The Definitive Guide to Leadership Development
Irresistible Leadership

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Only 12% of companies are hitting the mark in leadership development maturity—underscoring a unique opportunity for helping leaders worldwide foster the development of exceptional leadership in their organizations.

In the Industrial Age, we relied on management science, directed leadership, and top-down execution to thrive. In this new Post-Industrial Era, we need leaders who understand the people issues in their organizations— unlocking productivity through inspiration, mission, purpose, collaboration, learning, and of course accountability.

Based on our comprehensive, year-long study of leadership practices, which included an analysis of over 1,000 organizations, many interviews and discussions with company executives worldwide, and detailed reviews from experts in the field, we've developed *The Definitive Guide to Leadership Development: Irresistible Leadership*.

What Leaders Need to Know

Leadership development is one of the most complex, crowded, multifaceted issues in business. With tens of thousands of books, endless articles, and hundreds of vendors and models, the options we face are dizzying. And every year there are new themes, ideas, and role models that come into view.

Our research shows that "trendy" approaches do not pay off. Rather, consider you are building your own internal muscle: how to define, implement, and reinforce leadership that amplifies your business, your competitive edge, and your culture. Given that concept, which are the optimal places to invest and reinvent your leadership strategy? What people and business practices are most crucial to building a strong leadership pipeline?

Companies generally move along a maturity curve of leadership development in a linear way. Getting the strategy and model right, building accountability and operational support for leaders, and establishing the right mix of programs and offerings are necessary first steps on the journey. As companies become more sophisticated with these core elements, dimensions like democratized coaching, state-of-the-art learning technologies, and expanded assessment techniques bring more value.

And finally, it's worth noting the impact of technology. Applying advanced technologies like nudge tools, AR/VR, and coaching platforms into your leadership development are most beneficial when they enhance and enable the learning experience

Key Messages

The Definitive Guide to Leadership Development reveals five key findings from our research. The following is a brief excerpt from the third finding of our full report.

A new mix of essential leadership behaviors is here.

Our research now reveals a fundamental shift when it comes to the behaviors that drive the most impact on the business. The traditional dependence on "performance" behaviors—behaviors like goal-setting and managing down—is no longer the only path to success. Performance behaviors are still important, but leading companies recognize that transformation and human-centered leadership capabilities are taking center stage. These companies are confident that building leaders who exhibit change adaptability and human-centered skills will drive performance—and our research shows they are right.

These human-centered leadership behaviors are more than just nice-to-have qualities in people managers and senior executives, or sound bites used in recruiting campaigns. Our research shows organizations where leaders prioritize growing their people are five times more likely to exceed their financial targets. Likewise, they are more than twice as likely to be able to retain top talent, a vital differentiator in today's constrained labor market.

Similarly, when organizations cultivate empathetic leaders, they see positive gains in innovation and talent outcomes. For example, when senior leaders spend time with their teams and exhibit empathy and care, they are twice as likely to be innovators and market leaders than their peers.

Next Steps

The Definitive Guide to Leadership Development: Irresistible Leadership **provides actionable insights to start implementing practices for developing a company with great leadership. Additionally, the full report provides:**

- The full discussion of why leadership matters, especially now

- The 4 elements and 16 dimensions of the Leadership Framework

- The characteristics of each of the four levels of the Leadership Maturity Model, and how to advance to the next level

- A complete analysis of our 5 research findings

- The 16 essential practices that matter most, as well as their impact on outcomes

- Real-life examples of companies using these practices

- Our study methodology