Personalize Your Leadership Development

Based on Natalie S. Griffin's article, “Personalize Your Management Development”, HBR, March 2003, pp.113-119
Organizations typically use one-size-fits-all management training programmes.

An individualized approach can be far more effective!
Leadership Development Programmes

- Most organizations struggle with it
- They promote their top performers into management roles,
- Put them through few workshops and seminars, and then throw them to the wolves.
- In the Darwinian process that follows, those with the ability to survive and thrive are rewarded;
- Those without it are disciplined or reassigned.

An alarming number of people fall into the second
Why?

• It is not simply that people lack the skills and talent for the job.

• They fail because their organization’s leadership development approaches fail them.
Organizations

- Do not recognize the degree to which personal characteristics, ideologies, or behaviours affect an individual’s ability to lead.
- People do not check their individuality at the door before leaping into the great organizational melting pot.
- Nor do they all fit a single leader-in-training profile.
Experiences of Nationwide Financial

- A financial services company based in Columbus, Ohio, USA
- 5,000 employees
- Faced management crisis in 1996
- As the remaining mid-and-senior-level managers were promoted or retired, those who should have replaced them were increasingly unable to lead.

- A cross-functional team set about creating a management development programme
- Application to the programme was a matter of choice
- The year-long programme included coaching, mentoring, observing others, hands-on management experience and training classes backed up by regular feedback sessions.
- Developed specific approaches tailored to each type of prospective leader.
### Four Types of People That Enter Leadership Development Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reluctant Leaders</strong></td>
<td>Have all the necessary skills to be excellent managers, but can’t imagine themselves succeeding in a leadership role.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Arrogant Leaders</strong></td>
<td>Believe they already possess all the leadership skills they need, but lack empathy and humility of effective leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unknown Leaders</strong></td>
<td>Have the right blend of humility, confidence &amp; leadership skills, but their talents are overlooked.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Workaholics</strong></td>
<td>Most common, put work above all else, spend excessive works at the office, lack both the perspective &amp; personality to inspire others.</td>
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Each has unique Challenges and Opportunities.
Identify these four types

- And tailor a specific development path for each
- Treat potential leaders as individuals and focus on their unique personalities and circumstances
- Offer effective coaching and provide realistic real-life management experiences
Typology of Leaders

- The Reluctant Leader
- The Arrogant Leader
- The Unknown Leader
- Workaholic
Reluctant Leaders

- Have the skills to be excellent managers
- But, can’t imagine themselves succeeding in a leadership role
The Reluctant Leader

- 20% fall into this category
- Have the raw material to make outstanding managers

- But are sabotaged by their own lack of self-confidence
- Their deeply ingrained insecurity manifest themselves in a variety of ways – indecisiveness, risk aversion, and tendency to avoid conflict.
To transform Reluctant Leaders

- Help them change their assumptions about their own abilities
- Provide them with specific training in decision-making and conflict management
- Give them steady doses of encouragement
Julie

- A natural leader
- Able, intelligent and compassionate leader
- Didn’t believe she had the right to make decisions for others
- First needed to change her negative assumptions about leadership.
- 360-degree feedback was an excellent tool

- A mentor created a series of hypothetical problems for her to handle.
- She gradually learned to trust herself to make good decisions.
- A more forceful combination of coaching and hands-on experience was used to help her managed conflicts.
- An enormous amount of encouragement was needed with constant, encouraging feedback.
- Julie will never be overconfident but she has learned to take a stand when necessary and to manage her self-doubt.
Arrogant Leaders

- Are ambitious self-marketers who rise quickly to the top

- But they lack the empathy and humility common in effective leaders
The Arrogant Leader

- Only 10% fall into this category
- Stand out because they are brazen
- Insecure
- Overcompensate for their self-doubt by convincing themselves that they are terrific managers
- Ambitious self-marketers
- Can wreck havoc on their teams
Transforming Arrogant Leaders

- Requires a rude awakening in the form of harsh feedback
- Hands-on practice in empathetic listening and teamwork
- Even threats of demotion or dismissal
Steve

- Extremely competitive and technically competent
- Displays overweening confidence
- Thinks he can do any management job.
- He confronted his mistaken self-image during his 360 degree feedback session.

- He was given a written warning about his performance and notified he risked getting fired.
- During the coaching session he admitted his fears.
- He was forced to walk in his associates’ shoes.
- A self-deprecating honesty began to replace his phony self-confidence.
Unknown Leaders

- Have the right blend of confidence and leadership skills, but they fail to develop relationships outside of a small circle of colleagues.
The Unknown Leader

- Roughly 25% are unknown leaders – ambitious, highly competent, yet cautious who form relationships more tentatively and slowly than others.
- Often introverted, personal networks are small and rarely initiate conversations.
- People don’t usually look to them for leadership.
- Have little “brand recognition” in their organizations.
To transform unknown leaders into effective managers

- Require 360-degree feedback
- A lot of monitoring and support
- Hands-on management experience in an unfamiliar environment
- Give them unfamiliar assignments in new environments
John

- Not for small talk
- His entire focus was on achieving results
- During the coaching sessions, he was encouraged to become a more sociable person

- He need not totally change his style, but use his natural abilities.
- Again like Julie he needed on-going encouragement
Workaholics

- Get ahead by putting work above all else.
- Unfortunately, they often lack the perspective and personality to inspire others.
Workaholics

- The largest number – fully 45% - are workaholics
- Have anxiety-driven, addictive personalities, choosing work over and above family, spiritual growth, sports, hobbies, love or friendship.

Like hamsters on a wheel, labouring relentlessly
To transform Workaholics

- 360-degree feedback is not usually an effective training tool.
- A holistic model, which describes the ideal manager as one who is strong in physical, emotional, spiritual, business, family and social skills was found to be more powerful.
Mark

- A classic workaholic
- Worked 100 hours a week, and received a string of rewards and promotions
- Frustrated with his colleagues and lost touch with his friends

- During the coaching session, he was asked to consider the question: *What will people say about you at your funeral?*
- Everyone at work chipped in to help Mark get his life back.
- He started sharing more about himself and taking a genuine interest in people.
The four types of leaders require

- A tailored approach
- While one type responds very well to one form of “treatment”, the same approach backfires with someone else.
- Reluctant and unknown leaders require extra doses of support and encouragement.
- The threat of harsh consequences makes all the differences with arrogant leaders and workaholics.
Leadership Development

• Must focus on the whole person;
• Not just on individual competencies!
• A “cookie cutter” approach will not work