

## “Leaders At All Levels”

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Defining the learning needed in each new job and making sure the learning in fact took place before helping the leader take the next step or leap forward. (2) Find leaders and provide the right job experiences, supplemented with continuous learning opportunities. (6) The talent review process in Novartis Pharmaceuticals U.S. identifies the target job for an individual leader several years out, along with a development action plan to get him or her there quickly. (7) We should read the severe shortage of leaders as an unmistakable sign that the typical approaches to leadership development are fundamentally flawed. Many fail to recognize that developing other leaders is, or at least should be, a major part of every leader’s job. (10) He had a clear idea of what he was looking for: broad thinkers, fast learners, people with the ability to get along with different kinds of people in different cultures, the ability to think analytically as well as creatively and intuitively, a strong character, a (12) drive for excellence, and a desire to help others succeed. (13) Gary had to repeat time and again that debate was healthy and that ideas that were challenged would become better as a result. (16) Companies have to ensure that potential leadership talent, wherever it resides, is spotted early and developed thoroughly to create a corporate talent pool that is capable of leading in an environment not yet foreseen. (20) Our current formalistic processes and training programs will not get us where we need to be, no matter how much we spend on them, because they are built on serious misconceptions about leadership and its development. These shortcomings include Failing to make the identification and development of other leaders an explicit part of every leader’s job... Using classroom education as a substitute for real-world challenges. (21)

People can pick up tools and techniques and ideas about leadership from a book or a classroom. A lot of what passes for leadership development consists of this sort of thing. But those who have a talent for leadership must develop their abilities by practicing in the real world and converting that experience into improved skill and judgment. Leaders—meaning those people with the inherent aptitude of leadership—develop predominantly through experience, combined with substantive evaluation and self-correction along the way. (25) Companies using the model put leaders in jobs carefully chosen to build on their existing talents and test their ability to discover or acquire new capabilities. Key elements of the Apprenticeship Model, then, are to define leadership potential correctly, spot it as soon as possible, then focus time and attention to help talented young leaders develop through a series of jobs customized to allow each one of them to expand as (26) quickly as possible. (27) Experience becomes learning only when the leader makes adjustments based on insightful feedback, intelligent self-reflection, or both.

As in any organization with a good leadership development process, bosses carefully observe the leaders and give feedback and coaching. (29) The most complete and nuanced picture of a leader comes from inputs of many people. Those collective insights help detect the trajectory of a leader’s growth and inform decisions about where the leader should go next. (30) Leadership development should be an integral part of both the company’s mission and vision statements. The recruitment of midlevel and higher executives must include the ability to develop other leaders as a nonnegotiable criterion. (32) HR looks ahead to ensure that the company is creating and developing a leadership pool for the future. But individuals who aspire to leadership at higher levels must appreciate the value of constructive feedback and combine it with self-awareness and a desire and drive to improve. The pace of their learning must match their ambition. (33) Leaders expand their capabilities through deliberate practice of a core skill in increasingly complex situations. (36)

High performance in leadership, as in athletics, the arts, and many other human endeavors, is the result of *deliberate practice over an extended period*—that is, practice that is repetitive and effortful, combined with real-time constructive and specific feedback and a willingness to take corrective actions. Deliberate practice—in short, practice combined with feedback and self-correction—is how business leaders refine their abilities and judgment. It is propelled by a person’s drive and tenacity to grow and improve, even if the person is not conscious of it. (37) Colgate’s talent machine works in part because the company excels at identifying the specific talents of each potential leader early in the person’s career. (41) “We clearly want to ensure that we have people who have a unique ability to communicate effectively, and by that I mean all aspects of communications,” says Marsili. (Colgate) “They need to be able to communicate their vision, but they also have to be good listeners, constructive and articulate and able to influence others.” (42) Leaders are identified based on their ability to clearly articulate a vision, set priorities, motivate people, pull together and focus their teams, and perhaps most of all, celebrate people’s individual and team successes. (43) Leadership is predicated on the ability to mobilize others to accomplish a vision, a goal, or a task. You know you’ve discovered a leader with people acumen when you see evidence that the person selects the right people and motivates them, gets them working well as a team, and is able to diagnose and fix problems in coordination and social relationships among groups of people. Real leaders, I have found, exhibit an enthusiasm for selecting people who are better than they are. Such leaders show a repeated pattern of accurately identifying other leaders’ talents, helping them flourish, or easing them into other jobs where their talents fit better. (47)

Leaders must also be able to make sense of all they take in and set a clear course of action. (52) The challenge is to define what your company considers important in its leaders and to ensure the criteria are up-to-date and anticipatory of where the company will be in the near and distant future. (54) GE Leadership Criteria: □Create an external focus that defines success in market terms □Be clear thinkers who can simplify strategy into specific actions, make decisions, and communicate priorities □Have imagination and courage to take risks on people and ideas □Energize teams through inclusiveness and connection with people, building both loyalty and commitment □Develop expertise in a function or domain, using depth as a source of confidence to drive change (56) Hiring people with a master’s degree in business administration (MBAs) from Ivy League schools is no guarantee of leadership ability. (57)

### How to Spot a Leader

- What is the person’s ambition?
- Does she talk about bringing together and motivating others to achieve those goals?
- Is continually learning?
- Does she like to work with diverse, high-caliber people?
- How driven and passionate is she about leading? (59)

How many potential leaders pass their careers in relative obscurity because no one recognized their leadership abilities, and how many companies missed out on their talents? (60) You are not only handpicking your leaders, you’re also handpicking their jobs so that each assignment provides the right kind of developmental challenge for that leader to grow as fast as possible. (61) Resistance can’t be tolerated. The deployment and development of leadership talent needs to be a corporate priority that every boss understands and acts on. It is a core value. (74) A constant pursuit of personal growth and new challenges is itself an earmark of high-potential leadership. (77) The idea is to dig for insights into what one or two items could propel the leader if he or she improved. Those are the things the leader should practice and the boss should coach on.

How well does the leader motivate people, develop new leaders, and build a team of people who report directly to her? Specific skills that contribute to a leader's social acumen include things like pinpointing people's talents, communicating, getting conflicts resolved, creating mechanisms for the free flow of information, diagnosing problems in interrelationships, and putting the right people in the right jobs, all of which require intuition combined with decisiveness. (82)

### What to Coach On

- Is the person decisive?
- Does the person push himself and others to innovate?
- How well does the person manage her time by determining the correct priorities and delegating and assigning the best people to new initiatives?
- How well does the person build cohesive teams?
- How well does he facilitate group dialogue? (84)
- How good is the person at identifying and developing new leaders?
- Does the person demonstrate emotional extremes that are detrimental others?
- Does she exhibit signs of arrogance, which might suggest an unwillingness to learn?
- How does the person deal with setbacks and disappointments?
- Is the leader more interested in being respected or in being liked? (85)
- Is the person inclined toward doing something himself rather than getting it done?
- Does the leader exhibit the emotional strength to bring conflicts to the surface in a group setting and the skills to oversee the resolution of a conflict?
- Does the leader demonstrate an inclusive mind-set that naturally encourages teamwork and collaboration across hierarchical boundaries?
- What is the person's appetite for risk? Is he realistic?

The point is to keep leaders focused on the one or two things they must deliberately practice so that their personal traits get honed and their skills get tested and hopefully expanded. (86) Organizations should help the boss with an annual "leadership recalibration session" that combines the observations and thinking of several people who know a leader and whose sole purpose is leadership develop. (92) An annual leadership recalibration provides the opportunity to probe the capabilities the leader has demonstrated, what others are seeing in the person, and where he or she might go next. (93) "It isn't just one observation by one person, it's *multiple* observation points by *multiple* people." (Jim Smith, Thomson Corp.) The key to developing an accurate and nuanced calibration of a rising leader is periodic facilitated dialogue among several people who have observed the leader in action. (94) Assign individuals with leadership talent to a sequence of challenging and exciting work that builds future leadership capabilities while meeting current organizational needs provide rigorous feedback to speed leaders' development.

Let's look closely at how Colgate executes these tenets. Its methodologies and mechanisms are uniform across the globe, ensuring that the same process for identifying and developing leaders is used at every location where it does business (106) At a minimum, HR *must* ensure the following:

- That bosses give timely feedback to high-potential individuals that is specific, constructive, and actionable
- That bosses look beyond their narrow specialties to the broader pool of potential candidates when they select people

- That bosses promote people based on the concretely defined and nonnegotiable requirements of a job both today and tomorrow

That bosses view leadership as a corporate resource. They must help leaders move from one place to another, testing and developing their skills, abilities, and leadership potential. (107) HR must also ensure that leaders discuss each high-potential candidate through the dialogue process and arrive at a common understanding of his or her strengths and the obstacles to his or her progress. (108) The round-robin discussion is intended to develop multiple perspectives on a rising high potential's leadership abilities. (110) One of the most important tenets of Colgate's talent identification and development process is that everyone everywhere is measured by the same standards (111)

Look ahead to an individual's next two possible jobs and what needs to be done to prepare him or her for them. (113) Choosing the CEO...The givens...specified, which anyone in the pool had to meet, were Passion, honesty, authenticity, integrity, and principle-centered leadership Good communication skills Confident without being arrogant Emotionally stable (124) The best understanding of people emerges from open discussion in group settings, focused on drawing out every observation and unspoken instinct about each succession candidate and arriving at a collective view. (137) They nevertheless spent many hours preparing exactly the right questions to ask in the interviews and then spent days exchanging their views and probing each other to try to nail down exactly what each individual had to offer. (138) Those who believe they have leadership potential that is undiscovered should take charge of their own learning and development. (153) If you have a natural affinity for people, and especially if you can amplify their energy and channel it toward a common purpose, you may be a high-potential leader. (154)