

Rush to the Top

Accelerating the development
of **leaders** in schools



“ The way schools treat potential and the steps they take to ensure people with the capability and desire to become leaders succeed, matters more than ever. ”

New research from Hay Group suggests that high performing schools are five times more likely than low performing schools to have a formal process for identifying leadership potential. They also spend more time developing this potential and take more care in letting people know that they have been recognised.

The way schools treat potential and the steps they take to ensure people with the capability and desire to become leaders succeed, matters more than ever. One quarter of headteachers are aged over fifty-five, 43% of deputies express no desire to inherit their position and it takes on average twenty years to go from NQT to head. Finding, encouraging and, most critically, accelerating the next generation of leaders is the critical legacy of today's generation.

'Fast track' schemes are nothing new in either the public or private sectors, but our research and experience in

working with corporations and major public services reveals many flaws in the management of high potential – not least in coming up with a common definition. If schools are to take a more proactive role in nurturing talent, then there are some lessons to be learned. In this article, we reflect on why we need to develop leaders more quickly, on what we might mean by potential and on the forces which can derail otherwise promising careers. From this we suggest four strategies underpinning success, which can be adopted by individual schools, by local collaborations and by the system as a whole.



Generation Ex

The demographic statistics are well known. Across the developed world (in all sectors not just education) positions of senior leadership are largely held by the 'baby boom' generation. And this generation is approaching retirement. In fact, 34% of senior leaders could retire today. The next generation, who should be stepping up into their roles, is smaller. In the USA, for example, over the next five years, 75 million people will retire from the workforce and only 45 million will replace them.

There are only a few possible responses. We can keep people in post longer, we can find ways to make do with fewer leaders, we can look for them in new places or we can recruit younger leaders – looking not just to the forty-somethings, but to the thirty-somethings as well. They are all valid strategies (in education, federations reduce the number of leadership roles, for example), but in this article we are concerned with the last two responses – accelerating those people we regard as having significant leadership potential into senior positions more quickly and more reliably than we have been used to. For it seems to us that, in schools, it generally takes too long and we lose too many able people along the way.

The demographic trends have two neglected implications. Firstly, large scale Hay Group studies of leadership competencies reveal that the retiring generation is dramatically stronger in certain characteristics than the generations which will succeed them. Specifically:

- Vision
- Political awareness
- Indirect influencing and alliance building
- Long term thinking and planning.

That these characteristics are more common in experienced leaders is no surprise: they are those which tend to come with maturity. If we believe they are an important part of the contribution of senior leaders, however, we need to understand how they can be acquired more quickly. We are not just talking about accelerating the acquisition of leadership skills, but accelerating leadership maturity. Later we'll explore some principles which may support this.

A second neglected consequence of the demographics is that, if we recruit younger leaders, or leaders from more diverse backgrounds, we will be seeking people with different expectations of work. Younger leaders, coupled with the tendency of professionals to have children later in life, means, for example, that more leaders will have caring responsibilities outside work. Tony Blair is famous, for example, for being the first prime minister in recent memory to have a young family with him in Downing Street; he is unlikely to be the last. Yet leadership roles are becoming all-consuming – more accountable, more exposed, faster paced and broader. There is a feeling among many leaders that they are on demand twenty-four hours a day and that other interests and responsibilities are marginalised. It is unlikely that the next generation will accept this proposition. We already see indications of this in surveys – a recent GTC survey commissioned from MORI suggested that only 4% of teachers currently plan to become a headteacher, and NCSL data show that only 28% of middle leaders plan to take NPQH. Unless we rethink the job itself, no amount of development will produce the volume of leaders we need. We should also remember that younger leaders will eventually mean longer serving leaders, making the question of sustainability even more troubling.



Pedal to the Metal

Succession planning is firmly on the agenda in education, and is at the forefront of managers' minds in every sector. 90% of corporations list succession planning as a top priority (although only 20% of CEOs were confident they had got it right). We are starting to see specific strategies in schools and groups of schools to define what we mean by effective leadership and to forecast the numbers required, to identify people with talent at all levels of experience and from all backgrounds and to apply a comprehensive set of development strategies to move them forward.

Among those organisations rated most highly by their peers for leadership, there are a number of common themes to their succession planning strategies:

- They attach a strong, public and symbolic importance to effective leadership; in some of the organisations rated as the best companies for leaders, the CEO spent as much as 50% of their time developing other leaders
- They are clear about what effective leadership looks like, and which roles are most critical to organisational success
- They are clear about which people have the most potential to advance as leaders
- They, therefore, ruthlessly prioritise their resources towards the roles and people who will make the most difference
- They use a portfolio of different techniques for leadership development, including extensive on-the-job support, rather than relying on external programmes exclusively
- They measure the impact of development and hold people accountable for developing other leaders and making use of the training they receive

¹You can find out more about the best practices for leadership development in the article *How to Grow Leaders* on www.haygroup.com/uk/schoolleadership

²See www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/fasttrack/index.cfm

³See www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/futureleaders

- They are committed for the long term, seeing this as an essential and enduring part of their strategy.¹

The private sector is still ahead of education, as a whole, in the management of potential. In our surveys, 61% of private companies had a formal process for identifying high potential staff, compared to 37% of schools and 49% actively managed their careers, compared to 24% of schools. However, high performing schools as a group were easily the equal of private sector practice; suggesting that it is both possible and desirable to make use of these practices.

The most prominent example of accelerating potential across the education system as a whole is the Fast Track scheme.² This uses formal assessment techniques to identify a cohort of potential leaders at early stages of their careers, provides additional development opportunities and actively tracks and supports their careers; seven years in and the first alumni are approaching headship – showing a dramatic acceleration of the usual time taken. Fast Track also demonstrates some of the difficulties of formal high potential schemes – the need to ensure full buy in from colleagues and host organisations; suspicions of differential treatment of supposed 'stars' and the need, therefore, for the evaluation criteria to be defensible. It has sometimes proved necessary to show that people moving quickly through leadership levels stay long enough to make an impact before moving on.

Variations on these schemes are emerging elsewhere within the education system – including the Future Leaders³ programme, with even more ambitious timescales for acceleration and NCSL's local succession planning strategies, which contain explicit guidance for school collaborations on identifying high potential and managing their careers.

Early Warning Signs

The first step in the successful management of leadership potential is to define the term itself. What does potential look like? Does it really exist and how might we recognise it? At what stage in someone's career does it first become evident? The last question is perhaps easiest to answer, for headteachers tend to agree: if you are looking carefully you can spot leadership potential from the earliest days of someone's career. It implies that leadership development needs to begin early.

Formal definitions of 'leadership potential' vary greatly and some would contest its very existence as an independent entity – ascribing progress mainly to combinations of environment and opportunity.

The Canadian writer, Elliott Jacques⁴ believes that capacity for senior positions is a function of one's planning horizon – the number of years ahead one typically thinks about and deals with. This horizon does increase over time, for everyone, but its ultimate extent is fixed, and predictable. If I'm operating on two year timescales at the age of 30, I may develop eight year horizons in my fifties; if I'm operating at six months, I will probably only advance to two years.

A full definition of potential requires a clear understanding of the roles we are developing people towards – characteristics are not intrinsically

effective, but only more or less useful in relation to a task. It is also true that potential is not always fulfilled (a topic we explore later). These factors demand real caution about identifying and investing in potential, but experienced leaders also tend to agree on a range of factors they look for in those judged worth pushing forward. Among headteachers, the traits commonly identified as 'early warning signs' of leadership include:

- Confidence and credibility
- The ability to see the big picture, to make connections and think of the whole school
- Mastering the basics of their role quickly and looking for more
- Getting involved (doesn't look the other way or walk past incidents)
- Initiative and self motivation (the sort of people you can't stop from leading)
- Intellectual curiosity and capacity (sees the common threads)
- Resilience and empathy (to survive the pace of acceleration and learn from others).

Neither being the top performer in one's current job, nor expressing great personal ambition and drive are particularly good predictors of long term potential.

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⁴See Requisite Organisation for example



Coming off Track

However defined, potential is too often unfulfilled, promising leaders are too often knocked off course. If we plan to accelerate more high potentials into positions of responsibility, we need to understand and reduce these ‘derailing’ forces. We can split them into two broad camps: factors derived from the organisation and those stemming from the individual themselves. Sometimes we sabotage potential, other times people do it to themselves.

One of the foremost causes of organisational failure in developing potential is a lack of support during key career transitions.

The need for support during one’s first management experience is pretty obvious, but the fact is that leadership careers are

not steady, linear progressions, marked by gradually increasing demands. Instead, they contain a number of profound transitions, with dramatic changes in the nature of the job. Not only do these transitions require skills and perceptions which are hard to acquire until you actually get there but, more painfully, they often require the unlearning of hard won strategies and approaches.

Three common leadership transitions include:

- ‘**First leadership role**’ – usually around moving into tactical implementation (see page 13)
- ‘**Top job**’ – usually around moving into strategic alignment
- ‘**Emeritus**’ – usually around moving into system leadership.

Transition	Essence	Change	‘Unlearn’	Support
First Line	First time performance depends wholly on others	Communicating thinking; delegating effectively	Personal achievement drive and excellence	Moral support Peer-to-peer networking Early feedback on impact
Top Job	The buck stops with you	Focus on strategy and structure; lengthen horizons; role model	Working through mastery of detail and expertise	Insight into organisation Creating space to think and plan Confidence to act and not to act
Emeritus	Swapping authority for influence	Empower other leaders; suggest and coach; let go	Making decisions, directing	Blunt feedback from client insight into motives and values

Take, for example, the transition from individual contributor to first line manager. People are often promoted to their first management position on the basis of an outstanding individual contribution – they are driven, ambitious, conscientious. They acquire new skills, work hard on tasks and take pride in their accomplishments. None of this matters very much when managing other people – it is their skills and their accomplishments which matter and new leaders must learn to take satisfaction from watching other people succeed and grow. Their habits of personally diving into and mastering new tasks and challenges may be actively harmful – creating the impression they are unwilling to delegate, to coach or to trust colleagues.

Such transitions occur at several levels, each demanding a change in self image as a leader. Organisations should invest heavily in supporting people through these transitions or risk a high rate of attrition and reduced performance from delays in mastering the new brief. Chief among the tactics for support are mentoring and coaching, as the challenges encountered are often highly personal. Careful preparation, including communicating the extent of the transition, is also vital. Too many organisations neglect the rituals of induction and transition – often a more formal and celebratory approach to role changes can help people discard old habits and take on new priorities.⁵

The other critical external challenge to fulfilling potential is that job demands change over time. It is very hard to predict

today what the leadership roles of five, ten or fifteen years hence will look like. Ten years ago, we were developing leaders for positions of clear, managerial authority – to plan investments and direct resources that were clearly under their control. Today, we are asking those same people to collaborate with peers and exert indirect influence over complex and ambiguous networks of agencies; much of what they were taught is unhelpful.

Hay Group’s research on well connected leaders, for example, found that they modelled themselves on a leader who was innovative, approachable, honest, passionate and adaptable; compared to the averagely connected leaders’ models of leaders as authoritative, expert, credible, diplomatic, visionary and efficient. The well connected leaders displayed different characteristics: they were more tenacious, more optimistic, less constrained by boundaries, better listeners, and less committed to pre-defined plans. ⁶The table below summarises some of key differences between connected leadership roles and traditional management posts.

Formal Management	Connected Leadership
Vertical	Horizontal
Hierarchical	Collegiate
Instruction	Dialogue
Constrained	Flexible
One way	Two way
Accountability	Reciprocity
Robust	Fragile
History irrelevant	History matters
Control of resource	Creation of trust

⁵See also Top Leadership: Taking the Inner Journey by Rick Lash, in the Ivey Business Journal.

⁶For more on connected leaders, see the book Connected Leadership by Emmanuel Gobillot, Director at Hay Group, available on Amazon.

This suggests caution in our own planning horizons and in how specific we wish to be about the skills we are developing. Perhaps the ultimate transferable skills are the abilities to read one's environment, learn from others and the adaptability to relish new challenges. It also implies that leadership development should be specified and directed by those with a stake in the future rather than the past. We should be asking high potentials to at least partly develop their own curriculum.

Reading the situation: some foundations

Empathy – with both individual and group perspectives and emotions

Conceptual thinking – the ability to discern patterns amidst ambiguity

Humility – a willingness to come without the answers and to not be on the centre stage

Curiosity – a drive to understand, question, probe, listen and learn

Self awareness – a knowledge of strengths, weaknesses and preferences

Resilience – realistic optimism about self and others

Objectivity – an ability not to immediately take ownership and become immersed in or associated with a situation

Leadership development should be specified and directed by those with a stake in the future rather than the past.

We can already see a need for the next generation of school leaders to master the demands of customer service, to acquire the political skills of community mobilisation, to deliver through projects rather than functions and departments, to 'create with' rather than 'deliver to', to lead without clearly defined organisational boundaries, to create employer brands

which appeal to a far more diverse and demanding workforce, to use technology effectively and to redefine the purpose and contributions of their institutions; managing the competing priorities within their own lives, those of their teams and those of their organisations will also be critical. How much of today's training recognises these trends?

Other barriers to the realisation of early potential exist not in the organisation but in the person. Most obviously, and perhaps most benignly, priorities change. Changing personal circumstances, experience and maturity may all deflect someone from their original aspirations and we may feel that this is no bad thing. At most, it warns us against putting too much weight on one or two protégés or assuming that, once potential is identified, the progress of someone's career is largely fixed.

More serious, however, is when we observe people sabotaging their own careers despite their continued ambition to make it to the top. In our work with senior leaders in the private sector we have observed a number of common traits in such derailments:

- A short term focus on immediate results or acquiring technical expertise, at the expense of building capacity or acquiring breadth of experience
- Arrogance or an assumption of being smarter than one's peers
- The inability to listen to others
- A lack of self-control and self awareness.

These attributes are sometimes the negative counter-parts of the very qualities which lead people to be identified as high potentials in the first place: ambition, achievement orientation, focus, self confidence.

However defined, potential is too often unfulfilled, promising leaders are too often knocked off course.



Managing Potential

Four strategies for success

Building on these reflections, we have identified four success criteria underpinning the management of staff with high potential for leadership. There are many other things to get right, but these are perhaps the most contentious:

1. A focus on readiness versus potential alone
2. A focus on impact above promise
3. The creation of better jobs
4. The management of maturity.

1. Readiness versus Potential

Succession planning can focus on two goals:

- Readiness to make the next career step – what should this be, how far should they go this time, when should it happen and what support do they need?
- Potential – a judgement about the ultimate destination of someone’s career.

Based on the factors discussed earlier, including the changing shape of jobs and individual priorities, our contention is that a focus on readiness is more important and more reliable than making possibly shaky judgements about someone’s long term potential. Of course we’ll have a sense of where they might go, but an investment in making sure that each immediate career move is timely and appropriate is far more likely to accelerate

talented leaders along their career paths, without offering hostages to fortune or creating excessive pressure.

The only caveat is to ensure that each career move takes place within a broader sense of direction, offering different shapes of roles to build a breadth of experience. Sideways moves can be equally important to career development – ensuring that talented staff get exposure to operational, policy and project-based roles, as well as different functions and departments can add greatly to their confidence and ability.

But, there are a number of prerequisites to taking advantage of readiness:

- A clearly defined structure of leadership roles which grow in size and impact
- Clarity about the characteristics associated with success at each level
- An understanding of the sensible steps – which jobs are natural precursors to others, whether a particular gap between roles is too large or too small
- A steady flow of people through leadership roles to ensure that readiness to move can be fulfilled in a timely fashion; this may sometimes involve letting a talented leader leave the organisation if they are ready for growth but there are no appropriate opportunities internally
- Open and honest communication with people about our assessments of their potential (which requires

evidence and an objective process for forming those assessments) – letting people know when we think they are ready and being honest when we think they are not (including what could change that assessment)

- A recognition that there are few perfect fits, even for the next logical career move – we should identify development needs and supply support during the transitions. Managers should check on progress regularly rather than assume that a talented member of staff will simply absorb the challenge – it is hard to predict when they will encounter unexpected gaps in their knowledge.

Role Matrix

The table below suggests six levels of increasing job size, based on studies of thousands of executive roles in the public and private sectors globally. You may wish to evaluate your own leadership structure against this and identify gaps or ‘bunches’. It is also worth noting that growth in job size is not dependent on line management responsibilities or the physical size of the team managed and is suitable for application to a wide variety of contributions inside and outside schools.

System Leadership	Accountable for delivery within a system as a whole generating system-level principles structures and initiatives	Connect, facilitate and leverage the processes players and programmes of a system as whole	Shape the concepts and strategies which underpin a system as a whole; acknowledge thought leader
Strategy Formation	Provide the overall sense of direction and vision for a large complex organisation or group in line with system-wide principles	Define and oversee strategic programmes across multiple organisations through indirect influence over a diverse network of resources	Lead innovative and far reaching policy/strategic developments; partner in the determination of organisational strategy
Strategic Alignment	Stimulate, co-ordinate and direct multiple diverse strategic themes providing goals within a broader vision	Define and deliver multiple measurable long term programmes through indirect influence over a diverse network of resources	Develop policy and strategy and co-ordinate application; provide authoritative advice on major issues
Strategic Implementation	Responsible for agreeing and implementing wider and longer strategic themes within strategic goals	Deliver broadly defined results in clear projects aimed at broad/complex areas through indirect influence over a diverse network of resources	Translate and apply broader but related policy themes; offer skilled specialist advice
Tactical Implementation	Responsible for the operation of a clearly defined unit within a given overall strategy	Deliver tightly defined results in a specific area through indirect influence over a network of resources	Translate and apply a clearly defined area of policy; provide technical advice
Tactical Involvement	Helps others to meet well defined challenges within clear plans	Provide support and facilitate communication on specific projects	Investigate and support the development or application of specific policies
	Operational	Co-ordination	Policy

2. Impact versus Promise

We are all familiar with the high flyer who moves on before their results become evident, who builds a career by staying one step ahead of the consequences of their judgements. It is this pattern which puts fast track schemes into disrepute and breeds disgruntlement among colleagues. Career management should be a two way street – people’s careers are advanced in return for deepening their contribution and commitment to the organisation. Unfortunately, the more senior the leadership role, the more complex its contribution and the longer it takes for success to be clear. It becomes too easy to focus on what someone could or should be capable of, rather than whether their current results predict future success.

We are not in favour of promoting solely on the basis of current performance – sometimes the top performer in a role has reached the pinnacle of their contribution and promotion will destroy their effectiveness and their career. An evaluation needs to be made against the characteristics identified as leading to success in the next role – but the evidence for this evaluation needs to be drawn from the impact the individual is currently making. With suitable realism, it is often possible to identify, without much ambiguity, a positive or negative leadership impact within a year. And, sometimes, fast track careers will benefit from a pause until this impact has been identified – learning to recover from early mistakes and misjudgements (rather than running away) is a vital skill for every leader. Demonstrated impact also makes it far easier to sell colleagues on the benefits of the scheme to the system.

Diagnosing Impact

The four questions below suggest a framework for assessing readiness to progress based on current impact in job. They are designed to solicit feedback from colleagues or stakeholders and to provide an assessment not only of scale of contribution, but the shape as well. This should enable evidence-based choices about the timing and direction of the next step – and a strong sense of accountability for delivery.

1. What is the single greatest contribution that Sue has made in school in the last term? Please describe in a single sentence ...
2. How would you describe the nature and style of this specific contribution? Select any descriptors that apply from the following list:
 - Intellectual / policy / creative
 - Delivery of results / follow through
 - Inspiration and mobilisation of colleagues
 - Co-ordination of resources and information.
3. How would you rate the level or scope of this specific contribution on the following scale?
 - Delivers alone or contributes to others’ goals
 - Operates a single, well-defined area of responsibility
 - Directs and co-ordinates a few wider, more complex strategic themes
 - Directs and co-ordinates many diverse strategic themes within a broader vision
 - Provides the overall sense of direction for a complex organisation or group
 - Generates system-level principles, structures and initiatives.
4. If Sue wanted to move to the next higher level of contribution, what should she learn or develop or do differently to get there?

3. Real Jobs for Real People

Too few people will be interested in becoming leaders and too many talented staff will burn out, if we persist in the hero model of leadership – authoritative in every situation, knowledgeable in every field, accountable for every action; polished, perfect and relentlessly enthusiastic. This model is deep rooted in our culture and many job holders conspire themselves to perpetuate it – gaining secret short term satisfaction from sacrifice, troubleshooting, being in demand, even martyrdom. Most senior teams complain about the pressures that keep them from being reflective and strategic – yet many of their members return to operational behaviour, and are unable to resist giving advice or saving the day for others.

The first step in building real leadership jobs is to think about the individual accountabilities of each role and where that job fits within the structure of other roles. Can these accountabilities be delivered within a reasonable commitment? And, does each accountability have a clear measure of success associated with it? Very often, dedicated people over-commit to their work because they can never be entirely certain they have done a good job – they feel like there is always something more they could be doing. It is the responsibility of their managers to set boundaries with clear performance criteria – to specify the central contribution of the role and to reward when that contribution is delivered. Role holders need clarity about the vision and their contribution to it, so that they can prioritise between essentials and the desirables. We need to be ruthless about pruning away to focus on the essentials.

It is also vital to ensure alignment for every leadership role between accountability, the authority to act upon this accountability and the resources or capability to deliver – all three are needed to succeed. The language of accountability is common place within education, but the language of authority – about the scope of a role’s freedom to act – is far less common. In a collaborative or multi-agency environment, freedom to act is complicated, but it is possible to map inter-locking contributions by being more subtle about what we mean by authority. Given any specific accountability or task:

- Do we have a right to make decisions without reference?
- Do we have a duty to consult or to inform others?
- Do we have a right to be consulted or informed?
- Can we veto or delay activity?
- If something goes wrong, what is the next layer of accountability?

This implies, of course, clarity about the outcomes and the tasks required to deliver them – a defining feature of successful collaborations.⁷

Accountability, Authority and Capability



⁷See, for example, Hay Group’s research on Decisive Collaboration, on www.haygroup.co.uk

Senior leadership roles in particular are only feasible if their holders are skilled and confident in delegating responsibility not only for tasks but for the outcomes of those tasks – they cannot hold themselves directly responsible for every result within their area – only for ensuring that the environment exists within which other people can succeed.

This raises the most fundamental change required for real, doable jobs – reconstructing our role models and social norms for effective leadership. This is a painstaking cultural shift away from heroic and charismatic models. Key elements of this new norm include:

- Accountability for creating an enabling environment for others rather than outstanding personal delivery
- A focus on contribution and results, not inputs, time or knowledge
- Recognition and celebration of outside interests and multiple priorities
- Ruthless prioritisation of the essentials over perfection
- Finding a unique contribution, based on one's strengths, in the context of a team of others with complementary skills and expertise
- Rewarding and expecting strategic vision in senior roles
- Proper delegation of accountability and authority
- The celebration of listening, curiosity and experimentation/improvement over credibility, authority and obedience.

Today's senior leaders have the tools they need to develop these norms: it depends on what they choose to celebrate, who they promote, the stories they tell about what good leadership looks like, the feedback they give, the things they measure, notice or ignore and, of course, their own behaviour as role models.⁸

4. Short cuts to Maturity

The final element of best practice returns to our original discussion of demographics and the competencies that disappear with retirement. Our concern was that some leadership behaviours are closely associated with maturity and length of experience. If we are accelerating a younger generation into leadership positions, will we tend to lose these valuable behaviours, or is it possible to also accelerate the process of maturing as a leader?

Of course, one valuable response to this concern is to try not to lose that wisdom from the workforce quite so quickly – by retaining experienced leaders in consultative and mentoring roles alongside the next generation. This would seem to be a vital component of any effective response, and attractive to both parties.

In terms of developing leadership maturity and wisdom, there is also reason for optimism. Most of us will be familiar with the old adage that you find some people with twenty years experience, and others with experience of the same year twenty times – the trick in supporting high potentials is to ensure breadth and diversity of experience, to make the most of the limited time available. This is achievable, but requires a slightly different approach to leadership development.

Firstly, we need to abandon the reliance on external, off-site leadership development programmes and instead see leadership development as a permanent, on-the-job activity. External programmes are important, but they are one component of a portfolio of activities. Often this will form a rhythm which balances the conceptual/reflective elements of formal training with the practical/experimental elements of learning by doing – such a rhythm creates the strongest blend of vision and action. Schools then need to step up the elements of leadership development proven to work for the acceleration of potential:

- Job shadowing opportunities to observe and work closely with more senior leaders
- Job rotation opportunities, where people work in unfamiliar functions or contexts
- Participation and consultation on cross-school initiatives
- Mentoring and coaching to support the interpretation of experience.

The tools to achieve these in schools are widely available in the shape of temporary 'acting' posts, assignments to special projects inside or outside the school and longer term secondments to other schools, sectors or countries.

Best Practice Checklist

1. How consistently do you plan the next career move for each member of staff? What evidence do you use to make these judgements? Do these decisions take place within a broader sense of the direction of a career? Do you discuss them openly?
2. How much support do you provide before, during and after significant changes in role?
3. Do you have a clear structure of increasingly larger leadership roles, both with and without line management responsibilities?
4. Do you know which leadership roles matter most for the success of your school? How might this have changed in five years time? What characteristics will be required to succeed then?
5. Do you measure the impact of leaders? Do you hold them accountable not only for today's results but for increasing their capacity to contribute? Do you hold them accountable for developing other leaders? How do you measure success in each of these areas?
6. Is it possible to succeed in a senior leadership role in your school and still have significant external interests?
7. Are role holders clear about when they have succeeded? Do they know what is essential in their contribution, and what is desirable?
8. How many different leadership development techniques do you use and how well do they fit together?

⁸For an extended discussion on the tools of cultural change in schools, see for example A Culture for Learning on www.haygroup.com.uk/schoolleadership

Conclusions

Hay Group is in the relatively unusual position of working extensively in both education and business. Our experience tells us, and the results of our recent survey confirm, that thinking about leadership in education is as advanced as in any other sector. There are few areas in which schools need fear the comparison. In the identification and management of leadership potential throughout people's careers there are lessons to be learned – ones that lie at the heart of the education system's response to the changing shape of the workforce.

It is perhaps easier for the management team of a large corporation to take a long term, systemic view – they are clearly responsible for developing leaders throughout their organisation. Schools, on the other hand, are too small to develop leadership careers in isolation from each other. The development of breadth, perspective and vision in leaders requires a broad range of experience in a variety of responsibilities and contexts.



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