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Leadership Assessments
Guide railing your talent path

TALENT MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

High - Potential Identification

Succession Planning

Learning & Development

Talent Acquisition

Skills · Motivation · Culture Fit · Behavior

IDENTIFICATION OF TALENT

MEASURE THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR LEADERS

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Introduction

Organizations require their leadership capital to grow and take on more challenging roles and responsibilities. As such, two of major concerns of all senior leadership are - whom to promote and who to invest in. Even if organizations are able to answer these two questions, what individualized development gaps need to be addressed is another big challenge. These questions need to be addressed quickly and accurately as effective leadership development is time consuming and calls for a lot of investment in all organizations.
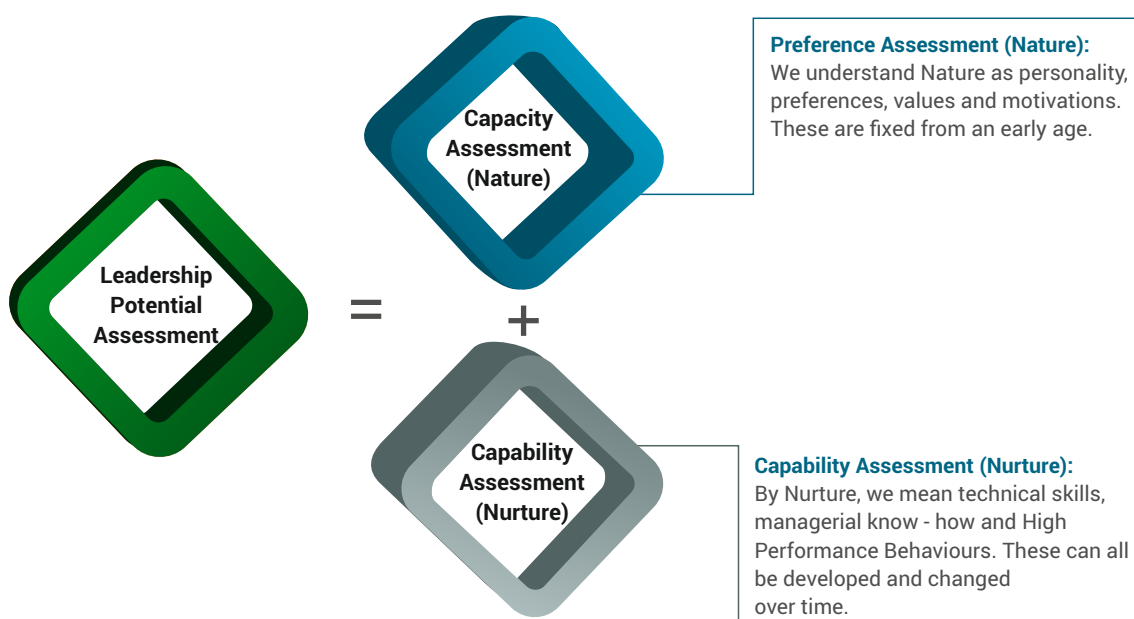
Nature vs Nurture OR Nature & Nurture

Adding to this conundrum is the fact that human beings are complex, with each person battling between emotions and rationality in their own way. Are leaders born with certain characteristics (nature) that cannot be changed and controlled. Or, can we nurture behaviours based on our environment and willingness. The answer is not a mutually exclusive option, but a mix of both nature and nurture. Extensive research has shown that the interplay between nature and nurture is what determines leadership qualities. Understanding what we can change about ourselves and what we cannot change about ourselves, regardless of a strong desire to change, is critical to developing self awareness, and leading and managing others[1]. Thus, certain abilities of a leader will never change but he/she can always improve on certain aspects. For example, a leader can learn to give more praise to peers and colleagues.

Assessing both nature and nurture helps in determining a person's ability to manage and lead in various roles and situations. However, the most commonly used techniques such as resumes, interviews, and reference checks are least effective in predicting performance of a candidate. Similarly, past performance is simply not a reliable indicator of future success in leadership roles. This is now a universally known and accepted fact. The standard ways of measuring *potential* - that is, considering factors such as ambition, learnability, loyalty to the organization and using talent discussions for leadership promotions & placements serve some purpose. However, Talent Managers & HR Heads are constantly on the look out for **scientific, predictable** and **tangible** ways of measuring a leader's potential and preference. This is where assessment process comes into play, which produces accurate and predictive data that can be used with confidence.

IBM/Kenexa's 30 years of research shows that assessment of the **leadership potential is a combination of capability and capacity**. Thus, **capability is** measured against leadership behaviours that will contribute to organizational success. Additionally, to improve the accuracy of identifying leaders, one needs to explore their innate preferences, personality, motivators and styles, which sums up as **capacity**.

IBM's Talent Assessment Philosophy

Leadership Potential Assessment = **Capacity Assessment (Nature)** + **Capability Assessment (Nurture)**

Preference Assessment (Nature):
We understand Nature as personality, preferences, values and motivations. These are fixed from an early age.

Capability Assessment (Nurture):
By Nurture, we mean technical skills, managerial know - how and High Performance Behaviours. These can all be developed and changed over time.

IBM's Formula for predicting future success of leaders

The IBM formula for predicting future success of leaders is to measure several dimensions holistically, across the capacity and capability parameters.

Leadership Assessment Process and Approach

A strong holistic leadership assessment process is the backbone of a sustainable leadership pipeline and consistently shows a more accurate prediction of likely job performance[2]. Many leadership roles have strong behavioural requirements, and it is important that the hiring manager and HR obtain information on those qualities. For example, for a sales head, qualities of strategic thinking, and establishing relationships are important. Thus, organizations should look at assessments that can aptly measure the behaviours and ability of candidates, specifically for the job.

When assessing people for **future roles**, it is always a good idea to place them in challenges of a higher role and observe their responses to different, complex situations, and understand 'how' they will possibly respond. Assessment centres do just the same, by measuring and assessing an organization's best talent on simulations. The certified and trained assessors generate rich and significant amount of data to effectively predict potential and future performance of your talent.

Assessment centres can be based on a robust and specific framework of behaviours or competencies. For example, IBM Smarter Workforce provides a set of 12 behaviours for thriving in a VUCA environment. These are called *High Performance Behaviour Framework, and are used widely for assessing talent*.

The 12 High Performance Behaviours have been identified through extensive global research with over 25,000 leaders, which revealed the leadership behaviours and business thinking that are predictive of future organizational success.

An Assessment centre evaluation is standardized because everyone is treated the same way and the assessors keep rotating between participants. While the final report gives a reasonable idea of the leader's strengths and areas of development, and the possible gap in leadership abilities in order to reach the next level, several other areas too need exploration. What if there are potential strengths that are currently latent? What are those strengths that can be developed at significantly high levels and are there areas of development that can only be incrementally worked upon. Each leader is unique and it is important to capture this uniqueness. Aside from just measuring leaders on standard behaviours and competencies, their motivators and preferences must get assessed.

Questionnaires such as IBM's Leadership Preference reveal such data. It combines an individual's personality and motivation and brings out the unique preferences of leaders across 28 dimension, thus measuring *capacity*. Leadership *capacity* is the innate potential an individual possesses to help him/her lead at a certain level. The leadership preference questionnaire (LPQ) measures the leadership talents, preferences, and cognitive ability, thus giving a complete picture of the innate leadership talent a person is born with.

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Making Assessments Successful

What ensures the high predictability of success of information from various assessments? The answer is **right data and right people**. Right data means measurement of the right competencies at proficiency levels that are distinctly differentiated. Right people means a skilled team that uses data and intuition for reviewing and analysing assessment results.

Thus, **holistic information** about the leader - not just his past performance, but the preferences, motivators, unexplored strengths, unique personality and so on is what ensures correct decision - making related to development efforts, promotions, succession planning, etc.

The individual and team data generated through IBM assessments can be mapped to global benchmarks, which is especially helpful when organizations compete in global environments. Often, this data gives clear understanding of the leadership gap, specifically from a global expectation standpoint.

Guiding Principles in Leadership Assessment

Assessments play a big role in leadership pipeline development. This diagnostic approach to development helps in identifying areas of strengths and development and can empower participants and their managers in accessing the right opportunities for enhancement of capabilities[3].

The way in which organizations approach assessment, as well as the methods and tools they utilize, significantly impact the effectiveness of outcomes in powering a strong and sustainable leadership bench. Given that a variety of assessment methods are available, organizations may struggle to form an assessment strategy, choose the right tools, and utilize results in an informative and actionable manner[4]. Thus, organizations can keep in mind the following points while devising their assessment strategy:

1. Adopt an approach that measures both the nature and the nurture components of an individual's personality.

2. Ensure that the competency framework used for assessments is aligned to business goals and strategy, and has been giving proven results to the organization.

3. Devise a differentiated approach, with appropriate tools for each level of leadership or hierarchy. Define proficiency levels of competency required for success at each leadership level and map assessment tools to each level.

4. Use multiple valid tools to assess the defined competencies. More precision in results can be achieved when multiple measures are used to measure the same set of competencies.

5. Integrate assessments across talent practices. Thus, use the assessment data for coaching, selection, high potential identification, development, etc.

6. Ensure flexibility in assessment tools to align them with changing competencies, business context, and adaptability to languages and locations.

Conclusion

What is even more critical: the synthesis and linkages of the information and data generated through **these assessments** to make a match between who the person is, what he wants to achieve, and what the organization needs. Thus, in order to make the assessment process more robust and successful, the organization should focus on enhancing the following other processes:

1. Ensure reliable and complete availability of data for all leaders, with respect to the following components:

   - Leadership competency assessments, highlighting the areas of strength and development

   - Personality, preference, motivators, and emotional quotient

   - Past performance, which includes experiences, successes, and failures

2. Ensure that the talent review team has the requisite skills and experience to assess talent and interpret assessment results

3. Ensure availability of a comprehensive role profile of the future leadership role for benchmarking

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[1]Nature vs. Nurture or Nature X Nurture, IBM Kenexa, Bill Erickson, 2009
[2]Hire the Right Talent, IBM Software Group, Simon Gluyas, 2014
[3]Identifying and Growing Talent Through Development Centers, IBM Software, 2014
[4]Leadership Assessment Backbone of a Strong Leadership Pipeline, Aon Hewitt, April 2015
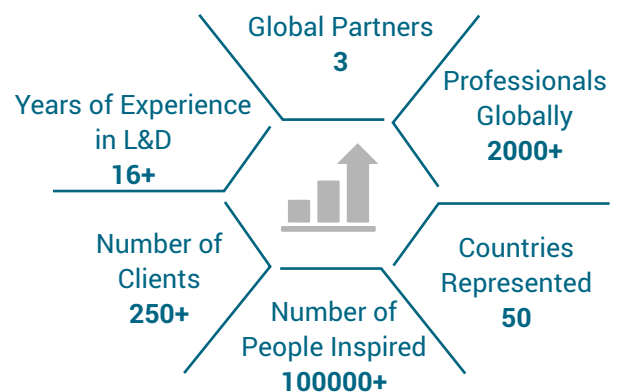
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About InspireOne

InspireOne is India's leading consulting firm offering organizational and leadership development solutions. With nearly two decades of experience in the consulting domain, we partner with organizations to transform their people and organizational capabilities into corporate value.

Inspiration is at the core of all we do. InspireOne, reinforces two facets of our philosophy:

Inspiration: To activate positive change by connecting to the minds and hearts of people and to infuse passion and energy that catalyzes change within one self and in people around.

One: To be the ONE partner for all human development needs and to enable our customers to be best as individuals, teams, and organizations.

Our vision is to be the preferred partner for organizations around the world that want to maximize their corporate value through the development of their human capital. Our core areas of expertise include leadership development, assessments, emotional intelligence, employee productivity, customer centricity, and sales force enhancement.

Global Partners
3

Professionals Globally
2000+

Years of Experience in L&D
16+

Countries Represented
50

Number of Clients
250+

Number of People Inspired
100000+

Our Partners

Our partners are leaders in their respective areas of expertise with years of researched know - how and worldwide experience. Together, we catalyze and improve business performance by developing your most valuable talent - your people.

InspireOne is India's leading consulting firm offering organizational and leadership development solutions. With nearly two decades of experience in the consulting domain, we partner with organizations to transform their people and organizational capabilities into corporate value.	Expert in **Sales Capability Development** and are a world-leading provider of learning and development solutions.	Global leader in **Performance Enhancement** with over 40 years of experience in productivity and customer centricity.

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