We've Been Doing It Wrong:

Fresh Approaches to High-Potential Programs

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BETTER LEADERS. BETTER FUTURE.

Backed by Science.

Matt Paese

Senior Vice President
Leadership Insights

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What is art

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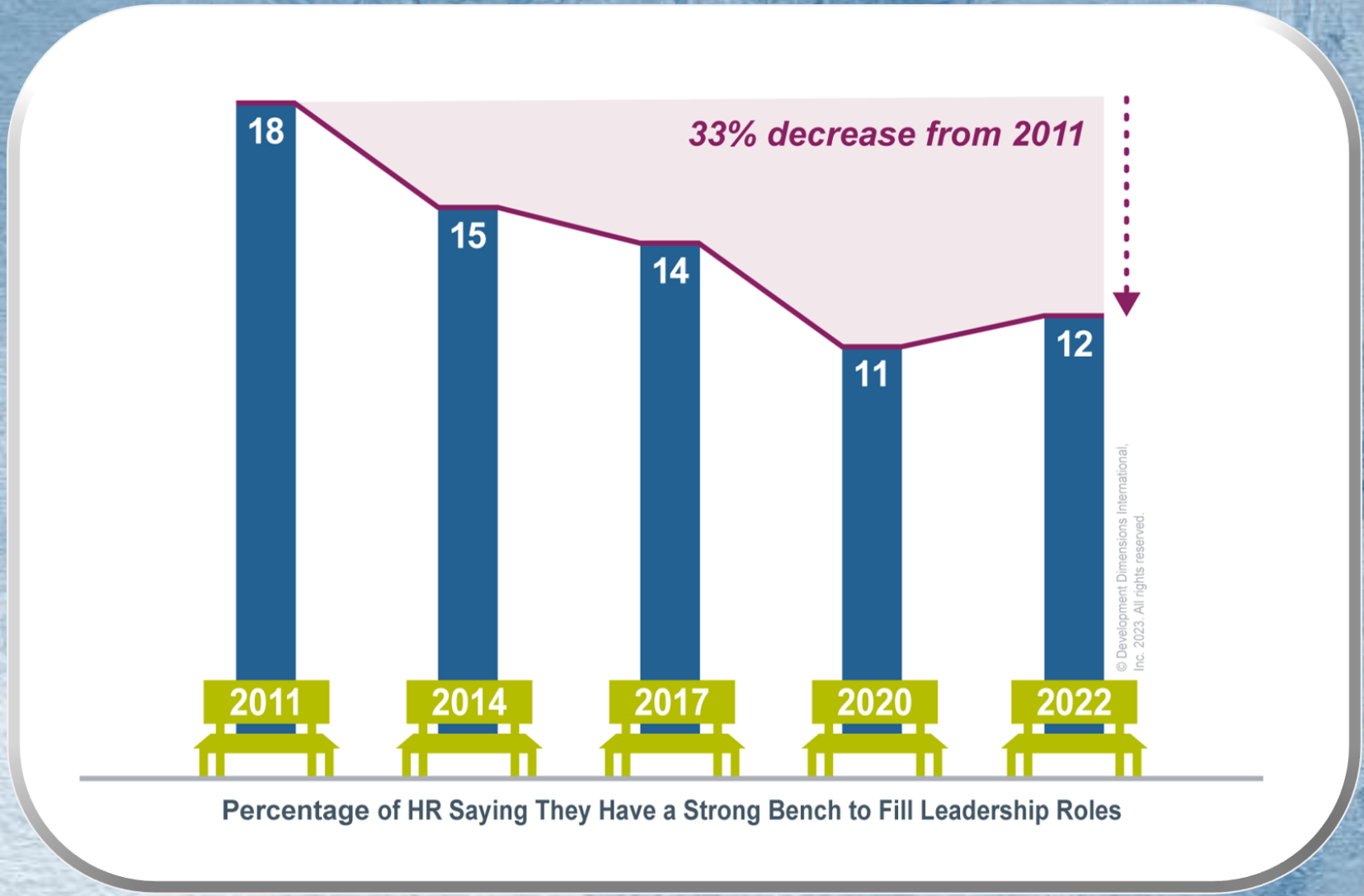
Over a Decade of Declining Bench Strength



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Most Have Opportunities to Cast a Wider Net

Only **21%**
of leaders say their company recruits and promotes from diverse candidate pools.

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Without Development, High-Potentials Make Alternative Plans

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Those with Strong Benches Fare Much Better

10X more likely to have employees rate their leader quality as “very good” or “excellent”

6X more likely to be capable of engaging and retaining top talent

5X more likely to be able to prevent employee burnout

3X more likely to be among financially top-performing organizations

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IN CONTEXT

Company – Role – Individual

Performance

In Current Role

Current Role
Success Profile

Potential

To Grow

Potential Factors

- Curiosity
- Receptivity to feedback
- Learning orientation
- Mastery of complexity

Readiness

For New Role

Future Role
Success Profile

Actual Growth

- Feedback requests
- Formal learning
- Development risk-taking
- Vulnerability/openness
- New achievements
- New experiences
- Volunteerism
- Peer support

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Potential is not simply a trait to be assessed. It is a **possibility to be cultivated.**

We cannot fully understand **potential** until we have begun to take action to **cultivate it.**

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Let's change the question from "Who are the high-potentials?" to **"Who is currently in a good position to accelerate their growth?"**

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A Tale of 2 Candidates

The Succession Scenario

- Loss of talented Product Line Manager
- Newly redesigned product – $$ potential
- High-velocity go-to-market mandate
- Long-tenured teams; steady; deliberate
- Product teams will need to operate very differently – adaptive, nimble, competitive

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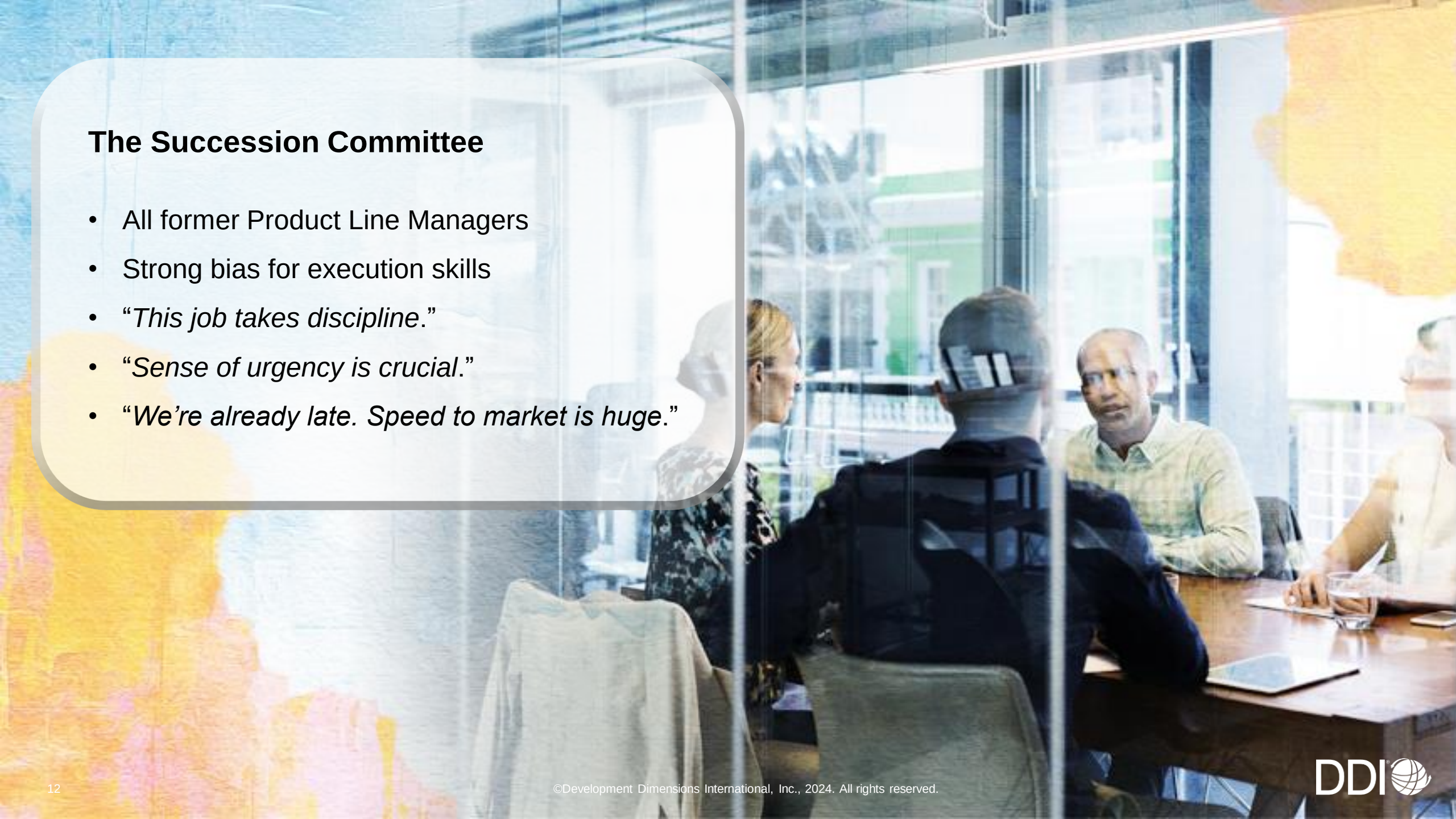
The Succession Committee

- All former Product Line Managers
- Strong bias for execution skills
- "*This job takes discipline*."
- "*Sense of urgency is crucial*."
- "*We're already late. Speed to market is huge*."



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Candidate Profiles

Candidate 1
Assessment Insights

Interview:
- Executes
- Results-oriented
- People development
- Continuous improvement

Personality:
- Calm, steady
- Pragmatic, disciplined
- Critical, rigid, picky
- Control-oriented

Candidate 2
Assessment Insights

Interview:
- Change driver
- Builds strong teams
- Impatient, hard driver
- Awkward communication

Personality:
- Humble, open, receptive
- Creative, thoughtful
- Undisciplined
- Reserved, hard to read

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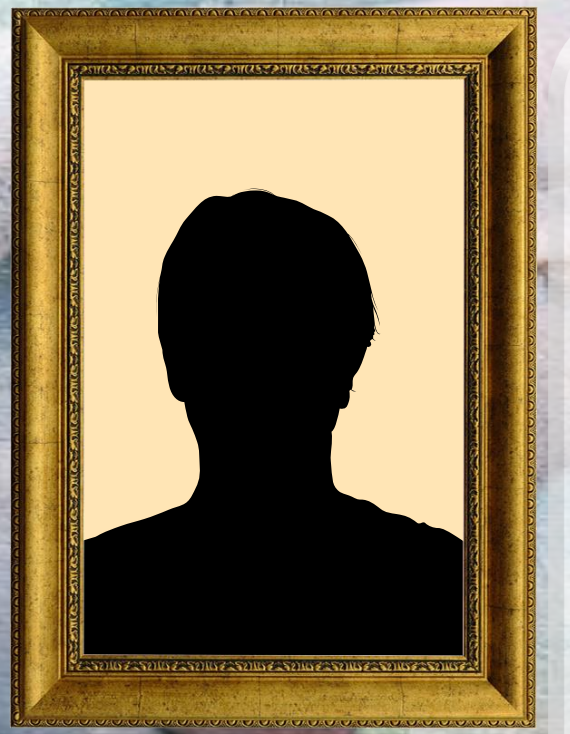
Candidate Profiles

Candidate 1
Assessment Insights

360 Feedback:
- High standards
- Integrity & transparency
- Innovation
- Talent development

Simulation Immersion:
- Deeply analytical
- Poised, sturdy decisions
- Detail orientation
- Rigid interactions



Candidate 2
Assessment Insights

360 Feedback:
- Business savvy, innovative
- Humble, courageous
- Unclear direction
- Verbose, over-explains

Simulation Immersion:
- Inventive, creative insight
- Thoughtful relationships
- Vague accountabilities
- Logic over inspiration

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Based on what you know, how would you be advising the Succession Committee?

What **development** do these **candidates need**?

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Timeline

Candidate 1

12 years with company

Product Team Lead (4 years)

Product Manager (4 years)

Assessment & Coaching Experience

Candidate 2

3 years with company

Product Team Lead (2 years)

Product Manager (1 year)

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Assessment & Coaching Experience

Development Action

Succession Decision

Developmental Achievement

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Succession Decision

Developmental Achievement

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Be cautious of overemphasis on succession decisions at the expense of developmental achievement **GROWTH**

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What makes developmental achievement happen?

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Identifying Potential Process

One Clear Definition of Potential

Management Dialogue

Objective Assessment Inputs

Associate Dialogue

+

Growth Enablers & Experiences

Self-Insight

Future Roles/ Challenges Insight

Stretch Experiences

Formal Learning & Skill Building

=

More Leadership Readiness

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Self-Insight		**Simulations, 360 Feedback, Personality & Motivation Inventories**
Future Roles/ Challenges Insight		**Future-role Simulations, Transition & Pitfall Coaching**
Stretch Experiences		**Special Projects, Key Assignments, Job Rotation**
Formal Learning & Skill Building		**Next-level Skill Courses, Peer Learning, Coaching, Easy Access to Self-Directed Learning**

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The term "**high potential**" is dangerous in the hallways

… until potential becomes about action, learning, and **GROWTH**; not simply evaluation.

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Three actions to take now

1. Confront fixed evaluations of potential and turn attention to the **demonstration of actual growth**.

2. Elevate the focus on **developmental achievement** in the succession process. It's not only the decision that counts.

3. Avoid communicating evaluations of potential, and instead make **invitations to challenging growth experiences**.

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Creativity takes COURAGE

-Henri Matisse

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A Holistic View on Potential

The 4 Leadership Potential Facets

Leadership Promise

- *Propensity to Lead*
- *Bringing out the Best in Others*
- *Authenticity*

Development Orientation

- *Receptivity to Feedback*
- *Learning Agility*

Mastery of Complexity

- *Adaptability*
- *Conceptual Thinking*
- *Navigating Complexity*

Balance of Values and Results

- *Culture Fit*
- *Passion for Results*

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Sample HiPo Frontline Program

Get Started

Kickoff from CEO

Orientation for Leaders and Their Managers

Complete Assessment
Experience a business simulation and get 1:1 feedback and coaching on strengths and development areas.

Organize Peer Learning Groups
Schedule sessions to discuss key takeaways and insights.

Build and Practice Skills

Phase 1

Key Courses

Maximizing the Power Skills

O *20 minutes*

Boost interpersonal skills to support and deeply connect with team members.

Driving Change

C *3.5 hours*

Accelerate change by creating an agile environment where people are more receptive to change.

Executing Strategy at the Front Line

C *3.5 hours*

Drive results using three key elements of strategy execution: Focus, Measurement, and Accountability.

Finding Control During Change

M *10 minutes*

Move through change successfully by identifying areas to control or influence.

Phase 2

Key Courses

Inclusion: Build Empathy

C *2 hours*

Experience an immersive simulation to witness feeling excluded and commit to becoming more inclusive.

Inclusion: Take Action

C *2 hours*

Develop everyday inclusive leadership behaviors using an actionable framework to create and nurture an inclusive culture.

Engaging Quiet Quitters

M *10 minutes*

Recognize the causes and symptoms of quiet quitting and learn strategies to re-engage and prevent future disengagement.

Phase 3

Key Courses

Strategies for Influencing Others

VC *90 minutes*

Package ideas in a way that captures stakeholder attention, changes perspectives, and drives commitment to action.

Target Selection: The Art of Behavioral Interviewing

O *60 minutes*

Conduct objective, fair interviews to gather data and make the best selection decisions.

Unconscious Bias: Awareness Into Action

M *10 minutes*

Review common biases to make better decisions moving forward.

Online learning and sustainability tools for ongoing development and just-in-time skill building:
Discussion Planners, Job Aids, Practice Simulations, Self-Assessments, and more.

Get Results

Recognition
- Reflections
- Celebration

Measurement
- Participation
- Evaluation
- Impact Study
- Talent Metrics

Plan Future Development

C Classroom VC Virtual Classroom O Online Course M Microcourse

Your program may look different depending on the needs of your organization.

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Sample HiPo MidLevel Program

Get Started

Kickoff from CEO

Orientation for Leaders and Their Managers

Complete Leadership Personality Insights
Get individual reports and personalized insights for multiple live sessions.

Complete Assessment
Experience a business simulation and get a 1:1 feedback and coaching on strengths and development areas.

Organize Peer Learning Groups
Schedule sessions to discuss key takeaways and insights.

Build and Practice Skills

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Key Courses	Key Courses	Key Courses
Six Steps to Strategic Leadership O *30 minutes* Think ahead and take steps to move actions and outcomes from the short term to long term.	**Driving Transformations Through Culture** C *90 minutes* Engage and energize teams and partners while navigating and building commitment to change..	**Influencing from Stakeholder Perspectives** VC *2 hours* Plan an influence strategy
Leading Through Vision VC *90 minutes* Craft and Communicate a compelling vision that energizes, inspires, and motivates the organization.	**Connecting Talent to Strategy** C *1 hour 45 minutes* Craft a solid strategy that fills talent gaps for the long term while still meeting short-term objectives.	
Driving Culture with Intent M *10 minutes* Translate vision into daily work practices and a positive work environment with five actionable tasks.	**Sparking a Culture of Innovation** M *10 minutes* Empower teams to think outrageously experiment responsibly, and learn from failure.	**Purposeful Networking** M *10 minutes* Invest in building and maintaining strategic connections to get the highest returns.

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