

Assessing "Great" Leaders

Stop guessing and start pinpointing leadership development needs



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How often are leadership development needs and subsequent training programs to address those needs predicated on a group-think process focused on a generic competency model comparable to guesswork? Or on the latest book or article on leadership attributes? When high performance for critical roles is behaviorally defined via a "great" profile, your organization has the basis for a highly objective, quantifiable gap analysis that will pinpoint your top priority leadership needs.

Companies can assess “great” leadership in their organization by building on the solid foundation of a “define great” process.

We believe in putting people in the kinds of situations they are likely to face today and in the future at their company, and assessing their thinking, behaviors and skills.

This is a better predictor of success than personality tests and the standard approach to assessment. The appropriate combination of assessment instruments will identify the organizational and individual leadership gaps required to enable your leaders to successfully execute your company strategy.

None of the preceding examples included instruments that measure psychological constructs, which are often key components of competency models. Developing psychological constructs is difficult at best and their relevance to “moving the mean” of high performance leadership behavior is questionable. Using the above tools—tailored to your organization and to your target leadership audience—will provide you with a pinpoint focus on what your subsequent leadership program(s) must address, and will provide a strong perspective on how to address those needs programmatically.

Identify Leaders Objectively, Not Subjectively

A highly predictive, valid assessment of leaders is fundamental to highly effective leadership development programs. It only makes sense that the greater the capability and capacity of participants entering a leadership development program, the more significant its impact will be on their ability to grasp, leverage and apply the behavior changes engendered in the program’s learning objectives.

When identification of leaders is dependent upon generic competency models as the criteria, and the process is limited to leaders advocating for their direct reports based on those criteria, the result is a significant number of false positives. Assessment instruments comparable to those above provide for the validation of the “high potential” leaders that results from less-than-objective talent identification processes.

Not only are those instruments highly predictive in identifying leaders, but they provide a diagnosis that is the basis for highly actionable, focused, individual development planning. Why? Because the diagnosis is predicated on what high performance in your organization requires in an objective, behavioral context that is easy to understand and is relevant to leaders executing your company strategy.

Focus on Behavior Change and Application of Learning

How a participant feels about the effectiveness of a leadership development program drives his/her motivation to apply the concepts delivered in the program. However, the significance of quantifying behavior change, application of learning, and impact on business results is much greater and more relevant to our contribution to the organization's success via leadership development.

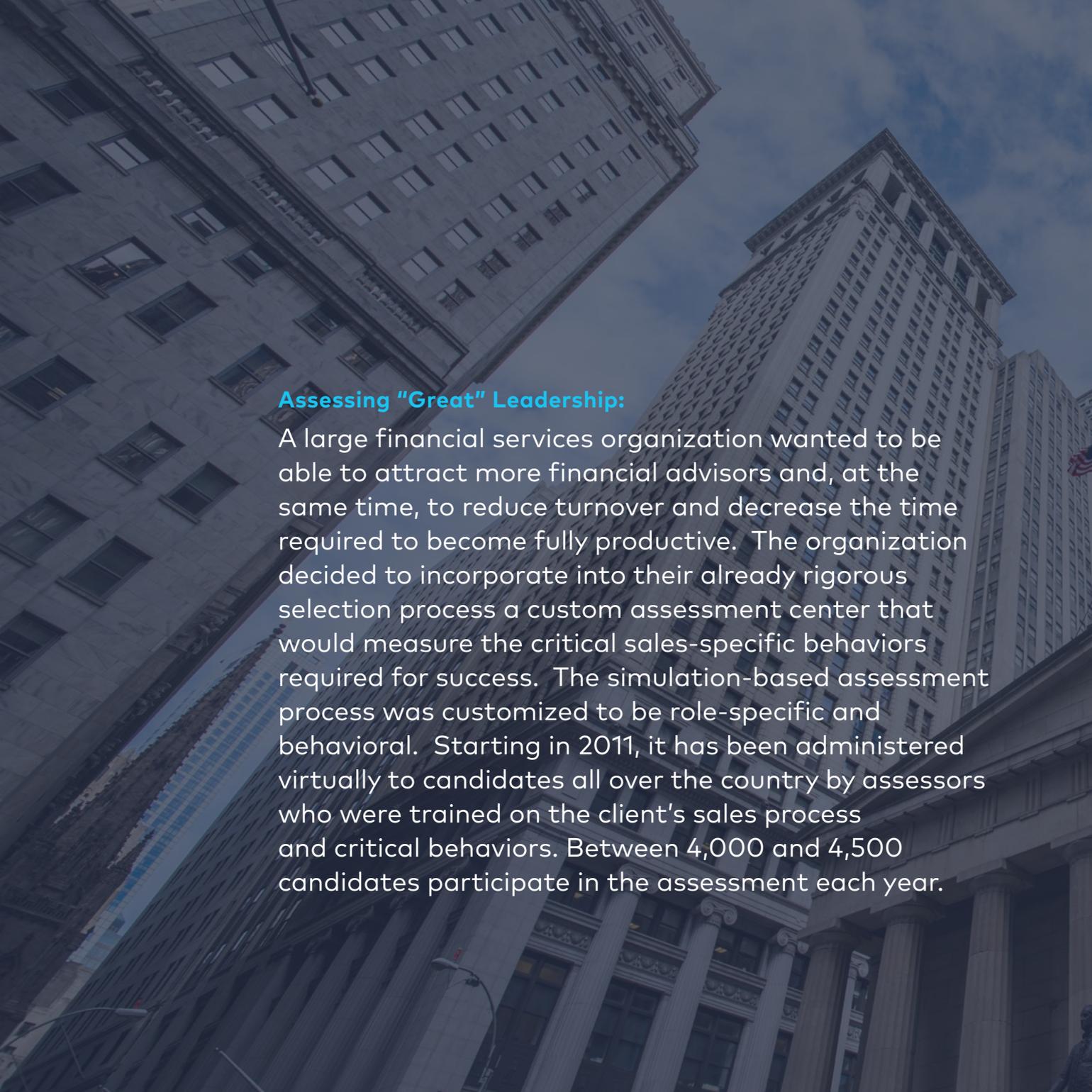
Assessment instruments, such as situation judgment tests or comparable scenario-based simulation tasks, are relatively easy to develop when based on the high performance behavior in a "great" profile; plus, they are readily deliverable via a variety of technology platforms. These and comparable instruments accurately document pre- versus post-program behavioral change. Retention of learning can be measured by simulation-based instruments.

Application and business results can be measured by self-report instruments and observation-based manager instruments. Assessment during the delivery of a program can also be very powerful for measuring the program's effectiveness and providing individual feedback during or at the end of the program. Simulation-based initiatives are most amenable to this type of measurement.

Think Big Data when Thinking Leadership Development

To get ahead of the curve, it is critical to identify the metrics and methods by which you will measure the effectiveness of your leadership program. This should be done during the development of the program, not once delivery has begun. The same is true for individual leadership identification resulting from your talent identification process. The need to identify both short-term and long-term measures of your talent review process is critical.

Assessment center results correlated to manager evaluations of potential as well as yearly business results, time to promotion, employee engagement, turnover in the leader's unit, effective development of direct reports and other measures will help create the human capital big data that will serve you well.



Assessing "Great" Leadership:

A large financial services organization wanted to be able to attract more financial advisors and, at the same time, to reduce turnover and decrease the time required to become fully productive. The organization decided to incorporate into their already rigorous selection process a custom assessment center that would measure the critical sales-specific behaviors required for success. The simulation-based assessment process was customized to be role-specific and behavioral. Starting in 2011, it has been administered virtually to candidates all over the country by assessors who were trained on the client's sales process and critical behaviors. Between 4,000 and 4,500 candidates participate in the assessment each year.



Analysis of the relationship of the assessment to job performance indicates a number of important results. Success on the assessment is a significant predictor of retention, demonstrating an overall reduction in turnover of 18.5%. Results also indicate that the assessment successfully identifies candidates who will generate greater financial growth; strong candidates have had over 33% more assets under care than those candidates that were identified as "Not Ready."

About BTS

BTS is a global strategy execution consulting firm, focused on the people side of strategy. Partnering with today's leading corporations, BTS designs fun, powerful experiences that have a lasting impact on people and their careers—inspiring new thinking, building critical capabilities and unleashing business success. By leveraging customized business simulations and targeted experiential learning initiatives, BTS helps develop the leadership, business acumen and sales skills necessary for superior strategy execution.

Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, BTS has approximately 400 professionals in 32 offices located on six continents. Partnering with nearly 400 organizations, including over 30 of the world's largest corporations, BTS's major clients are some of the most respected names in business: Anglo American, AT&T, Chevron, Coca-Cola, Ericsson, HP, Rio Tinto, Sony, Telefonica and Unilever.

BTS is a public company listed on the NASDAQ OMX Stockholm and trades under the symbol BTS B.

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