

Why Leadership Development Programs Fail . . . And What You Can Do About It

Reasons 5-7

WHY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FAILS

- (5) No needs assessment / organizational scan was performed to identify what leadership skills are needed to meet the current and anticipated business needs of the organization.
- (6) Leadership training is an “event” or series of events.
- (7) The leadership development initiative is focused solely on developing weak or absent skills.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ENSURE SUCCESS

- ❑ Conduct a needs assessment on the **business need** (drivers) for leadership development.
- ❑ Identify what skills and performance are needed by your leadership team to meet the business need.
- ❑ Use a 360-degree feedback assessment or something similar to identify the skills that your leadership team currently has and the “gap” between current skills and the skills needed to meet business need. (You’ll also want to leverage the strengths identified for each leader in his or her 360.)
- ❑ Ask your leadership team what they think will most benefit them in a leadership development initiative – it ensures buy-in and anchors your initiative in reality.
- ❑ Provide exposure or training of new leadership skills a little at a time, such as one new skill a month for 9-12 months.
- ❑ Include assignments to apply newly learned skills on-the-job throughout the leadership development initiative.
- ❑ Have participants document the application of new skills and talk about their experiences with their coach and their supervisor.
- ❑ As Marcus Buckingham noted in [Now Discover Your Strengths](#), organizations reap a greater return by helping their leaders leverage their strengths rather than simply fixing their “weaknesses.” At a minimum, your leadership development initiative should have a dual focus – leveraging strengths and developing other needed skills.

Remember: Incorporate follow-on coaching into the leadership development program. Companies such as Xerox have identified that **87% of leadership training is lost** when follow-on coaching is not provided.

For more information on ensuring the success of your leadership team or [executive coaching](#), contact:

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