



The Great Misalignment

*Talent Readiness
Perception vs.
Reality*

THE HIDDEN LEVER OF SHAREHOLDER VALUE

LEADERSHIP BENCH STRENGTH

Drives Growth, Creates Scale + Minimizes Risk

COST OF LEADERSHIP GAPS

- ✘ External executive search costs
- ✘ Slow leadership ramp-up
- ✘ Failed executive hires
- ✘ High turnover of high potentials
- ✘ Strategic initiatives stall

Hidden Costs: \$2M–\$10M+ annually

VALUE OF LEADERSHIP READINESS

- ✓ Internal promotions fill key roles quickly
- ✓ Faster leadership productivity
- ✓ Lower executive failure risk
- ✓ Higher retention of top talent
- ✓ Strategy executes faster

**Value Creation: Stronger Growth,
Lower Risk, Higher Performance**

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY PROBLEM


Only **14%** of organizations say they have a **strong leadership bench**.

***40-50%** of new leaders fail within the **first 18 months**.*

*Only **29%** of HR leaders say succession pipelines are **ready**.*

WHAT IS READINESS, *REALLY*?

Talent readiness is the degree to which an individual is prepared to take on a specific role or higher responsibility based on their skills, experience and potential.

What Drives Readiness	Degrees of Readiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Capabilities/Competencies <i>Leadership, Relational + Technical</i>✓ Knowledge + Experience✓ Performance Track Record✓ Learning Agility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ready Now – Immediate• Ready Soon – Needs some development• Ready Later – Requires significant development• Not Yet Ready – Lacks significant key capabilities

Readiness is the confidence with which a leader can take on greater complexity and succeed. Not just strong performance in their current role. And not just potential.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT READINESS



CREATE STRONG BENCHES + GROW LEADERSHIP READINESS

Solid Talent Practices

Set the Org up for Success – Build the Foundation

Succession planning is about more than replacing leaders – it's about ensuring the organization always has leaders ready to scale and grow the business.

Practice strong succession planning: Requires strong Talent Review with heavy emphasis on development planning + opportunities

Identify high-potential talent early: Know your potential markers and “scout” that talent “early” in the org; define intentional engagement + retention strategies

Define clear leader “readiness” criteria: Defines success at the next level – it's more than leadership behaviors

Challenging Learning/Educational Opportunities

Commit to Growth – Talk About It, Work on It, Stay With It

Prepare for more – grow capability for greater responsibility, more complexity + richer thinking

Offer structured development programs: Engage in new thinking, frameworks + tools to strengthen leadership practices

Engage in personal + leadership development coaching: Increase self-awareness + perspective; identify new strategies for success + increase accountability

Engage in applied action learning programs: Take on bigger problems and enrich strategic thinking + planning; grow networks



Enriching Career Experiences

Set People Up for Success – Activate Learning + Stretch

Accelerate enterprise perspective, judgment + resilience

Provide real leadership growth experiences: Provide stretch assignments to get people outside their comfort zone

Enable cross-functional mobility: Grow perspective by seeing the business from multiple vantage points

Increase executive exposure: Strengthen visibility + fan base + opportunities for mentoring relationships to form

Engage in strategic talent development: Plan development based on mutual goals – the org + individual; talk it over with meaningful Career, Development + Performance conversations

BUILDING TALENT READINESS ASSESSMENT



Instructions: Rate your organization’s talent readiness based on the rating scale.

1 = Not Yet | 2 = Taking Shape | 3 = Established | 4 = Part of How We Work

SOLID TALENT PRACTICES: Building the Foundation for Leadership Readiness

Practice strong succession planning	
• Leaders engage in regular, calibrated talent discussions for key roles, focusing on performance, potential, and development.	
• Succession plans are reviewed and updated regularly based on evolving business strategy and individual development progress.	
Identify high-potential talent early	
• Clear criteria and potential markers are used to identify emerging leadership talent early.	
• High-potential employees receive intentional development, engagement opportunities, and targeted retention support.	
Define clear leader “readiness” criteria	
• The organization clearly defines success at the next level of leadership including leadership effectiveness, business acumen and enterprise thinking.	
• Leaders and employees understand the capabilities, expectations and experiences required to advance.	

ENRICHING CAREER EXPERIENCES: Activating Learning Through Stretch and Exposure

Provide real leadership growth experiences	
• High-potential employees are intentionally given stretch assignments to build judgement, resilience, and enterprise thinking.	
• Stretch opportunities are planned, assigned and tracked as part of leadership development.	
Enable cross-functional mobility	
• Employees are encouraged and supported to work across functions or business units to broaden experience.	
• Career paths include cross-functional moves that strengthen enterprise perspective and leadership readiness.	
Increase executive exposure	
• Emerging leaders gain direct exposure to senior executives through mentoring, dialogue and leadership interactions.	
• High-potential employees build organizational visibility through strategic initiatives and presentations to senior leadership.	
Engage in strategic talent development	
• Leaders and employees share responsibility for development through regular, meaningful career conversations.	
• Development plans align individual aspirations with organizational needs and future leadership capability.	

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CHALLENGING LEARNING/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: Building Capability for Greater Responsibility

Offer structured development programs	
• The organization provides structured leadership programs that build critical leadership capabilities.	
• Programs equip leaders with practical frameworks, tools, and practices aligned with current and future leadership needs.	
Engage in personal + leadership development coaching	
• Leaders have access to professional coaching and mentoring to deepen self-awareness, broaden perspective, and strengthen leadership effectiveness.	
• Coaching reinforces accountability and supports progress toward leadership development goals.	
Engage in applied action learning programs	
• Leaders work on real strategic challenges through cross-functional projects and business initiatives.	
• These experiences expand leadership capability while strengthening internal and external networks.	

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are your biggest strengths in preparing future leaders?
2. Where do you see the largest gaps in leadership capability or readiness?
3. What roles or levels represent the greatest succession risk?
4. What one or two improvements would most strengthen the leadership bench?



READINESS GROWS FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Growing Executive Leaders - An Inside Out Experience

Understanding Executive Leadership Qualities & Capabilities

Who You Are – the essence of your leadership
What You Want – the aspirations of your leadership
How You Do It – the capabilities of your leadership



Personal development starts by understanding “who you are” and how your personality traits affect how others experience you. Capability development starts by recognizing how people interpret your behaviors and the impact you have on them. It’s all about how they fit together.

Understanding personality traits & behavior together provides a well-rounded view into one’s leadership today and, even more importantly, a path for growth tomorrow.

A Coaching Experience can help an executive assess, interpret, understand and grow in all three areas. The opportunity is to determine and focus on the “area” of growth most pertinent for the individual and the organization.

Who You Are – Is the essence or character of your leadership. It’s about how your leadership is “felt” by others; experienced in observable ways by how your values, beliefs and personality affect your decisions, interactions and relationships. Sometimes due to past experiences or a desire to please, we can struggle with our inner core and confidence.

What You Want – Is your ambition as a leader and what you are willing to do to achieve. Some leaders are willing to work harder or take bigger risks to produce bigger outcomes. While there is no right or wrong on ambition at the executive leader level, it’s critical to demonstrate desire, conviction and determination as you have a responsibility to build and role model engagement and commitment for others.

How You Do it – Is your skill or capability to do executive level work. As you grow in leader roles and responsibility, the requirements for leadership change. Knowing how to deliver on these key skills in a nuanced way within your organization is critical at the executive leader level.

EXECUTIVE SUCCESS – THE INTERMIX BETWEEN WHO, WHAT & HOW

WHO YOU ARE

Defines your character as a leader. It shapes how others trust, follow & connect with you.

Presence: Shows up with confidence, clarity + conviction – communicating decisively + inspiring followership.

Integrity: Aligns values, words + actions. Acts from clear principles to build trust + credibility.

Humility: Demonstrates self-awareness of strengths, limitations+ impact on others. Seeks feedback + prioritizes the collective win.

Empathy: Aware, responsive + emotionally intelligent. Reads the room and values others.

Resilient: Bounces back from adversity; moves forward with commitment to continuous improvement.

WHAT YOU WANT

Reflects your drive and ambition. It shapes the purpose, results and impact you strive to make.

Passion: Authentic drive toward purpose; sets bold ambitions + sustains commitment over time.

Accountability: Owns outcomes + enterprise impact while holding high expectations for self and others.

Courage: Steps into uncertainty, takes thoughtful risks + does what's right even when it's hard.

Tenacity: Practices discipline, pushes through setbacks + puts the mission ahead of self.

Learning: Stays curious with a growth mindset searching for better. Agile + open to new ideas/approaches.

HOW YOU DO IT

Demonstrates your leadership in action. It shapes how you drive results, growth & inspiration.

Strategic Direction: Identifies “where to play,” connecting customer needs + trends. Defines the “right” problems to solve for the win.

Enterprise Focus: Aligns vision + priorities to the operating model. Thinks systemically across functions.

Financial Ownership: Owns P+L and allocates capital with discipline. Balances growth, profitability, and risk to create sustainable value.

Decision Making: Balances judgement with speed, data + intuition. Makes high-quality calls amid ambiguity.

Relationship Building: Establishes trust-based connections across stakeholders. Fosters collaboration and alignment to drive collective results.

Culture Builder: Drives alignment, engagement + performance. Reinforces desired behaviors through rewards + example.

Talent Development: Builds leaders' capability + strengthens the bench. Ensures succession for critical roles.

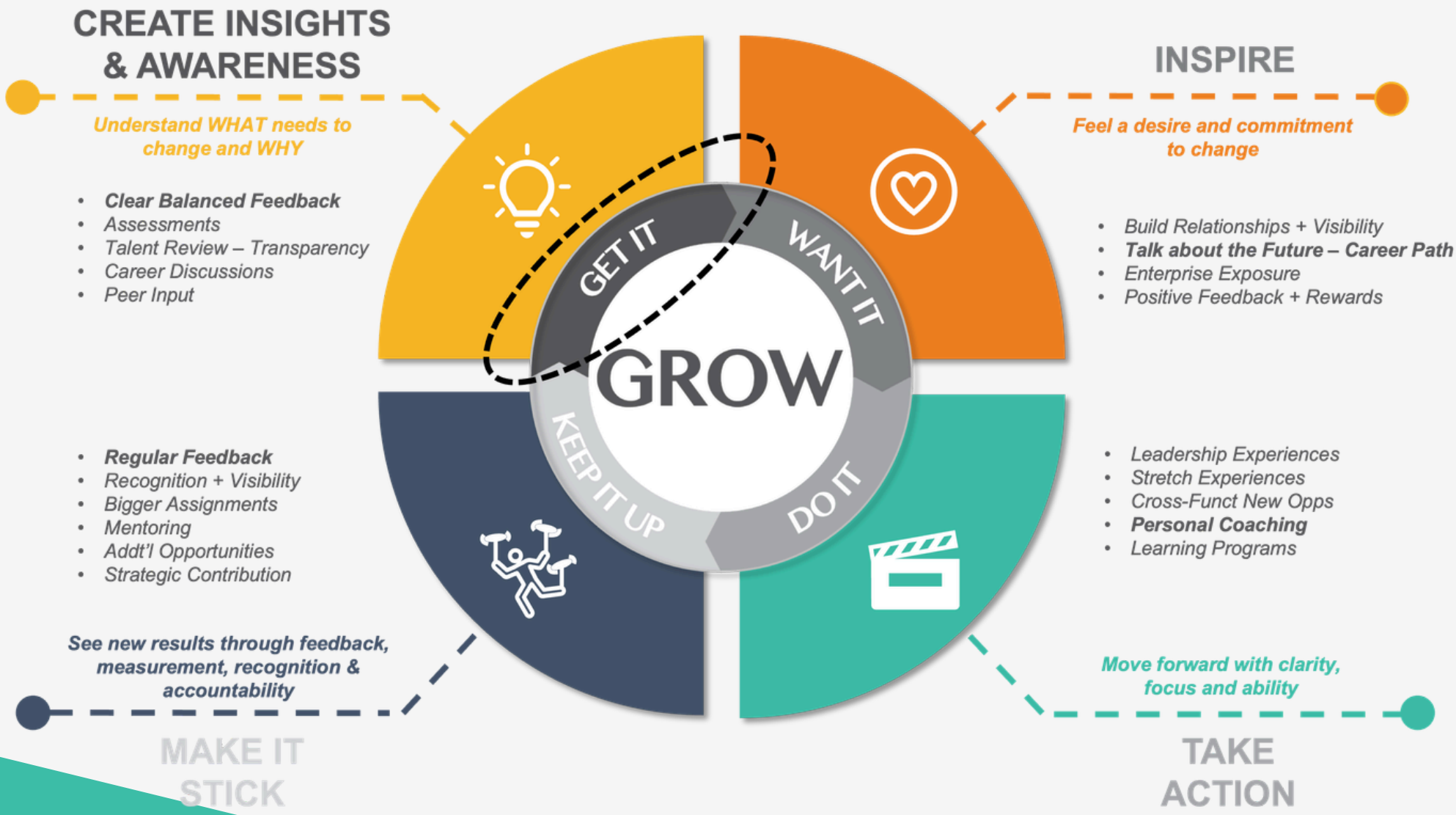
Change Leadership: Powers transformation + mobilizes stakeholders through complexity.

Influence: Conveys credibility. Builds trust, shapes thinking, + drives action.

Team Effectiveness: Selects, aligns + grows team to deliver results and prepare for the future. Ensures the right people are in the right roles doing the right thing.

INDIVIDUAL READINESS + DEVELOPMENT IS ALL ABOUT PERSONAL GROWTH

You Can't Grow Without Changing – Personal Growth Means Personal Change



APPLIED LEARNING EXPERIENCE: ACTION LEARNING + PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen Strategic Problem-Solving Capability

Accelerate Leadership Readiness Through Real Business Impact

Combine cross-functional teamwork + personal development:

- To solve a real business challenge – define the problem, engage stakeholders, and deliver strategic solutions that drive results
- For immediate application with current business challenges + personal leadership capability
- To enable executive visibility + showcase potential

Applied Learning Experience:

- Must matter to the enterprise
- Must produce execution plans
- Must force tradeoffs w/ decisioning
- Best with cross-functional alignment
- May involve capital allocation options

Develop the business and the leader – at the same time.

**Change the Leadership Readiness Equation for \$200-250,000
\$10-15K per leader to build readiness
\$1M-10M when senior leadership fails or turns over
And the largest cost of all: being unprepared for growth**



Structured Process:

Connects each component, facilitates deeper dialogue, and convergent and divergent thinking

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Key Takeaway:

Sweeten Reality – Bigger Bench + More Opportunity

Organizations don't outgrow opportunity – they outgrow their leaders. Build the bench with the right talent practices, a deeper career experience, and rich conversations that strengthen people. Results will follow.

Next Steps:

- Take the Building Talent Readiness Assessment.
- Reach out for a strategic conversation to explore ways to grow readiness in your org.
- Register for our next webinar on May 1 at 10am CST: **No Bench, No Future: Why Leadership Pipelines Break Down**