Developing Employees into Leaders
Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................. P2
Investing in your talent matters ................................. P3
Why ................................................................. P4
How much are low performing employees costing your company? .................................................... P5
Quality talent sticks around ........................................ P6
Millennials matter ....................................................... P7
How ........................................................................ P8
The Westbourne Choice ............................................. P12
A leadership shortage is one of the biggest barriers to growth at companies around the world. In fact, developing new leaders is the No. 1 talent challenge facing organisations rating it as ‘urgent’ or ‘important.’¹

The most successful companies don’t recruit leaders. They grow their own.

Skilled leaders are in short supply, with 85 percent of executives not confident in their leadership pipelines.²

These challenges are particularly important as older leaders retire at accelerating rates and millennials assume leadership roles.

Only 13% of companies say they do an excellent job developing leaders at all levels.

According to Forbes, millennials will comprise 75 percent of the workforce by 2025 and millennials are no longer the leaders of tomorrow — they are rapidly becoming the leaders of today.

The data shows that many organisations are not preparing millennials for management positions. And yet, if millennials aren’t promoted, there’s a good chance they’ll go elsewhere.

A substantial 66 percent of companies say they’re “weak” in developing millennial leaders.

At the same time, employees describe opportunities to develop their own leadership skills as their No. 1 reason for staying with an organisation.³

¹ Deloitte University Press, Leaders at all levels.
³ Deloitte University Press, Leaders at all levels.
We’re experiencing a training gap, not a skills gap. Companies agree that developing leaders is critical, and yet research shows they are doing little about it.

Specifically, 61 percent of companies offer no leadership training. No wonder there is a leadership shortage.

To sustainably grow, organisations are shifting from viewing leadership development as a “nice to have” to a “need to have”.

Leadership development programs are mission critical to organisational success.

Three dynamics that drive successful leadership development.

A healthy talent pool of engaged employees.

Robust training that actively develops that training.

A culture that identifies and promotes employees from within.

Investing in your talent matters
The performance of your leaders has a massive impact on your bottom line.

Most executives instinctively know that strong leadership is essential for overall organisational success.

However, in most organisations there is a lack of urgency to improve leadership skills driven by a belief that an organisation’s current leadership capacity — and subsequent performance — is good enough. But is it?

Regardless of company size, developing great leaders deserves investment.

That investment serves as a competitive advantage, as it ensures your managers are getting the most out of your workforce.

Statistics show that the average organisation is forfeiting over $1 million per year in untapped potential and lose as much as 50 percent productivity because of less-than-optimal leadership practices.

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4 The Ken Blanchard Companies, The High Cost of Doing Nothing
Disengaged employees cost the U.S. economy up to $550 billion a year due to lost productivity.\(^5\) Of that on average $86 billion annually in losses results from disengaged leadership.

\(^5\) Gallup, State of the American Workplace
It's not easy to retain top talent. Research shows that 56 percent of organisations struggle to keep top performing employees.\(^6\)

Replacing them is even more challenging, costing an average of $20,000 to replace a departed millennial employee.\(^7\)

Creating an organisation that develops quality talent from within is the secret sauce for retaining engaged employees and staying competitive.

The key to retaining your people is providing them with the professional development they need to advance their career.

This benefits you as well, as it fills your leadership pipeline with a large pool of strong internal candidates.

78 percent of employees say they’d remain longer with an employer if they saw stronger career paths.\(^8\)

Employees who don’t believe they can achieve their career goals with a current employer are **12X more likely** to consider leaving.

With new employees, the number skyrockets to about **30X more likely**.

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\(^6\) Willis Towers Watson, Balancing Employer and Employee Priorities

\(^7\) Chicago Tribune, The cost of millennials job hopping

\(^8\) Mercer, One in Three Employees Claim to Have a Job Rather than a Career
Millennials matter
They’re rapidly becoming the leaders of today, but many are not prepared.

Millennials want to develop as professionals, and while that feels like a no-brainer, it actually differentiates them from prior generations. Career progression is their top desire from a workplace.\(^9\)

But many do not feel they’re prepared or receiving the necessary leadership training to effectively lead.

Use leadership training to develop quality, confident millennial leaders, as well as to retain them.

Help steer their careers at your organisation.

Millennials want to work with purpose, and they want to feel that their workplace is investing in them.

It’s critical for organisations to recognize the correlation between leadership development opportunities and high retention rates.\(^10\)

By 2025, millennials will comprise 75% of the workforce.

65% of millennial leaders feel unprepared for their leadership role.

87% of companies say they don’t do an excellent job developing leaders at all levels.\(^11\)

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\(^9\) PWC, Millennial Survey

\(^10\) PWC, Millennials at work: Reshaping the workplace

\(^11\) Deloitte University Press, Leaders at all levels, 2014
What are the key drivers making leadership training an organisational priority?

Developing leaders from within doesn’t happen overnight. It can take months or years to build a pool of quality talent.

To help jumpstart the process, we’ve put together some of questions designed to get you thinking about what an effective leadership program looks like.

There’s a variety of reasons why leadership training is flagged as a priority.

Dig deep to identify what the key drivers are for your organisation.

These are a few examples that we often come across.

- **An aging workforce.** A current cohort of leaders approach retirement, and new candidates need to be ready to fill the gap.

- **First-time managers.** A workforce has C-level executives and VPs, lower level employees, and lots of first-time managers to upskill for leadership roles.

- **High attrition rates.** An organisation suffers high turnover and needs to retain its current workforce.

- **Leadership skills gap.** An organisation has identified a lack of leadership skills in managers and needs to course-correct.
What are the organisation goals?

It’s the role of senior leaders and key stakeholders to determine the specific leadership skills needed to successfully execute the company’s strategy.

Without a clear vision, it’s difficult to inspire new leadership.

Examples of organisational goals are:

- Upskill individual contributors moving into management roles
- Create new products, enter new markets
- Ramp up sales operations
- Create a flatter corporate structure

Try to define what success looks like. It’s different for each organisation.

For example, a high-growth tech company may define success as the ability to quickly up-skill first time managers.

Conversely, a government agency may define success as the ability to teach an aging workforce new technologies and incorporate them into their leadership style.
How can you get executive team buy-in?

Success is more likely when senior leadership sees value.

Help executives understand short and long-term pain points that occur when building leaders from within is not made a priority.

What are your leadership skills gaps?

One way to discover leadership skills gaps is by surveying your employees.

This gives employees, both managers and individual contributors, an opportunity to share their voice.

It allows you to measure how employees feel and think about their job, leadership, and the company’s culture — as well as identify what’s working well and the things that can be done better.

Example questions focused on leadership and professional development:

- The executive team gives employees a clear picture of the direction the company is headed.
- I have had a meaningful career development discussion with my manager in the last 6 months.
- My manager inspires me to do my best work.
- I have the opportunity to continually learn and grow at my organisation.
How can you create a culture where learning is valued?

Learning experiences are happening daily in your workforce. Do you have a culture that celebrates learning?

Are your employees empowered to make time to learn?

All the training resources in the world won’t make a difference if you don’t build a strong learning culture that values self-transformation.

Who are your learning champions?

To create a learning culture, you’ll need learning champions to cultivate, motivate and mentor.

Learning champions can be anyone in a leadership role. Often times you’ll have managers that volunteer to be champions of learning.

It’s important to acknowledge that part of this process is teaching managers how to effectively coach.

What tools will help measure success?

Once you’ve defined what success looks like, it’s time to create a process for measuring overall performance and growth.

Providing targeted assessments at various stages of a leadership development program can help keep future leaders on track.

There are a ton of different assessment types out there, which measure everything from problem-solving and decision-making styles to emotional intelligence to identifying one’s approach to innovation.
By using the tips from this guide, you’re that much closer to building a culture that develops and promotes quality leaders.

Whether you’re designing a learning development program from scratch, or improving upon a current one, we’re excited to have you join us in building the next generation of leaders.

Remember, your leadership is at the heart of organisational growth. They’re worth the investment.

At Westbourne, we are passionate about helping people from all walks of life achieve their aspirations and dreams. Westbourne is leading the charge in online education – Your future, Your choice!