THE FRUIT IS UNDER THE PEEL: UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: Spurred by competitive growth and lack of leadership, organizations are beginning to deploy leadership development aggressively. In this paper we explain leadership development and the developmental tools and frameworks commonly used. We also describe the antecedents and the organization context required in deploying a leadership strategy, and the potential benefits that organizations might realize. Leadership Development contextualized to organizational needs calls for new ways of exploring leadership development in complex environments.

KEYWORDS: Leadership Development

INTRODUCTION

Building organizational capabilities is emerging as a significant priority for organizations globally. Leadership skill is considered to be the capability that contributes most to business performance and competitive advantage (Mckinsey, 2010, (McCall, 1998; Hay Group, 2000, Vicere & Fulmer, 1998). According to a Booz and Hamilton study, Leadership Development is ranked along with managing change as one of the top three business focus areas for the coming years. It is has been recognized as a key factor in navigating organizations through challenges and driving them towards higher performance (Bennis, 2003, Maxwell, 1998, Kets De Vries, 2010). Thus the importance of building strong leaders as a strategic imperative (Magee, 2009).

Though there is a lot of information on what makes a good leader (Stodgill, 1974, Burns, 1978, Fiedler, 1967) there is still less insight on Leadership Development, the discipline of creating a robust and sustainable pipeline of leaders. Many formative ideas in the area of leadership development have their foundings in North American and European research in western business organizations. Though leadership development emerged in the western countries during the year 1900 to 2000 but interest and investment continues to grow globally (Towers Perrin, 2006). The Centre for Creative Leadership (CCL) has globally popularized the concept of Leadership Development. According to a survey of the American Management Association (AMA), more than 25% of organizations spend more than one-third of their annual training budget on leadership development programs. Such a heightened interest in the area of Leadership Development has been simply because of its role in enabling a robust leadership pipeline. Hence, the growing importance of Leadership Development (Avolio, 2004, Conger & Benjamin, 1999; Day, 2001; McCall, 1998, McCauley, Moxley & Van Velsor, 1998).

Historically Leadership development has been recognized broadly as a one event training initiative, where participants go back to their jobs with enthusiasm and energy, only to lose much of the benefit of the training (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). However leadership development focuses on building networked relationships (social capital) among individuals in an organization (Wikipedia). In turn leader development focuses on developing individual knowledge, skills and abilities Day (2000) contends that what most organizations term as leadership development should be more specifically termed as leader development. Leadership development is defined as the expansion of a group's capacity to produce direction, alignment, and commitment (McCauley et al.), while leader development is described as the "expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes" (McCauley, Van Veslor, & Rudeman, 2010).

There are multiple approaches to develop leaders ranging from formal programs, diagnostics,

mentoring, coaching etc. State of the art leadership development occurs in the context of ongoing work initiatives that are tied to strategic business imperatives (Dotlich & Noel, 1998; Moxley & O'Connor Wilson, 1998). Organizations cannot choose one or the other approach, but instead a bridge must be anchored on either side of leader and leadership development for effective development to occur (Kegan, 1994). Many companies do engage in more on-going leadership development efforts, but these are often fragmented and have a lack of clearly defined goal for development of leaders or succession requirements (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). Eventually, few leadership development efforts produce the leaders needed (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2010).

OVERVIEW

Leadership

The concept of Leadership has evolved from the earlier times of trait theory (1930's) o behavioral theories (1950's) to contingency or situational leadership theories (Hershey & Blanchard) in 1960's. While each of the trait, behavioral, and contingency approaches (Fiedler, 1967) have contributed to the understanding of leadership, none of the approaches have been able to explain leadership completely. Much of the research in the last 50 years has focused on the study of "heroic" leaders (Yukl, 2001). Recent advancements in the study of leadership refer to concepts of transformational leadership. (Avolio, 2005; Bass, 1990), servant leadership and distributed leadership. Other definitions of leadership related to process of influence, getting things done (Yukl, 2002, Northouse, 2004, Hollander, 1978), setting directions (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990; Batten, 1989) and visioning (Bennis, 1989). Inspite of this Fred Luthans, (2005), states that "leadership does remain pretty much of a 'black box' or unexplainable concept."

Leadership Development

In case of leadership development there is an apparent lack of a generally accepted description of what it actually is. One definition focuses on the development of individual leaders and states that is "the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes."(Mccauley, Moxley & Van Velsor, 1998) One way of expanding a person's leadership capacity includes but is not limited to helping to develop knowledge, skills and abilities that the organization values with regard to leadership. Wikipedia defines Leadership Development as any activity that enhances the quality of leadership within an individual or organization whereas McCauley refers to Leadership development as expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes (McCcauley, 1998). CCL uses the term "development" broadly, referring to growth and change in competencies, attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, and abilities in areas relevant to the individual's job performance or career progression (Velsor, McCauley & Moxley, 1998). The primary emphasis in Leadership development is on building collaborative group processes and using interpersonal and influence processes to achieve organizational objectives. CCL, which has significantly advanced theory and practice, developed a general model of development and developmental experiences which describes what needs to be provided and the context that needs to exist, for an experience to bring about development. This framework is popularly used in implementation of leadership development programs (Day, 2001; Van Velsor et al., 1998).

Leadership Development Approach

Leadership Development follows a more or less standard approach including identification of talent, assessment of high potential, program design and delivery, assessing effectiveness and career planning. Common frameworks to leadership development continue to be prescriptive in nature, built around leadership development for self, to others to managers to business leaders and intertwined around various approaches of 360 feedback, action learning, classroom modules etc. However, most of the approaches have relied on the 70:20:10 principles of leader development as popularized by CCL (McCall, Lombardo &Morrison, 1998). This framework emphasizes the importance of conceptual learning (10%), reflective

learning (20%) (Gray, 2007; Smith, 2001) and action learning experiences (70%). There is evidence that experiential learning through 70:20:10 (Arvey, Zhang, Krueger & Avolio, 2007) is adopted and implemented across a range of programs in small and large organizations. Other approaches also include references to life changing events (Maxell, 1998) or transformative events called crucibles.

In many Leadership development frameworks organizational competency framework defines a leadership success profile and is factored into the design of the 360 degree feedback. However, the competency approach to leadership continues to offer a illusive direction to explain and simplify the processes of selection and development of leaders and yet only reflects a section of the vastness of leadership (Bolden & Gosling, 2003). In many development frameworks critical competencies to move up the leadership pipeline like knowledge, skills, time horizon (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2001) are being complemented by learning agility, adaptive capacity, resilience, reflection, decision making, complexity and uncertainty handling. The concept of Leaders developing Leaders is also being seen as an effective development process. (Cacioppe, 1998). Taleo (2010) identifies a seven step approach for leadership development

1. Determine the best leadership style for your organization
2. Identify current and potential leaders within the company
3. Identify leadership gaps
4. Develop succession plans for critical roles
5. Develop career planning goals for potential leaders
6. Develop a skills roadmap for future leaders
7. Develop retention programs for current and future leaders

Some of more common approaches follow a three stage process for leadership development:

1. Talent Assessment: Talent assessments form an integral process for the beginning of the Leadership Development Journey. This is done by using tools like performance identification, potential assessment. They have been known to be indicators of readiness of talent pool and strength of people capability nominated to be part of the Leadership Development process. While most programs are built on the premise of competency based talent assessments as indicators of effective leadership potential, they are much overused. Though necessary, competency assessments are not sufficient (Bolden, 2005).

2. Design & Delivery: Robust leadership development frameworks establish a set of clear and defined leadership competencies. There is a need to align each leadership development initiative in the pursuit of a company's business goals and strategic direction as a prerequisite to success. A leadership program needs to identify the expected leadership skills and competencies needed to successfully execute the company's strategy. **Once the necessary leadership competencies have been determined, targeted developmental initiatives and review at various stages of a development program can help keep future leaders on track**. There are numerous tools that support the leadership development framework delivery including problem solving and decision-making to emotional intelligence to live business experiences through action learning. This is supported by other tools like 360 degree feedback, coaching etc. Some of the common tools used in the framework are described in the Table 1.0

3. Monitoring Effectiveness: There are a range of factors that influence the style of leadership and dictate which approach to leadership development is most likely to lead to success. This is an area where most organizations fail to focus on. The other organizational distinct factors of individual growth, organization culture, manager involvement, shared values, career planning and fulfillment of individual identity (Klein & Ziegler, 2004; Hall, 2004 et al.) as a contributor towards leadership enhancement is imperative and needs to be focused on. Individual aspirations and social context as well as shared ownership of development are

important features of leadership development. Talent Review programs, action learning reviews and the ROI on leadership initiatives are some of the ways which organizations engage in post program delivery.

With the myriad tools, techniques, and strategies available for leadership development, one might expect more progress than we see. However the programs fail to achieve the desired impact and an anticipated leadership pipeline as comprehended by organizations. The real return on the investment is not short term changes in attitudes or behavior but the increased numbers of master leaders who achieve the business strategy (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2010). The lack of success suggests that something is still missing-either an as yet to be discovered technique or approach or some "secret sauce" that blends the existing ingredients so that they work together. (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2010). Hence the need for this study.

Table 1.0

Practice	Description	Development Target	Approach	Strengths	Weaknesses
Formal program	Classroom-based learning. Shell for including a variety of practices	Skill development self-knowledge leadership principles	A formal program comprises of a classroom workshop covering fundamentals, theories and practices of leadership. The formal program serves as an umbrella under which an assortment of practices can be customized to address the developmental needs.	Flexible Efficient	Poor transfer of learning Lack of support on Job
360 feedback	Multisource ratings of performance, organized and presented to a manager	Self-Knowledge Behavioral change	This tool provides an opportunity for a comprehensive feedback that is a complete and accurate picture of an individual's performance through different rating sources typically include peers, direct reports, supervisors, and external stakeholders	Comprehensive Picture Buy –in	Overwhelming amount of data, no guidance on how to change, time and effort
Coaching	Practical , goal-focused form of one-on-one learning	Self-Knowledge Behavioral change, career development	Executive coaching is a practical, goal-focused form of personal, one-on-one learning which is used to improve individual performance, enhance a career, or work through organizational issues. It can be a relatively short-term focused process aimed at improving specific leadership competencies or can be a long term process aiming at visible change and transformation	Personalized intensive	Perceived Stigma(remedial) expensive
Job Assignment	Providing "stretch" assignment in terms of roles ,function or geography	Kill development, Broader understanding of business	Jobs that are more developmental include "stretch" assignments that put a manager in a new situation with unfamiliar responsibilities – especially high-responsibility and high-latitude jobs or projects requiring a manager to bring about change or build relationships	Job relevant Accelerates Leadership	Conflict between performance and level no structure for learning

Mentoring	Advising/developmental relationship, usually with a more senior manager	Broader understanding of business. Advancement catalyst. Lessons learned/avoid mistakes	Most commonly, formal mentoring programs pair a junior with a more senior manager, although the pairing can occur with a peer or an external consultant. Although many of these relationships are of an informal nature because the organization does not make an explicit pairing, part of the process is formal	Strong Personal bond	Peer jealousy, Over dependence
Networking	Connecting to others in different functions and areas	Better problem solving. Learning who to consult for project help in socialization	An important goal of networking initiatives is to develop leaders beyond merely knowing what and knowing how, to knowing who in terms of problem-solving resources. Enhancing individual networks is believed to be an effective way to increase managers' innovation and problem-solving capacities	Builds organization	Ad hoc ,unstructured
Reflection Tools	In depth thinking about personal experience	Understanding lessons of experience. Self-understanding	Introspection and reflection are types of personal growth training for leadership development that are used to uncover people's hidden goals, talents, and values. Some believe that one of the most important aspects of being a good leader is self-knowledge. Reflection can enhance a better understanding of who you are	Enhanced learning	Time and guidance effectively Poor Job transfer
Action Learning	Project-based learning directed at important business problem	Socialization teamwork Implement Strategy	A number of organizations have embraced the action learning process, which is as a continuous process of learning and reflection. A key advantage of action learning is that it is problem or project-based. Action learning ties individual development to the process of helping organizations respond to major business problems.	Tied to Business imperatives. Action Oriented	Time intensive Leadership lesson not always clear Over emphasis on results
Outdoor Challenge	Team-building experiences in outdoor settings	Teamwork Self-Understanding	The outdoor challenge is another popular tool. In addition to building teamwork and leadership skills, outdoor challenges also encourage participants to overcome risk-taking fears. Opposite of reflection, outdoor challenges are action-based.	Emotionally charged Action Oriented	Poor job transfer

METHODS & DISCUSSION

The study is based on research and literature review of research papers, journals and surveys for understanding the practices used in leadership development. Telephonic unstructured interviews were used to obtain feedback from industry HR managers and consultants. One of the authors experiences as a sponsor of multiple leadership development initiatives have been taken into account to define organizational contextual parameters. Key themes emerged and were analyzed to understand what goes into making the leadership development process more effective. Based on the findings the A5O3 model is recommended for effective leadership development that integrates the antecedents and the organizational context into the design framework

Antecedents: The A5 Model

1. Articulation of Leadership in Context : The meaning and context of leadership (success profile, leadership competency framework, leadership attributes) and leadership development both at the individual and the organizational level needs to be explained, reinforced and understood by all participants, line managers and champions/steering committee members to enable organizational development at the same pace.

2. Agile Leadership Competency Framework: To evaluate potential leaders in the organization, a leadership program needs to recognize the expected leadership skills and competencies in alignment to changing environments. Off the shelf competence models are not sufficient to to identify leadership potential but is also imperative to define the success measurements and build them in sync to the changing business context. Integration of competency framework into the talent review process further enhances the effectiveness of the development of the desired skills.

3. Alignment to Business Strategy: There is a need to align each leadership development initiative in the pursuit of a company's business goals and strategic direction as a prerequisite to success. Key leadership development processes need to become embedded in the organization strategy.

4. Assessment of Readiness: The developmental readiness of participants, commitment to the program and willingness to learn and adapt to the nature of the program is a critical ingredient to be assessed before the initiation of the leadership development program. Though a number of tools like performance rating, assessment centres, manager feedback and emotional intelligence tests are used to avoid derailers, the impact can be scaled up by HR not only clearly knowing the criteria but also by rigour and focus on assessment of a participant's readiness.

5. Aspiration Alignment: People develop fastest when they see and feel responsible for their own growth. The idea is to understand the triggers of each individual in terms of their own aspirations and what will drive them towards growth and in turn define the path of development in alignment to individual needs. Effective leadership development process needs to support career planning for its participants. Combining employee development with career planning enables employees not only to explore potential career paths but also to monitor and progress through the development activities necessary to attain them.

Organizational Context - O3 model

6. Organization Environment: The most important driver of success is organizational values that support leadership development. A truly strategic and structured Leadership program will be difficult to achieve success with, it needs to be supported, committed to and lived in the organization context with strong buy-in in from the top.

7. Operational Systems: HR processes for individual growth, reward and recognition and fulfillment of individual identity need to be defined and institutionalized as a contributor towards leadership enhancement. As part of the leadership program, it is also imperative to critical leadership roles and in build succession planning for a participant into the process

*8. **Opportunities to practice leadership:*** Developing leader's must have an opportunity to practice leadership learnings and experiences including secondments, job rotations, cross functional moves, strategic exposures and working along with leaders on key business initiatives. This will go a long way in building a robust leadership pipeline

CONCLUSION

On the basis of secondary research, it can be comprehended that practical approach is used abroad to build leaders for the future. An integrated Leadership Development framework is an enabler of successful Leadership development needed to manage the complexities of the future. Leadership Development is contextual and no one size fits all. Effective Leadership development is a function of requisite antecedents, principles of design and organizational context. It was evident with the fact that almost all HR facilitators use Action Learning Projects (ALPs). In the context of framework design side, where the utility of traditional methods i.e. classroom training and lectures is higher, there is an opportunity to increase the proportion of on-the-job tools in their program to gradually move towards the ratio of 70:20:10 rule (70% on-the-job methods, 20% social interaction, 10% classroom methods) globally proven for developmental effectiveness. The delivery is to be supported by formulating a formal strategy with clear objectives and vision after considering the value proposition of LDP. Leadership Development is an action response and triggers a mechanism of change process and mindset of development in the organization. Thus organizational context and support plays an important role in the effectiveness of leadership development programs. This calls for a renewed look at the Leadership Development Strategy and the practice of building leader's

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