

# LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

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Organizations today must contend with an environment of constant and accelerating change. Outstanding performance in such an environment “demands more and better leaders up and down the line.”<sup>1</sup> A core aspect of this leadership-development challenge is the necessity for leaders, either promoted from within or hired externally, to transition into new roles effectively and efficiently. Whether dealing with mergers, acquisitions, consolidation, or growth, organizations can excel only if newly appointed leaders get up to speed quickly. The cost of poor transitions is unacceptably high, both in terms of money and organizational disruption.

The imperative for leaders to transition well has prompted much conceptual and practical work over the years. This effort, however, has been fragmented, making it difficult to understand and apply in an integrated way. What has been needed was a unified perspective—one that could organize the valuable thinking that has been done and identify a set of best practices. In short, organizations have lacked a clear way to understand and respond to the challenge of leadership transitions.

Overfield Leadership Group (OLG) has developed a practical framework that can be used to help transitioning leaders integrate seamlessly, be mutually assimilated with their new colleagues (superiors, peers, and direct reports), and add value quickly in their new positions. In this whitepaper we will describe this framework, which provides for an evidence-based and systematic application of best practices. In order to provide a context for this description, we will begin with a review of the business case for why leadership transitions warrant careful attention, and we will explain why they so often fail.

## WHY FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS?

Stakeholders expect new leaders to deliver results very quickly after beginning their roles. However, the ideal of “hitting the ground running” remains elusive. For example, it has been found that leadership transitions may take up to a year, especially for external

hires in senior roles.<sup>2</sup> For internal promotions, most executives believe they add value by six months.

Despite its importance, the most common approach to the transition challenge is assuming that smart people who have been successful in the past will figure things out: in other words, doing nothing to help the leaders. Boards of directors and executives responsible for leading corporations, government entities, nonprofits, educational institutions, and other organizations routinely let people sink or swim. When surveyed, half of companies questioned had no formal transition process for new leaders.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, this haphazard approach has a high failure rate. Forty percent of new CEOs do not meet performance expectations in the first 18 months.<sup>4</sup> The resulting costs—in terms of direct expenditures as well as lost productivity and engagement—are consequential, not to mention the organizational paralysis that frequently results when an executive is removed. Financial estimates for the cost of failed transitions range from 10 times<sup>5</sup> to 24 times<sup>6</sup> the executive's compensation. Moreover, analysis of the 2,500 largest public companies around the globe<sup>7</sup> found that when firms struggle to replace departing CEOs, they forgo an average of \$1.8 billion in shareholder value.

The investment of time and money necessary to ensure effective leadership transitions is an insurance policy to protect the irretrievable cost of recruiting a new person to an organization. In addition, it can guard against the high cost of failed transitions (whether an internal or external hire), at a fraction of the expense for an executive to derail and for a replacement to be recruited.

Thus, effectively transitioning executives into new leadership roles can represent a competitive advantage for organizations that do it better and faster than their competitors. For example, a study conducted by Boston Consulting Group found that companies that successfully onboard new hires and retain talent had 2.5 times as much revenue growth and 1.9 times higher profit margins than their less capable competitors.<sup>8</sup> There is a strong business case for organizations to focus on leadership transitions.

But why has it has been so difficult to meet the leadership-transition challenge?

## HOW TRANSITIONS ARE TYPICALLY APPROACHED

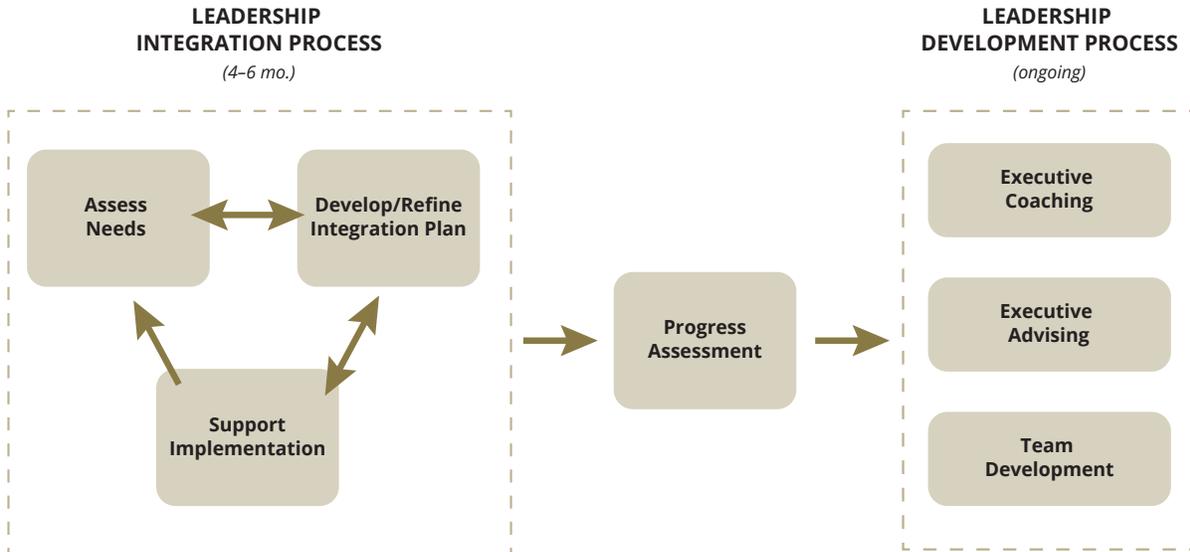
Unfortunately, even when companies formally address transitions, most approaches focus on only one piece of the puzzle—for instance, onboarding, a new-leader assimilation process, executive coaching, or 90- to 100-day plans. Each of these components is useful, but this piecemeal approach frequently leaves gaps new leaders can fall into.

For example, a specific plan for the first 90 to 100 days makes sense. However, most suffer from four pitfalls. First, they fail to take into account the importance of a person's own development—personality, temperament, background and experience, and leadership strengths and weaknesses. A consideration of the soft skills that are often the hardest to master is conspicuously absent from most 90-day plans. Second, most plans do not explicitly measure progress towards goals or incorporate feedback from key stakeholders so that the leader can make course corrections when necessary. Third, most 90- to 100-day plans, are exactly that, 90- to 100-day plans. They do not include a road map for what needs to happen in the time beyond 100 days to be an effective leader. Finally, many approaches are more focused on internal promotions than external hires. They frequently fail to incorporate ways for the executive to learn about the culture of the new organization and do not help new leaders tap into important sources of institutional knowledge.

There is a better approach: using the OLG Leadership Transition Framework (LTF). Its development was guided by research and refined through our experience in helping executives master new leadership roles.

# THE LEADERSHIP TRANSITION FRAMEWORK

The LTF represents a holistic approach with three phases.



The first phase is a Leadership Integration Process that lasts four to six months and is iterative in nature. It is designed to provide the executive with the information and resources necessary to succeed in his or her new position. During this time, we help identify needs and develop and refine an integration plan, and then we continuously support implementation of the plan.

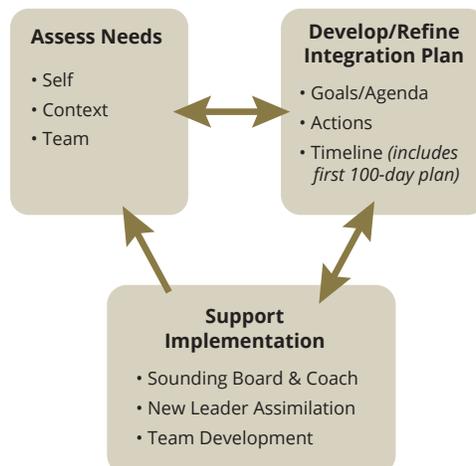
The second phase, beginning at about six months, is Progress Assessment. This involves a customized and comprehensive evaluation, during which we typically conduct one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders combined with quantitative ratings to help the executive measure and calibrate what has been achieved to that point and make adjustments where necessary. The Progress Assessment is particularly important for senior executives stepping into a role from outside the company. For these externally hired leaders, nuanced feedback about how they are striking the balance between fitting into the culture while simultaneously attempting to change it, building relationships with external directors and other key stakeholders, and communicating across the enterprise

can be essential to their effectiveness, but such feedback is commonly absent from their day-to-day interactions.

In the third phase we guide the executive in a shift of emphasis from concentrating on the specifics of a given transition to focusing on continuous learning and growth as a leader. Data from the Progress Assessment informs goals and activities that will assure that the executive not only sustains effective leadership but constantly improves it, consistently delivering expected results. In general, the activities that can accelerate an executive's ongoing development require three types of assistance—*executive coaching* (which fosters the development of behaviors, mindsets, and practices necessary for an individual to effectively influence others and guide groups to accomplish important objectives), *executive advising* (which provides an external sounding board to help the executive keep perspective and create an approach for ongoing decision-making), and *leadership-team development* (which helps the executive and his or her team systematically work together to address the fundamental elements of high performance).

## LEADERSHIP INTEGRATION PROCESS

The Leadership Integration Process helps the executive become aware of, see the relationships among, and systematically address all of the necessary elements of success.



**Identify needs.** The work of leadership transition ideally begins early—in the countdown period between when a candidate accepts the offer to take on a new role and the executive’s first day on the job. The best-case scenario allows for “preboarding,” with the executive receiving tips from the outgoing leader, having preliminary “meet and greet” conversations with direct reports and other key stakeholders, and devoting time to mental preparation before things get fast and furious. Identifying needs includes creating a plan for the first 90 to 100 days but doesn’t end there. It requires the executive to consider nine critical issues: self-awareness, type of situation (and its implications), organizational change, alignment with key stakeholders, most important operational issues, current state of the leadership team, the need to engage the culture, communications, and one’s network of relationships. Not every issue is equally relevant in every transition. Rather, these categories prompt a leader to consider where to focus one’s limited time and energy. For each issue, a series of questions must be answered.

1. *Self-awareness.* We begin with wisdom as old as the ancient Greeks: The oracle at Delphi said, “Know thyself.” How well does the leader understand his or her strengths and weaknesses—shortcomings as well as potential overused strengths—and how these line up with role requirements? What does the leader need to stop/start/continue doing to be successful? How does the leader need to grow, develop, and change?

2. *Type of situation (and its implications).* Is it a start-up? Turnaround? Realignment? Accelerated growth? Sustaining success? What strategic agenda best fits this situation? What leadership behaviors does this situation require?

3. *Organizational change.* What is the mandate for change in this new role and from whom does it come? The board? The boss? What needs to change and what should not change? What expectations need to be set? How can others be aligned with expectations? What change-management process would work best for communicating what needs to change, striking the right balance between being ambitious to change the organization,

on the one hand, and being careful not to take on too much all at once, on the other?

4. *Alignment with key stakeholders.* Who are the critical stakeholders? Board? Boss? Peers? Other colleagues? How can trust and loyalty be built? How are decisions made? Where does power reside? How can productive working relationships be built?

5. *Most important operational issues.* How can credibility be built by achieving quick wins? What is the priority order for pressing problems? What decisions need to be made?

6. *Current state of leadership team.* Are the right people on the bus and in the right seats?<sup>9</sup> Are the wrong people off the bus? Is the team focused on the right goals?

7. *The need to engage the culture.* What are the values, norms, and assumptions in this culture? What are the sacred cows? Is there more than one culture to consider? Where is the appropriate balance between fitting in versus transforming the culture? How much change should occur and how fast? Who can serve as a cultural interpreter?

8. *Communications.* What needs to be communicated? To whom? What is the plan and cadence for communications? How can I make communicating a continuous give-and-take dialogue?

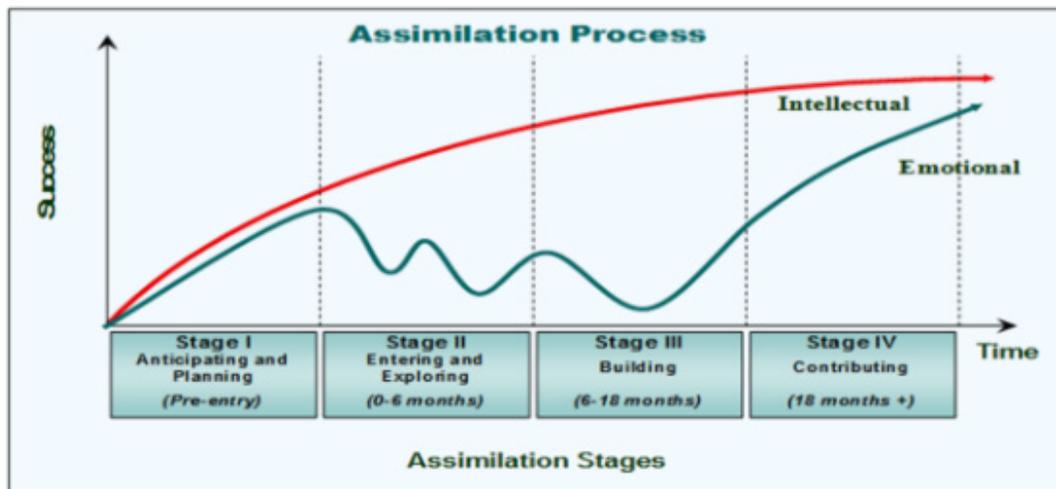
9. *Network of Relationships.* What are the critical relationships to establish and nurture? Who are the people inside and outside the organization that my team and I will depend on to accomplish our objectives—both short-term and long-term? Which people depend on us to reach their goals? Which relationships will help with resolving problems and securing necessary resources?<sup>10</sup>

**Develop/refine integration plan.** Developing a plan is familiar territory for most executives, so this component of the process of leadership integration is built on well-established practices. He or she sets goals, using the approach that has proved workable in past experience—for instance, choosing objectives that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely, or as the acronym has it: SMART—and

then the executive determines the appropriate sequence of actions and a time frame to accomplish them. The plan is adjusted and refined as its implementation unfolds.

**Support the implementation of the plan.** No executive should be expected to implement a plan alone, particularly given the stress inherent to transitioning to a larger, more complex role. OLG can provide several different forms of help to increase the odds of success: applying appropriate research insights to the executive's specific situation and context, accelerating the leader's growth and development, acting as a sounding board for the executive, facilitating a new-leader assimilation process, and assisting in the development of a high-performing team.

1. *Making use of research.* There is much valuable research (for instance by Amy Kates and Diane Downey<sup>11</sup>) on how leaders assimilate to new roles. The intellectual learning curve is less steep than the emotional learning curve, and that leads executives to be more adept at IQ than EQ. We will go over the relevant research with the executive and explain how it applies to his or her specific leadership situation, including how it is normal to feel as if one is on an emotional roller coaster and how to cope with it.



2. *Accelerating the leader's growth and development.* An important way to support transition-plan implementation (and its continued refinement) is to improve the self-awareness of the leader and to help him or her appreciate the basics of development,

which include the outer work of skill improvement and behavior change and the inner work of mindset. We will work with the executive to provide guidance and education.

3. *Providing a sounding board.* Executives can benefit greatly from having an impartial, outside perspective that help them come to terms with emergent situations and stressors. They need to have problem-solving conversations, do brain-storming, and engage in blue-sky thinking. As Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries has pointed out:

Today's executives face more pressure than at any other time in history. . . . One effective way of dealing with the pressures of the job is for leaders to have sparring partners who help them explore the challenges they face. . . . [They can benefit from having external people] act as impartial sounding boards free of the politics that are all too prevalent in organizations. As executives move up the corporate ladder, feedback about their performance progressively diminishes. But the loss of feedback can be career limiting; it creates gaps in how leaders perceive themselves, and how others perceive them. And the wider the gap, the greater the likelihood of a leadership crisis, and the greater the resistance to change.<sup>12</sup>

OLG's cadre of experienced coaches bring both business and psychology backgrounds to confidential and objective thought partnership.

4. *Facilitating a mutual-assimilation process with the leader and team.* Getting off on the right foot is much easier than recovering from a false start. Ira Levin has described a robust new-leader assimilation process in detail.<sup>13</sup> Fundamental to this process is the clarification of expectations for the executive and his or her team. This lays the foundation for trust and it builds relationships. Also important is the need to establish initial priorities, action items, and a cadence for reviewing progress. A general framework that represents a starting point in customizing a new-leader assimilation process and that addresses an executive's specific needs includes the following five steps: (1) contracting with the leader about desired outcomes of the process and how progress will be measured; (2) conducting interviews with team members; (3) reviewing themes

from these interviews with the leader in preparation for a working session with the team; (4) facilitating a working session in which the executive shares a brief bio and addresses questions and expectations and in which each team member shares information about him- or herself—after which the team reviews key themes from the interviews and identifies top challenges and opportunities and aligns on priorities, including an initial action plan; (5) and following up, as agreed upon during the working session, on action items and any emergent issues.

In some cases, OLG facilitates this process from end to end. In other situations, we partner with internal resources from HR, Talent Management, or OD to conduct some of the activities. Whether facilitated internally or externally, the goal is the same: for the executive in transition and members of his or her team to engage in a structured process that proactively (1) identifies and outlines steps to remedy issues that could impede collaboration, (2) promotes effective working conditions, and (3) builds strong, trusting relationships.

5. *Building a high-performing team.* Because building a high-performing team has become a crucial aspect of effective leadership,<sup>14</sup> we will work with the executive to make sure that his or her team has a compelling purpose, clear rules of engagement (norms), and healthy team dynamics (including trust, safety, dialogue and debate, and productive conflict).

## PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

The Progress Assessment involves soliciting 360-degree feedback from a range of stakeholders to identify what is working and where gaps exist in the executive's leadership and to guide ongoing development. Whether data are collected by interview, survey, or a combination of both, the people with whom the executive works provide candid feedback to help him or her accomplish three objectives: (1) calibrate performance thus far and gauge the effectiveness of the transition, (2) make necessary

course corrections, and (3) develop a robust follow-up plan to guide continuing individual and leadership-team development.

Interview/survey questions are tailored to calibrate the executive's specific situation; they typically cover topics such as what has gone well in this transition, what has not gone smoothly, and what adjustments would make this executive a better leader. In most cases, we also ask for specific feedback about aspects of the executive's leadership team, looking for ways to bolster what is working and remediate problem areas at the team level. To provide a comprehensive calibration, it is important that this process offer the opportunity for a very busy (and likely overwhelmed) executive to hear from colleagues not only about things that need improvement but also about what is going well—when or how other people have seen this leader really shine. We also routinely inquire about the personal attributes that others most appreciate, asking colleagues to offer words of encouragement, reinforcement, and support to the leader in transition. At a time when many executives are painfully aware that some things are not working and may even feel inadequate to meet the challenges of a new role, positive feedback can be a welcome tonic, affording a balanced appraisal and highlighting those areas that are effective but that may be easy to discount or overlook.

The 360-degree feedback provides the executive with a better understanding of the new context, including his or her role within it, what is effective, and where changes may be needed. Armed with this information, we will work together to refine the executive's development goals and action plan to incorporate the adjustments recommended within the feedback data. Executing the necessary adjustments begins with clearly defining what needs to change and then determining the specific steps required to implement and manage these changes.

But the effort does not end there. Part of the process of doing a Progress Assessment also involves following up with feedback providers: thanking them for their input, offering a summary of the key themes and lessons learned from the data, sharing goals and development plans for taking action based on this feedback, asking for ideas to

refine the action plan further, and including other colleagues in the improvement efforts. Research has found that “time and again, one variable [has] emerged as central to the achievement of positive long-term change. . . . Leaders who discussed their own improvement priorities with their co-workers and then regularly followed up with those co-workers showed striking improvement. Leaders who did not have ongoing dialogue with colleagues showed improvement that barely exceeded random chance.”<sup>15</sup>

In addition, being intentional about making development a team effort allows executives to model the importance of learning and growth, tangibly demonstrating an organization-wide commitment to leadership development. Taking these steps is an important way in which executives create cultures that build effective leaders. Conducting a rigorous Progress Assessment ensures that data, rather than gut feeling, will guide the executive’s ongoing development in a systematic way. This empirical approach maximizes a leader’s learning—as has been confirmed by research showing that the most effective executives are those whose careers have been marked by taking on a variety of new assignments, learning critical lessons, and developing a wide repertoire of skills, abilities, and perspectives.<sup>16, 17</sup> Feedback data from the Progress Assessment will guide the executive in refining leadership-development goals, crafting an action plan to achieve those goals, and specifying activities—such as training, executive coaching, and team development—that will subsequently support the leader’s ongoing development.

## ONGOING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The same issues that are critical to getting a new leader up to speed are important for sustaining effective leadership. Amid today’s constantly changing landscape, an executive must continuously learn, grow, and develop in order to deliver expected results. Strong leadership is not just “nice to have”; it separates the best companies from the rest.<sup>18</sup> And it does not happen by chance—effective leaders are made, not born. To help an executive maintain the momentum of a successful transition, focus must shift to keeping a sharp edge on his or her leadership. This is achieved by providing the person with both

challenge and support in the form of executive coaching, executive advising, and team development.

**Executive coaching.** Executive coaching is perhaps the most well-known means of leader development today. It is a process in which an individual works one on one with a seasoned consultant who is an expert on human behavior and organizational dynamics. To be successful, two fundamental principles must be followed. First, it must be highly customized to address the specific needs of the person being coached, within the context of how changes the executive makes in his or her leadership will lead to improved results. This requires a thorough understanding of the environment in which the executive works. Like the new-leader work, executive coaching is based on a rigorous assessment process, grounded in empirical research and tailored to one's situation and circumstances. Typically, this includes conducting a personality assessment (so that the executive can better understand his or her motivations and behavioral tendencies) and collecting 360-degree feedback from key stakeholders (through a survey or by one-on-one interviews) to identify the strengths, shortcomings, and blind spots that others experience in the executive's leadership. This approach helps the person set appropriate and realistic goals, create effective development plans, measure progress toward goals, and assess change at the end of the coaching engagement.

Second, it must be a confidential. Although coaching serves an organizational purpose—promoting better leadership—the substance of the developmental conversations is known only to the coach and the person being coached. Confidentiality promotes trust in the relationship and provides a safe, supportive environment in which learning can occur, making it possible for the individual to take the risks inherent in change and to grow as a leader and as a person. Organizations are served by the plans developed and results achieved through confidential coaching conversations.

To learn more, see the OLG whitepaper, "[The Value of Executive Coaching](#)."

**Executive advising.** A recent Stanford University study found that nearly two-thirds

of CEOs do not receive outside leadership advice but nearly all want it.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, frequently as an extension of executive coaching, we can serve as trusted advisors, acting as sounding boards, and listening and providing counsel on a wide range of situations in which an impartial outside perspective will help inform an executive's behavior and decision-making. This has led, for instance, to notable improvements in conflict-management, mentoring, talent development, sharing leadership, and delegating to subordinates.

**Team development.** In an increasingly turbulent world, teamwork affords the possibility that a collection of people can make better decisions, come up with more innovative ideas, and implement them faster than individuals working alone. Given the demands of the external operating environment, effective teamwork is a competitive advantage. However, leadership teams often fail to fulfill their potential. People who are “A” executives often lead “C-minus” teams: Real work happens outside of the team; team meetings, rather than being energizing, are merely events to be endured; and the collective IQ of the team is 85, even if team members average 140 as individuals. In order to help organizations maximize the value of their leadership teams, OLG has created a structured yet flexible process that integrates a range of practices to improve the effectiveness of leadership teams. The Leadership-team Development Framework (LTDF) provides an overview of this process.

To learn more, see the OLG whitepapers, [“Is Team Development the Right Tool for the Job”](#) and [“How to Develop a High-Performing Leadership Team.”](#)

## CONCLUSION

It's hard to imagine today but leaders once had the luxury of easing into their roles, learning the ropes, getting to know who they would be working with, and relying on trial and error to show them how to begin.

Of course, that's not the case today. Leaders are expected to deliver immediately, virtually on the first day. And what's more, everyone is expected to provide leadership. This can be daunting, but there is good news. The knowledge about how to make leadership transitions work is out there. The bad news is that knowledge is scattered through many places, and many people are aware of only a part of it.

OLG has consolidated this knowledge and developed a framework to help organizations understand and apply what is known about effective leadership transitions in a systematic and practical way—an important component in the continuous process of developing leaders who deliver superior performance.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>“What’s Missing in Leadership Development,” by Claudio Feser, Nicolai Nielson, and Michael Rennie, *McKinsey Quarterly*, August 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Sara Stibitz, in her blog for the *Harvard Business Review* (May 22, 2015), cites Michael D. Watkins, author of *The First 90 Days: Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2013), as making this estimate.

<sup>3</sup>This figure was found in a 2010 survey of succession planning by David F. Larcker and Stephen A. Miles, for the Rock Center for Corporate Governance and Heidrick & Struggles, as cited on the website for the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University.

<sup>4</sup>This figure is found in an article by Eben Harrell, “Succession Planning: What the Research Says,” in the December 2016 issue of the *Harvard Business Review*. The article discusses “the most salient studies of succession planning.”

<sup>5</sup>Lumenis Partners, in considering executive search, cite this figure. It is also mentioned that the failure rate of new executives hired from the outside is approximately 50% within the first 18 months.

<sup>6</sup>Bradford D. Smart cites this figure in his book *Topgrading* (London, England: Penguin, 2012).

<sup>7</sup>Ken Favaro, Per-Ola Karlsson, and Gary L. Neilson give this estimate in their article in *Strategy & Business* (issue 79, summer 2015) on succession planning.

<sup>8</sup>In the article “Realizing the Value of People Management: From Capability to Profitability,” Rainer Strack, Jean-Michel Cave, Carsten von der Linden, Horatio Quiros, and Pieter Haan cite Boston Consulting Group research that makes this point.

<sup>9</sup>See Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don’t* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001), page 41.

<sup>10</sup>See Linda A. Hill and Kent Lineback, *Being the Boss: The 3 Imperatives for Becoming a Great Leader* (Brighton, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup>See their chapter, “The Challenges of General Manager Transitions,” in *Filling the Leadership Pipeline* (Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership, 2005), pages 45-68.

<sup>12</sup>“Dream Journeys: A New Territory for Executive Coaching,” *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, volume 66, pages 77-92 (2014). See page 78.

<sup>13</sup>"New Leader Assimilation Process: Accelerating New Role-Related Transitions," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, volume 62, pages 56-72 (2010), especially page 60.

<sup>14</sup>See review of the relevant literature in Darren Overfield's 2016 article, "A Comprehensive and Integrated Framework for Developing Leadership Teams," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, volume 68, page 1.

<sup>15</sup>See Marshall Goldsmith and Howard Morgan's 2004 article, "Leadership is a Contact Sport: The 'Follow-up Factor' in Management Development," *Strategy + Business*, issue 36 (reprint 04307).

<sup>16</sup>See the research summary in Robert B. Kaiser and Darren V. Overfield's 2011 article, "Strengths, Strengths Overused, and Lopsided Leadership," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, volume 63, pages 89-109.

<sup>17</sup>See Michael M. Lombardo and Robert W. Eichinger, *The Leadership Machine: Architecture to Develop Leaders for Any Purpose* (Minneapolis, MN: Lominger, 2000).

<sup>18</sup>From the Zenger Folkman Blog, November 27, 2017, "Change Your Leaders to Change Your Culture."

<sup>19</sup>This figure was found in a 2013 survey of executive coaching by David F. Larcker, Stephen Miles, Brian Tayan, and Michelle E. Gutman, conducted by the Miles Group and Stanford University, cited on the website for the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University.



## BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

We build relationships based on trust and integrity. We don't cut corners, operating with transparency, ensuring confidentiality, and delivering on promises. Candor is only possible in a completely confidential environment.



## KEEP SCORE

As Peter Drucker stated, "Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results not attributes." With this spirit in mind, two types of metrics are a critical component of each development initiative: Process metrics monitor progress along the way, and outcome metrics evaluate end results to help deliver on the promise of becoming a more effective leader. We begin by clearly defining with a client what would constitute a "win" and then collaborate to deliver this outcome.



## APPLY SCIENCE

There are three areas of applying evidenced-based best practices. First, there is the science of goal setting and behavior change. Thirty years of research has identified what is effective (and what is not) when it comes to making the behavioral changes required for a person to grow and develop as a leader. We tap into this vast literature and provide practical ways for clients to benefit from its findings without getting lost in the minutiae. Second, there is the commitment to learn how to learn. As Eric Hoffer said, "In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists." Consistent with this message, we help clients apply research-based insights from the burgeoning fields of learning agility and growth (in contrast to relying on fixed mindsets). Third, there is the awareness that one must manage paradox in order to become a versatile leader. As F. Scott Fitzgerald observed, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." In a similar vein, the literature on developing mental complexity provides useful approaches for growing as a leader in the midst of an increasingly turbulent environment.



## KEEP IT SIMPLE (BUT NEVER SIMPLISTIC)

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity." In this spirit, we help clients crystalize the key messages in their assessment results and clearly articulate compelling development goals.



## MAKE IT PERSONAL AND PRACTICAL

We offer truly custom-built solutions, rather than an off-the-shelf, one-size-fits-all approach to development.



## PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

We are concerned with our own growth, requiring of ourselves the same level of learning, risk, and vulnerability that we ask of clients.