

Creating the Foundation for a Leadership Development Strategy at a Leading Engineering and Construction Company



To drive the talent development required for superior strategy execution, this leading organization was challenged to identify and prioritize the focus of the learning and development curriculum.

One of the oldest and largest family-led corporations in the United States, this leading engineering and construction company has been at the forefront of its industry for more than 110 years. Beginning as a railroad-grading operation in the Oklahoma territory, the company has evolved into an expanding multinational organization completing more than 23,000 projects in 140 countries on seven continents.

Having achieved record revenues over the past five years, going forward the company is committed to become the world's premier engineering, construction and project management company.

An Execution-Enabling Initiative

To effectively execute against the company strategy, the organization's executive management team recognized future leaders as key to the company's success moving forward. Building a strong talent pipeline across organizational levels was considered a critical first step. To accomplish this objective, the company made a significant investment in its university to build the company's talent and instill a culture of continuous learning and development.

In order to drive the strategic talent development needed for superior execution, the company was challenged to identify and prioritize the focus of the university's learning and development curriculum.

Targeting Key Developmental Opportunities at Three Leadership Levels

As a first step, the company partnered with BTS to identify the critical factors and behaviors needed to execute business objectives at the Supervisor, Mid-Career Manager and Executive leadership levels. Interviews were conducted with leaders across levels and business units to gain a first-hand perspective of these elements. A qualitative review of the interview data resulted in three **Level-Specific Impact Profiles** that illustrated a clear connection between the business challenges, the role objectives of each level, and the level-specific execution factors and high-impact behaviors required to achieve results.

The client gained a deep understanding of the critical factors needed to execute at various levels of the organization and exposed existing development gaps down to the behavioral level.

Leveraging the Level-Specific Impact Profiles, a stratified sample of Executives and Mid-Career Managers were invited to respond to a customized online **Development Gap Diagnostic** survey. Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the Supervisors, Mid-Career Managers and Executive Leadership in demonstrating high-impact behaviors. They were also asked to prioritize the top development needs related to the execution factors.

Using the quantitative survey results, prevalent gaps were identified and prioritized for the three levels. Pinpointing developmental priorities based on hundreds of ratings across the organization allowed the client to be confident in the resulting curriculum development focus for the University.

The insights from the assessment provided the direction needed to focus the content of actionable **Learning Journey Blueprints**. Working closely and consulting with main client stakeholders, BTS created Learning Journey Blueprints for each leadership level. Consisting of critical components targeting the major development gaps, the learning blueprint was designed to be delivered over a three-year period. Each customized journey was aimed to orient employees to their roles, build the execution factors and high-impact behaviors most critical to effective execution and, in the end, enhance overall readiness for promotion. Additional recommendations were made to prime, sustain and embed the learning over the timespan detailed in the blueprints.

Powerful Results

Through the partnership with BTS, the leading engineering and construction company gained a deep understanding of the critical factors needed to execute the strategy at various levels of the organization and exposed existing development gaps down to the behavioral level. Leveraging the Learning Journey Blueprint for each level, the company plans to develop and implement strategic leadership development programs to reduce the identified development gaps going forward.

The result of this effort has created further positive momentum. The company's stakeholders have identified additional applications for the Level-Specific Impact Profiles. The benefits from the original engagement continue. More user-friendly than typical competency models, the Level-Specific Impact Profiles are shorter in content, but comprehensive and customized to reflect organization-specific language. Avoiding overly general and abstract concepts frequently found in other competency models, these Impact Profiles make sense to employees at all levels and are practical for other activities like feedback and coaching.

The success of the partnership has motivated further collaboration between the two companies. The leading engineering and construction company plans to continue collaborating with BTS on similar initiatives in the future.

About BTS

BTS focuses on the people side of strategy, working with leaders at all levels to help them make better decisions, convert those decisions to actions and deliver results. At our core, we believe people learn best by doing. For 30 years, we've been designing fun, powerful experiences™ that have profound and lasting impact on people and their careers. We inspire new ways of thinking, build critical capabilities and unleash business success. It's strategy made personal.

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