity on your path to leadership development

1	Articulate the preferred future	
2	Identify the leadership archetypes.	
3	Develop content for the “core skills”	
4	Design use of multiple delivery mechanisms	
5	Tightly project manage the program	
6	Respond to the needs of the career model.	
7	Review internal PMS & TD processes	