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**WHITE PAPER**

## **Leadership Development & Development Programs**

### **Assessment of the Current Leadership Situation in Corporate America**

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This is the first in a series of White Papers being released during 2007. Others to follow are Top Ten Team Laws, Top Ten Laws for CEOs, Planning, Visioning, Measurement, and E-mail Etiquette.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Assessment of the Current Leadership Situation in Corporate America**

Over the past several years, Accelerate, in conjunction with the Center for Integrity-Based Leadership (C.I.B.L.), undertook a review of the current leadership situation in Corporate America and concluded:

- In general, corporate leadership has a poor reputation.
- It is in pitiful shape from an integrity viewpoint.
- There is growing public distrust.
- Government interventions and regulations have had little effect.
- New regulations are clumsy, unfocused, expensive and are being met with great resistance.
- Few, if any, industries are immune.

### **Current Leadership Training is Ineffective and Flawed**

First, over the past decade, many middle manager positions in Corporate America have been eliminated resulting in a loss of trained, qualified leadership and a lack of future leadership bench strength.

Secondly, to compound the issue, many leaders of the “Baby Boomer Generation” are soon to retire from the workforce.

Finally, even with the billions of dollars spent on leadership training, the situation appears to be getting worse. In examining the Organizational Development literature, speaking with prominent experts in the field, and debriefing past candidates, it’s clear that most Leadership Programs, both in-house and outsourced, don’t result in the improvements in leadership characteristics that are first promised.

Using more of the same past approaches to leadership development is not going to get us where we need to go over the next decade. Hence, Accelerate and C.I.B.L. re-examined all aspects of existing Leadership Programs, identified the primary problems with those approaches, and redesigned the whole process from top to bottom to address the flaws that show up in the existing offerings.

Following is an outline of the typical problems associated with the existing Leadership Programs. These problems are laid out by area, problem description, solution description, and associated benefit to the sponsoring organization.

### **What Does Program Success Mean?**

During our research, we came across many definitions of how the success of a Leadership Program was defined—job retention, behavioral change, performance or promotion. Few programs could demonstrate a direct linkage at Kirkpatrick Level 4.

For our work and for this white paper, we define success as “a planned and measurable change of behavior.”

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## OUTCOMES

### Clearly Define Outcomes

**Problem:** Often, the outcomes of a Leadership Program are not clearly defined and agreed to up front. Where they do exist, they are frequently not aligned with the true needs of the business.

**Impact:** In many cases, the defined outcomes of a Leadership Program are simply the desires or knowledge set of the head of the OD department, and are not aligned with the true needs of the business. Further, the outcomes are defined by an OD person in OD language, and not in the language of the CEO.

**Solution:** Define the desired outcomes up front and ensure that they fit the current and future organizational needs. Get clarity, specificity, and agreement upon the outcomes, and how the success of the program will be measured against those outcomes.

**Benefit:** The delivered program is more likely to have an impact on the behavior of the candidates and subsequently on business results.

### Align Outcomes with Candidates' Specific Needs

**Problem:** The defined outcomes of a given Leadership Program bear little or no resemblance to the specific needs of the program candidates.

**Impact:** Typically, outcomes are defined to address the average needs of the average candidate. As a result, few people have their real needs addressed.

**Solution:** Define candidate-centric outcomes based upon prior interviews, and configure each session based upon the actual profiles of the people attending.

**Benefit:** The delivered program is more likely to address each candidate, have an impact on their behavior, and subsequently, on business results.

## CONTEXT & CULTURE

### Link Programs to Cultural Change Efforts

**Problem:** The Leadership Program is often delivered in isolation without any linkage to an internal Cultural Change Program.

**Impact:** Whatever new skills the candidate learns will atrophy and go to waste if not supported by or aligned with the surrounding culture.

**Solution:** Align Leadership Development Programs with the culture. If the program is designed to trigger a change in the culture, then ensure that the cultural change piece is addressed within the program, and that candidates are given the authority to actuate the required change.

**Benefit:** Candidates will see their attempts at new behavior actually take root. Hence, the organization receives the benefit of their learning.

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**CONTEXT & CULTURE, continued****Obtain Feedback from Qualified Sources**

**Problem:** Most Leadership Programs assume that the people who have been asked to give feedback have the awareness and knowledge of how to give that feedback, will be constructive and candid, and will not abuse the privilege.

**Impact:** Feedback from unqualified sources can, at best, be irrelevant and inaccurate—at worst, it can be incorrect and damaging.

**Solution:** Design the process so as a) to help in the selection of who gives feedback, b) to engage the people giving feedback at an early stage, c) to set the stage for how to give feedback, and d) to assist them in delivering constructive yet candid feedback.

**Benefit:** This type of feedback to the candidate is as close to true feedback as can be obtained in a working environment. The secondary benefit to this approach is that the people giving feedback are both supportively engaged in the development process of the candidate and tend to go through some changes themselves as a result of vicarious learning.

**Engage Sponsors**

**Problem:** Most leadership programs do not engage ‘sponsors’, and where they do, they are only involved in the initial stages.

**Impact:** Candidates have no mentoring, internal support and safe place to talk as they go through, or return from, a program.

**Solution:** Engage sponsors for each candidate up front—actively engage them throughout the process—including any decision involved in graduation or certification.

**Benefit:** The sponsors have a responsibility for the candidate’s learning and development, which increases exposure and visibility, both of which increase the chance of change to occur. In addition, typical organizational roadblocks to learning will be minimized.

**Insist on Support from the Top**

**Problem:** The given Leadership Program does not have support from the very top of the organization, i.e., the CEO. Even when the CEO does give support, it is only lip service—it is passive, not active support.

**Problem:** Even when the program is supported by the CEO, other members of the Executive Team are not in support, and either actively sabotage the program or passively do not support it.

**Impact:** Candidates will know whether or not their attendance has support from the top when the first attendance conflict arises. Without support, attendance is interrupted or drops off completely.

**Solution:** Engage the CEO from the very beginning, specifically with regard to a) outcomes, b) his/her attendance, c) alignment of the rest of the Executive Team behind the program and d) measurement of results.

**Benefit:** When supported from the top, other issues tend to fall away. Candidates will be supported in their attendance with the minimum of on-the-job interruption. Funding tends to be easier too.

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**CONTEXT & CULTURE, continued****Senior Executives Must Attend**

**Problem:** Some Leadership Programs, while they may have support from the top, are not attended by the people at the top—the ‘fix them not us’ syndrome.

**Impact:** Lack of participation by Senior Executives diminishes the impact of most subject matter covered within the program. It is clearly seen by the candidates and results in a lack of willingness to go the extra mile to change behavior.

**Solution:** Either ensure that one or more of the Executive Team attend each of the first several programs—optimally the first one after the pilot—or construct a very similar program for the whole Executive Team.

**Benefit:** When candidates, indeed the whole organization, see that all of the leaders are also willing to learn and change, it re-enforces a learning culture within the organization.

**Choose the Right Candidates**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs have, as an outcome, something to the effect: “Graduate the top 400 leaders through the program.”

**Problem:** Attending a Leadership Program will not improve some people. (If they should be fired because they are bad managers or leaders, fire them.)

**Impact:** When the program is simply numerically based, it’s a waste of time having some people attend leadership training. Our experience is that only one in six people are actually ready for the work required for serious change in their leadership style.

**Solution:** Be very clear about why you are offering the program. If it is a platform for having senior leaders get to know each other better and to create better company networks, then set the numeric goal; if it is to actually change leadership behavior, then be more selective in your candidates.

**Benefit:** Selection has a few of benefits—it builds up an internal demand marketing dynamic, it ensures that the candidates rub shoulders with other people who are of their caliber, and the candidates are the ones most likely to change.

**CONTEXT & CULTURE, continued****Create the Challenge for the Returning Candidate**

**Problem:** When Leadership Programs are successful, then the candidate will start to grow fairly quickly and will expect to have greater challenges and be supported from the top in their growth opportunities.

**Impact:** The growing returning leader will tend to seek new opportunities, will tend to challenge his/her environment, and will be less tolerant of other less-than-adept leaders around them. In the worst case, they will leave the organization.

**Solution:** Ensure that the growing leader is given challenges in line with their growth and that the leadership chain above them begins to operate in accordance with good leadership principles.

**Benefit:** The purpose of developing leaders is to get benefit from their growth. This is best done by giving them challenging work and keeping them in the organization.

**APPROACH****It's a Process, Not an Event**

**Problem:** Often, Leadership Programs treat the leadership development process as a single 'event' to attend, dropping communication with the candidate after they have attended, and relying on a 'strategy of hope' that the candidate will change, apply what they have learned and have a nice leadership life!

**Impact:** No follow-up tends to lead to no change—and disappointment all round.

**Solution:** Recognize that learning does not take place by attending a single event. Learning and change/improvement takes place over time through an explicit, predictable, well-defined process. Plan an overall program approach with this in mind. The true work begins after the leader has learned what changes and improvements are required of him/her and has developed and started on a plan to address those changes.

**Benefit:** A well defined leadership development process, specifically tailored to each individual's needs, results in greater opportunity for learning success for the individual and more rapid bench strength development for the organization. An on-going support process will help to anchor the changes and increase the chance that the candidate will actually address those changes.

## APPROACH, continued

### Balance Strengths and Weaknesses

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs use only a strengths-based approach or a weakness-based approach.

**Impact:** Most people's strengths will be what gets them to move—rarely will people develop their weaknesses into something great. On the other hand, weaknesses, while not necessarily focused upon, need to be mitigated.

**Solution:** Integrate both aspects—strengths and weaknesses.

**Benefit:** This balanced approach doesn't ignore major components which need to go into a development plan.

### Focus on Growth, Development and Learning

**Problem:** Some Leadership Programs give the candidate the sense that he/she is being forced to attend a 'remedial' program.

**Impact:** The candidate attends the program with misgivings about what he/she has done wrong and wanting simply to get through the program.

**Solution:** Emphasize growth, learning and opportunity as the overall approach. Give the candidate a sense of what will happen after. Ensure that the candidate and their needs are involved and influential in creating his/her development process.

**Benefit:** The Leadership Program generates excitement and gets 'pull' marketing rather than having to be sold.

### Present Multiple Focused Sessions

**Problem:** A given Leadership Program combines multiple activities into one session, e.g., the delivery of critical feedback, the presentation of new skills, the personal interpretation of those skills, and the personal planning process.

### Directly Address the Resistance to Change

**Problem:** In most Leadership Programs, rarely is the inevitable resistance to feedback even addressed. When the process of resisting feedback is identified, there is rarely time given for the candidate to work through that resistance and become open to learning.

**Impact:** The specific outcomes of the session(s) become blurred by having too much mixed together, and by having the underlying resistance to feedback ignored. The candidate does not have time to go through the change process and hence, no deep change occurs.

**Solution:** Recognize that not all aspects can be achieved in one event. Separate the different aspects out over time and combine them into an overall cohesive process. This process will need to include: feedback in style, coaching through the resistance to feedback, identifying and presenting model leadership qualities, allowing for personal interpretation of those qualities, personal development planning, learning and reflecting in real time, on-going feedback and coaching.

**Benefit:** Candidates will have the time, and one-on-one coaching, to work through the resistance to their feedback and the subsequent need for change. As a result, when the candidate starts to put together their development plan, they will start at a high level of acceptance so that true change can begin.

**APPROACH, continued****One Size Only Fits One**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs take a one-size-fits-all approach, putting all candidates through a single, predetermined curriculum.

**Impact:** This approach results in most candidates wasting 50% their time as they are forced to sit through presentations of qualities in which they are already proficient. This approach is designed to optimize the time and effort of the designer rather than optimize the time, effort and experience of the candidate

**Solution:** Develop a one-size-fits-one candidate-centric approach in which the complete process is reconfigured for each group of candidates, and within each program, each candidate is attended to based on their needs. Since the leadership profiles of candidates are known in advance, the program can be fully focused on those areas in which the candidates need improvement.

**Benefit:** This focused approach saves time and results in less frustration for each group and each candidate.

**Use Credible Presenters**

**Problem:** Often, a Leadership Program is presented by a faculty who have never had real world experience in leading teams, departments or organizations. Their knowledge is only theoretical.

**Impact:** While some theoretical base is useful, if there are no presenters with actual, practical, hands-on leadership experience, the war stories may sound hollow and leave the candidate doubting the credibility of the presenting group.

**Solution:** Have a mixture of backgrounds in the faculty.

**Benefit:** The use of credible and experienced presenters provides the candidate with a wide range of backgrounds, opinions and war stories, increasing the chance of there being something for the candidate to relate to, thus increasing the learning opportunity.

**Use Global Thinking**

**Problem:** Some Leadership Programs, while talking globalization, use very U.S.-centric thinking, models, culture, processes and methods, and assumes these will translate to other cultures from both an attendance viewpoint, and from the point-of-view of the location of delivery.

**Impact:** Some approaches leave other cultures cold. Some assessments, methods and models have been shown not to translate from one culture to another. This diminishes the learning

**Solution:** Have a mixture of backgrounds in the faculty.

**Benefit:** Presenters with experience in culturally diverse environments can provide the candidate with a wide range of relevant background, opinions and war stories, increasing the chance of there being something for the candidate to relate to, and thus increasing the learning opportunity.

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**APPROACH, continued****Hold Multiple Short Sessions**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs, in a leftover from the past, still hold three-, four- or five-day programs.

**Impact:** In the current business environment, these lengthy programs take leaders away from their business for too long, causing them to resent the time away from their desks, resist attending in the first place, and making them more likely to bail half way through a session.

**Solution:** Hold multiple shorter-length sessions.

**Benefit:** Most candidates can get away for a day and a half or two days, resulting in a greater chance of having them actually attend.

**Use Non-interpretative Profiling Tools**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs use only generalized personality profiles (MBTI, DISC, etc.) as the basis for analyzing leadership characteristics and attributes.

**Use Open-ended Profiling Tools**

**Problem:** Generalized personality profiles tend to be 'label' based and require complex interpretation in order to determine what changes and improvements are required by the candidate. Candidates spend more time in becoming an expert with the profiling system than with the resultant feedback.

**Generate a Target Profile**

**Problem:** Generalized personality profiles tend to take the "there is no right or no wrong" approach.

**Impact:** Any interpretation is, at best, a generalized interpretation which will have no customization. In addition, once the 'label' has been established, there has to be an 'interpretative' process of 'how this label applies to me' resulting in misinterpretation and a significant opportunity for denial of difficult areas. Further, the "any profile is OK" approach provides no opportunity to highlight critical failings. Further, labels sometimes lead to an excuse for behavior.

**Solution:** Use a feedback instrument or interview process which can be a) specifically configured for the context and organization in which the leader is operating, b) is specifically designed around model leadership qualities and the feedback of the data is specifically organized to highlight the leader's strengths and critical weaknesses, c) can be driven against an 'ideal' profile for that organization, and d) is based on leadership qualities that have proven to be paramount for the development of great leaders.

**Benefit:** Comparing the candidate's leadership style against an 'ideal' style establishes the gap for directed change, again ensuring a targeted learning effort and maximum 'bang for the effort' in terms of learning. Focusing on those aspects of great leadership which apply to the candidate's organization, results in a targeted learning effort and increased chance of a successful change.

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**APPROACH, continued****Always Use Multi-lateral Feedback**

**Problem:** Often, Leadership Programs will use a single viewpoint for the purpose of gaining feedback about, and understanding of, the candidate's leadership characteristics, i.e., that of the candidate.

**Impact:** Self-assessment is, at best, a view of the participant's intent. In addition, there is no chance for the candidate to reflect on those areas where the candidate's self-view differs from the view of those around him or her—the most important part of feedback. As a result, developmental plans may, at best, be incomplete, and in the worst case, do not address the real problems that the leader faces.

**Solution:** Design a multi-lateral feedback process, that in addition to that of the candidate, collects feedback from all dimensions of the leader's environment.

**Benefit:** Feedback from all stakeholders in the candidate's environment provides true feedback on a candidate's leadership potential and style. This feedback is used to create a configured program, thus ensuring a targeted learning effort.

**Measure the Extremes**

**Problem:** Most tools provide only one set of feedback which is a blended average of the responses received.

**Impact:** When respondents describe extreme behaviors, this is the experience they have. Reporting the average feedback position is about as useful as reporting an average telephone number—no use for further action.

**Solution:** Use a tool that provides, in a non-attributable fashion, the range of feedback received in addition to the average.

**Benefit:** The candidate receives true feedback about how he or she is perceived across a range rather than a blended average—a much more useful basis upon which to start growth work.

## METHODS

### Use a Variety of Adult Learning Methods

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs still use the ‘lecture’ and ‘case-study’ approach as the sole method of teaching, not recognizing that adults learn best from the ‘action’ and ‘reflection’ method.

**Problem:** Nowadays, many of the candidates are part of the “Twitch Generation” (MTV, rapid motion, ADD oriented), and they learn best through high degrees of interactivity and short, to-the-point examples.

**Impact:** Adults, especially younger leaders, don’t learn much through lectures and get bored with repetitive case-studies, especially if they are not directly relevant.

**Solution:** Leverage the latest understanding of adult learning, and incorporate a wide range of learning methods including action learning, live theater, one-on-one coaching, virtual technologies, etc., in addition to more traditional methods.

**Benefit:** Variety increases the chances that the candidate will learn and develop, and that he/she will be able to use a learning method that best fit their learning style.

### Use What You Know About the Candidates

**Problem:** Most Leadership Programs use only one method of teaching and presentation for any given topic, forgetting the fact that we all have different learning styles.

**Impact:** At any given point in time, most programs are ‘tuned’ to a low percentage of the audience.

**Solution:** Most programs include some sort of assessment. Use this assessment, not only to give feedback to the candidate, but also to change, reconfigure or fine tune the method used within any given session.

**Benefit:** When you increase the attention of the candidate, you increase the chance of retention.

### Graduate by Success, Not by Attendance

**Problem:** In many Leadership Programs there is an assumption that, simply by attending the program, the candidate will now be qualified as a leader.

**Impact:** Leaders who don’t exhibit any change will result in a deteriorating reputation of the program.

**Solution:** Design a program so that there are explicit occasions during the process when the likelihood for successful change in the candidate is assessed and reported to the sponsors. Don’t make the assumption that just by starting the program, the candidate will successfully change and become a great leader.

Provide an explicit certification aspect. If the candidate has not improved, don’t ‘certify’ them.

**Benefit:** The program maintains credibility when all ‘graduates’ are seen as truly deserving of the certification. There is dilution of this credibility by passing an unqualified or unimproved candidate. Graduates become proud of their achievement because it has meaning.

## CONTENT

### **Include Ethics and Integrity Issues**

**Problem:** Often, Leadership Programs do not explicitly deal with ethics and integrity issues.

**Impact:** Candidates graduate without having addressed one of today's key leadership issues.

**Solution:** Explicitly weave ethics and integrity into every aspect of the model leadership characteristics and the program itself.

**Benefit:** Candidates will be able to take the lead in establishing ethics/integrity goals within their organization.

### **Include Hard and Soft Skills**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs are either 'hard' skill oriented, e.g., the typical MBA, or are 'soft' skill oriented.

**Impact:** When the content is out of balance, the graduate will be out of balance in their approach to leadership

**Solution:** Integrate both hard and soft skills in a comprehensive, integrated model of leadership covering how the leader behaves, what they know and who they are as a person.

**Benefit:** This well rounded approach increase the candidate's chance of greater success moving forward.

### **There's More to Learn**

**Problem:** Some Leadership Programs implicitly communicate that all the leadership learning and development that is required has been taught in the program.

**Impact:** Graduates are set up to think that their learning has finished—rather than just begun.

**Solution:** Recognize that no single program, approach or organization can offer teaching which covers all of the skills likely to be required in an individual development plan. Build in explicit hooks to other internal and outsourced programs.

**Benefit:** The candidate can develop a relatively comprehensive development plan which leverages offerings from a wide variety of sources, including third party vendors and the candidate's own organization.

**CONTENT, continued****Use Appropriate Role Models**

**Problem:** Role models are often hero-based, not oriented towards current knowledge of ideal leadership characteristics, and are not aligned with the profiles of candidates.

**Impact:** Role models have a huge impact. Wrong role models, at best, do not resonate with some candidate profiles and, at worst, perpetuate old leadership mythologies and styles.

**Solution:** Select role models that are appropriate to the candidates, to the organization, to the industry and to modern leadership practices.

**Benefit:** The candidates tune in to good role models and adopt their behavior.

**Use a Select Few of Carefully Chosen Models and Theories**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs use far too many models and tools. In attempting to cover every aspect of leadership, teams, organizations, etc., too many models are thrown into the ‘theory-stew.’

**Problem:** Some models get included for the wrong reasons—they are the fad-of-the-month, the OD person’s favorites, have past usage in the organization, etc..

**Problem:** The designers and developers of many programs assume that the models, metaphors, examples, and phraseology that they use will translate into all situations and relate to the backgrounds of all candidates. Military, sports and American metaphors abound—many are irrelevant.

**Impact:** Candidates get overwhelmed with all the models, can’t link them together, find them not relevant and therefore can’t relate, and consequently forget most of them.

**Solution:** Select a fundamental organizing model and relate other tools and theories to that model. Make all other models and examples relevant to that organizing principle and to the candidates backgrounds.

**Benefit:** Candidates will retain more of the information presented to them.

**FOLLOW-UP****Use Local Coaches with the Right Chemistry**

**Problem:** Most Leadership Programs, if they provide on-going coaching at all, provide telephone-based coaching—often using a coach that is distant from, and sometimes unknown to, the candidate.

**Impact:** Telephone coaching, while in some situations is an adequate tool, is not optimal for in-depth, intimate, strategic leadership coaching.

**Solution:** Include in the overall program design, the provision of local coaching, i.e., a person who is qualified and physically present at all key moments in the learning process, and who is known to, and accepted by, the candidate.

**Benefit:** This increases the chance of establishing a trusted bond between candidate and coach—again increasing the likelihood of actual change.

**Work on the Rest of the ‘System’ Too**

**Problem:** The issue of ‘stasis’ has been well documented and is a huge issue where personal change is concerned. Most Leadership Programs don’t recognize that in order for an individual to have success in their change attempts, the context or environment in which they operate needs to understand and support that change.

**Impact:** The candidate’s true challenge is when the context and environment of their day-to-day reality is brought into the learning process. Otherwise well intentioned change efforts by the individual often don’t ‘take’ or are sabotaged by the stakeholders surrounding the individual, unless these people are brought into the process.

**Solution:** Design the process so that on-going contact with sponsors, stakeholders and other key individuals within the organization is maintained. Design the program in such a way as to ensure that the leader’s process and intended changes are understood and supported by key members in the environment.

**Benefit:** This increases the chance of success of early change efforts on behalf of the aspiring leader. If the people involved in that environment are included, engaged and enrolled in the candidate’s plans, there is a much increased chance of success.

**FOLLOW-UP, continued****Use On-going Performance Feedback**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs don't provide explicit, on-going performance feedback focused on the candidate's change and learning goals.

**Impact:** The 'best laid plans of mice and men' syndrome kicks in. If there is no follow-up, it is unlikely that there will be significant change in leadership behavior.

**Solution:** Design the program so that through the local coach, and on-going interviews with the people who gave the leader feedback, the leader is given on-going feedback about how the proposed change in style is or is not progressing.

**Benefit:** Real-time feedback is the greatest way to ensure rapid learning. This on-going feedback increases the chances that the attempted changes will 'stick.' The candidate makes adjustments based upon this on-going feedback. It promotes a continuous learning environment.

**Never Walk Alone**

**Problem:** Often, Leadership Programs leave the candidate with a sense of feeling alone in going through the learning/change process.

**Impact:** The graduate has no place to try out new ideas, or what-ifs, and no where for immediate, sympathetic yet objective, counsel.

**Solution:** In the design approach, provide for one-on-one coaching, together with 'learning partners.' Assign candidates two types of learning partners—those that are intending to learn the same new characteristics so are experiencing the same issues—and those who already have the qualities in spades and can provide real time, on-the-ground discussion.

**Benefit:** This partnering accelerates the development process in two ways - by providing a 'like soul,' and a role model and by enlisting the efforts of others.

**Re-assess at the End**

**Problem:** Most leadership programs do not carry out a re-assessment process at the end of the program or learning period.

**Impact:** The graduate (and the organization) have no way of assessing whether a behavioral change has, in fact, taken place over the long term.

**Solution:** Design a re-assessment process as an integral part of the program. The local coach should 'loop back' to the people who gave the original feedback, together with some new views, in order to determine whether the intended changes have, in fact, taken place.

**Benefit:** No assumption is made that the intended changes have taken place. If no change is observed, then the candidate will be coached until such changes are integrated.

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**FOLLOW-UP, continued****Assess Learning, Behavior Change and Results**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs are only reviewed at Level 1, i.e., the ‘smiley sheet’ at the end of the program. Seldom does assessment occur at Level 2 (learning) or Level 3 (behavioral change), and very rarely at Level 4 (results).

**Impact:** Without these subsequent measurements, no matter how difficult to do, there is no way of assessing the efficacy of the overall program.

**Solution:** Design a re-assessment process as an integral part of the program. Once the outcomes have been determined, start designing measurement characteristics in at the beginning – not after the program has been running for a while.

**Benefit:** Candidates get a sense that they are having a real impact, the rest of the stakeholders see the measurements occurring, and the organization can make a determination whether the resources involved are worthwhile.

**Keep Everyone Informed and Involved**

**Problem:** In many Leadership Programs, the people who originally gave feedback to the candidates are not kept informed of the candidates’ learning goals and progress, and are rarely asked to comment after a period of time.

**Impact:** When asked to give feedback, most people take the role very seriously. It is disappointing and frustrating when the loop is not closed with them. In addition, they are frequently in the best position to give a re-assessment at a later stage.

**Solution:** Design the original people into a) a report back of the leader’s change program and b) their subsequent re-assessment. Do this as an integral part of the process.

**Benefit:** Candidates get real feedback—and an opportunity to see how far they have come since the last assessment with a true apples to apples comparison.

**Use the Life-long Learning Philosophy**

**Problem:** Many Leadership Programs don’t take a ‘life-long learning’ approach, and hence, once this ‘leadership program’ is finished, there is no follow-on activity.

**Impact:** The learning opportunities for the graduate are not leveraged further.

**Solution:** Don’t assume a one-time certification. The growing leader should have the opportunity to maintain the certification through on-going re-assessment and improvement.

**Benefit:** The leader is considered to be in a “life long” learning environment that is a quest for continuous learning and development. This will, in the long term, become embedded in the culture.