SNAPSHOTS



FROM STARS TO TALENT CLUSTERS

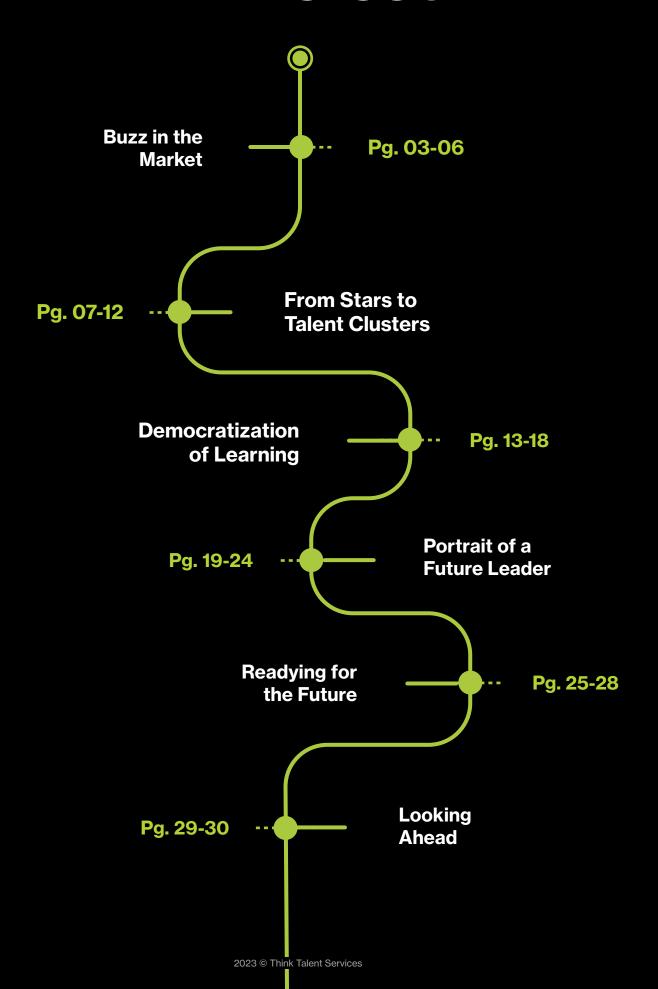
DEMOCRATIZATION OF LEARNING

PORTRAIT OF A FUTURE LEADER

READYING FOR



IN THIS ISSUE



Introduction

In the last decade, a new world of work has emerged through a sea of rapid changes.

he impact of some recent crises has been intense and especially unforgiving to organizations across industries.

Well-established strategies and processes face the threat of overhauling in an increasingly uncertain business environment, leaving many organizations struggling to adapt. Many are realigning their focus on building resilience and flexibility in their operations. Achieving that requires empowering employees to be adaptable and agile in learning new skills and ways of working.

Talent has always been a priority for most organizations. What is changing is the way talent is defined, nurtured, and led.

There is a push towards 'humanizing' the approach to engaging and taking along employees, as against pure resource management.

Phenomena like the pandemic and the great resignation have put tremendous pressure on the existing talent pipelines of organizations. The traditional assumptions around success profiles and competency frameworks for effectiveness in managerial and leadership roles are being challenged. The rise of technology has impacted talent practices significantly. Younger digital natives think of their careers very differently than previous generations.

Organizations today will benefit from a serious rethinking of their talent management strategy to ensure continued relevance.

Recent developments show how New-age Talent rejects traditional HR ideas. Big MNCs with established talent management processes have been compelled to change their thinking and are trying to adapt to the demands of the new talent market.





Here are the **top four trends** that are getting incorporated in the strategies of Talent-first organizations:

From Stars to Talent Clusters

In terms of succession planning frameworks, companies seem to be shifting focus from identifying and grooming 'stars' to developing broader talent and competency clusters.

Democratization of Learning

New digital platforms and tools are enabling companies to democratize key processes like learning and talent review and cover broader cohorts of people under these processes.

New Leadership Frameworks

Many companies are refreshing their competency frameworks and leadership success profiles to emphasize leading with empathy, digital dexterity, and managing ambiguity.

Next-gen Thinking

Young people in companies are coming in with new expectations around career and professional identity, which existing talent management frameworks may find difficult to meet.

As you turn to the subsequent pages of **Snapshots**, you will catch a glimpse of a multitude of thoughts that go into building a resilient talent pipeline.

66

Building a talent pipeline is about more than just filling open positions; it's about fostering a culture of growth, continuous improvement, and resilience.







The traditional philosophy and operating models for talent management are undergoing rapid shifts.

As HR professionals, we can't keep operating with the same approach that has evolved for the last 50 years.

Every organization will have to figure out its own middle ground.

Evolution of Talent Strategies and Operating Principles ——

- The Purdue Super Chicken experiment can be seen as a metaphor for the concept of 'Stars' in organizations, where organizations often kept removing people from the lower rungs of the performance ladder to create **ideal high-performing teams**. Yet this only led to negative consequences such as power imbalance and lack of diversity.
- Organizations are increasingly creating heliotropic cultures, i.e., the ability to 'zoom in' on specific tasks and goals and 'zoom out' and take a more holistic view of operations and objectives. The primary aim is to keep strategies flexible to accommodate the desired outcomes.
- The central talent philosophy should focus on the fact that each person brings unique capabilities and **everyone is talent.** The organization must provide its people with the right support and platform to deliver their best.

- Experience is irrelevant in today's world.
 Unless you can continuously learn and adapt through agility, be open to new ideas, and be willing to challenge the status quo and embrace change, you are irrelevant. This is the talent landscape we are grappling with at this point.
- Talent can be compared to seeds that need a conducive environment to grow and flourish. While a small percentage of individuals may still excel even in adverse conditions, the majority will thrive in a supportive environment.
- Many organizations are moving away from an **exclusive club** called stars. The focus is to create an environment that is inclusive enough, enabling enough, and discerning enough for all our people.

New Attributes Needed for Modern Leaders

- Digital dexterity, flexibility, and inclusion have become the red threads that have crept into how we view leadership and talent in the organization.
- Other than performance and potential, we are looking at internal credibility as an important differentiator. Hence, feedback is gathered from different organizational stakeholders through a 360-degree process to assess it.

Scaling-up and Democratizing Talent Processes

- Due to limited resources, organizations had to choose whom to spend it on previously. So, the natural logic was that only 10% of your workforce would be considered high potential. But with the technology advancement and reduced cost, organizations can now choose to allow everybody to put their best foot forward or to learn and grow in the same space.
- democratized approach to career growth, which involves making the promotional process transparent and unbiased to identify and nurture the best from a diverse pool of potential candidates. This approach particularly appeals to millennials, who may have concerns about traditional hierarchies and seek equal opportunity and fairness in the workplace.
- Organizations can now afford to use digital mechanisms to make assessments **bite-sized** and easy to administer to large cohorts. It helps to

- make learning and development initiatives more efficient, leading to sharper capabilities.
- With changing times, teams no longer have clear boundaries, and roles have become porous. To assess talent effectively, we must adopt a more holistic approach and make a shift in both technology and mindset. While organizations are moving fast in terms of technology, the mindset shift for some remains challenging.
- While technology and easy access to data has made our lives easier, we still need to bring our minds together to solve talent problems creatively. It is the **human mind**, not just numbers, that will be able to address these challenges effectively.
- The talent strategies and opportunities must align with the aspirations and goals of the multigenerational talent to collaborate and engage with them effectively.

FROM STARSTO TALENT CLUSTERS

The entire concept of loyalty is changing.

he world has been grappling with a lot of change in the last few months, and one of the most startling outcomes has been the Great Attrition. It is evident that the workforce is realigning its priorities and is feeling more confident in making choices.

The solid performers are no longer willing to wait for the organization to cater to their aspirations.

Further, people are looking beyond the age-old motivators of salary and promotion. They are expecting exposure or opportunity to work on new things, flexibility, learning & networking, etc. For organization leaders, it is not enough to think of just their stars but a broader talent landscape. Different individuals will bring different skills and capabilities. Also, given talent mobility, thinking of clusters or pools of talent as against individuals may make more sense. No single leader, person, or department has all the answers in today's world, resulting in a truly interdependent workplace.

The body of knowledge itself will be highly interconnected and interdisciplinary.

Interdependence cannot thrive without a culture of complete trust and comradery, as people will rely on others for their own success.

Finally, there is the organizational need to create Talent Pools or cultivate the knowledge and expertise to remain relevant, innovative, and progressive in the future. Businesses cannot operate as they have in the past. Customers nowadays expect every touchpoint in an organization to provide a consistent experience.

In a nutshell, the workforce and industry needs are pushing leaders and HRs to shift their focus from star talent to talent clusters.

Here are some **common gaps** that organizations may want to address:

Holding on to the traditional talent management processes

The robust structured processes have helped organizations for a long time. However, it might not be enough to provide the flexibility and the nimbleness required to manage aspirations at an individual level.

People management is just one aspect of the manager's role

People management is, in essence, the most important aspect of the manager's role. Also, managers and people leaders need to operate at a significantly higher level than others. They need to seamlessly balance the big-picture, the practical requirements of the work, individual needs, and priorities. Invested conversations need to be done for all employees and not just the star performers.

Not focusing enough on collaboration within or outside the organization

Of late, there have been many discussions on moonlighting. Aside from the legal ramifications, there are certain other things to consider. On one hand, it reflects the gig economy mindset that began long before the pandemic. On the other, it shows the extent of collaborative opportunities that exist, bringing together multiple skills, wherever they can be garnered, to deliver an outcome.

From the Talent Vault

Redesigning Leadership Development Initiative at a Global Energy Leader

Highlights

Initiative being delivered in partnership with Think Talent **since 2015**

Coverage expanded to include a broader talent pool with a **3x cohort size**

Design adapted to provide **differentiated experiences** for specific cohorts

Content redesigned to focus on topics related to the **future success profile** of leaders

Program Design

Since 2015, Think Talent has partnered with the client's HR team to deliver this development program for high-potential employees at the middle management level.

It has now become an **integral part** of the organization's talent management and leadership development process and a **rite of passage** for senior leadership roles.

Over the last four years, the program design has undergone some interesting changes reflecting the **broader changes in the talent strategy** of the organization.

- The program coverage has expanded to cover 3x the original cohort size, reflecting the need to broaden the focus to a **larger talent pool** from a narrow group of potential stars.
- From delivering a common experience to all participants, the program design has been adapted to provide differentiated experiences to different participant cohorts.

 This is primarily achieved by dividing the program into two phases with a select group of participants, identified based on their performance in **Phase I**, being given the opportunity to receive more personalized inputs on advanced leadership topics in **Phase II**.
- The focus areas and content have been redesigned to focus on topics related to future success profiles, such as **digital readiness** and **adaptability**, as well as a deeper focus on **self-awareness**.

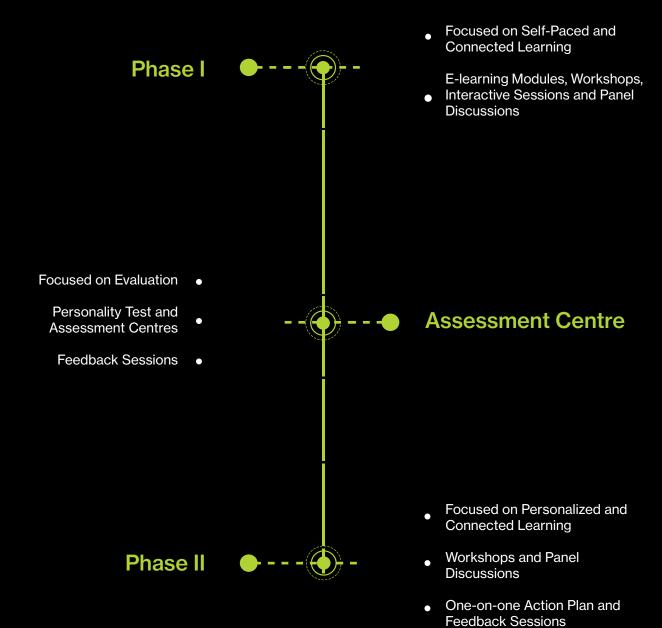
Impact

500+ Future Leaders have emerged through this initiative over the past few years, with many of them going on to occupy next-level leadership roles.

Development Themes



Program Flow





This is not to suggest that there will not be any more 'stars' in an organization. It is just that almost every individual employee will have to be a contributor by bringing unique capabilities to the table. That will be the best formula for individuals and organizations. Limiting development investment to a few is likely to backfire.

The people processes need to be significantly more democratic and nimbler than they have been in the past.

Organizations that do not consistently listen and respond to employee feedback will struggle to retain or hire talent at all levels.

Some of the things to keep in mind:

Focus on the intangible as much as the tangible

Interdependencies can flourish only by driving a culture of empathy, shared purpose, and transparency. The performance matrix, competency frameworks, and developmental conversations need to make people appreciate that they depend on each other and reflect ways of driving successful coalitions. Celebrate the stories of comradery, risk, and learning.

Need to reinvent the wheel

Organizations need to reassess their employee development and career growth frameworks.

Expert Opinion

Critical things to offer would be opportunities to experiment, network, and experience other career options. Not just experiencing different functions but being involved in diverse projects simultaneously. The career lattice needs to be like a maze or a chess board, which offers flexibility to the employee to choose their paths. It would almost be like managing your own internal gig economy.

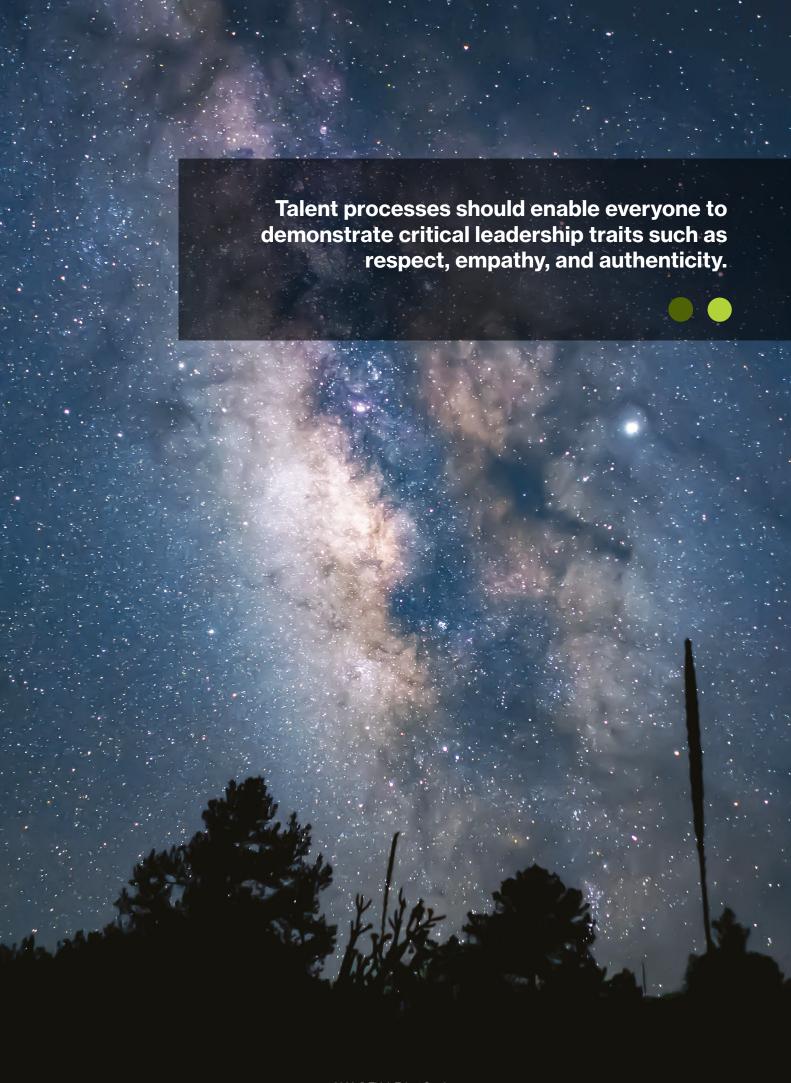
One size does not fit all

Organizational leaders must acknowledge how changing life stages, personal circumstances, and even individual priorities make different propositions attractive to different people. In addition, the fundamental things that employees at most levels expect from work are freedom and a sense of purpose. The talent management approach needs to accommodate the difference in pace, path, and purpose that would reflect the priorities of the individuals.

The processes should be seamless and a part of the work itself

People are experiencing burnout, and patience is running low. As a result, learning and development opportunities must be offered as a part of running the business rather than as an add-on activity. Organizations should leverage technology to trigger feedback, consolidate information, and initiate the development almost instantly and clearly linked to job effectiveness. Establishing peer discussion and coaching platforms to share quick wins and discuss roadblocks would also be beneficial.

- Dolon Mitra







- A large private bank now allows employees at various levels to self-nominate for promotions without needing approval or input from their managers or human resources.
- A new initiative around women leadership at a private bank covering 3000+ participants is designed with mentoring at its core. It allows them to find a mentor from a given pool, connect with them, and go through the mentoring process virtually without needing in-person meetings or e-learning courses.
- The first-time manager program at one of the largest IT services firms in the world allows participants to configure many steps of their learning journeys.
- A financial services regulator mandates that leaders above a certain level are required to receive feedback using a 360-degree survey process. However, whether to work with an external consultant to explore their personal development areas is a decision left to each employee.

The essence of democracy is putting power in the hands of the people. —

L&D and talent management have been key priorities for organizations, who often invest significant effort and resources in employee training and development.

The democratization of learning and other talent processes refers to a change in organizations' mindset, design philosophy, and delivery approach towards these processes.

The most significant shift driving the democratization trend is about putting the employee at the center and redesigning organizational processes to provide them with more choices.

Here are a **few shifts** in the design and delivery of talent processes and initiatives based on the broad trends around democratization:

Broadening Eligibility & Coverage

There seems to be a shift in focus from implementing stricter eligibility criteria and controlling the nomination process to scaling up and broadening coverage. Organizations are also educating employees about these processes to generate better participation.

Enabling Hyper-personalization

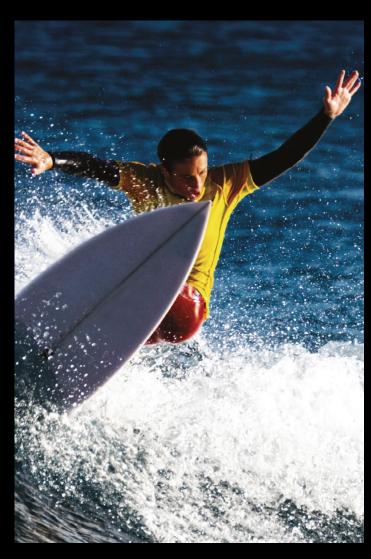
The design philosophy of learning programs and similar initiatives is moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach to a more open, options-based architecture. It allows the participants to create a more personalized experience through increased choices.

Technology as an enabler

Technology has played a critical role in the emergence of this trend. The development of new platforms and the integration of existing platforms with artificial intelligence has enabled a deeper level of personalization and the creation of innovative experiences.

Changing Role of HR

HR teams have traditionally focused on administrating talent processes. However, with the increasing automation of administrative tasks, they are now taking on a more significant role in the design of new processes and experiences. It requires them to develop deeper capabilities around consulting, content development, and digital readiness.



From the Think Talent Vault

Accelerating Individual Development for 17k+ Managers at a Leading Private Bank

In line with its talent philosophy that "everyone is talent," one of our clients, a leading banking company with 1.5L+ employees, decided to launch a new capability-building initiative that could democratize learning and cover all eligible managers at a particular grade range.

Design considerations for the bank's capability-building initiative included:

- The program must ensure **inclusivity** for a large and diverse workforce in terms of functional background, location, and demographics.
- Traditionally, the focus was on functional learning. It was imperative to bring a renewed focus on **behavioral development**.

Given the strong digital focus at the bank, it was essential to ensure that participants had a seamless and engaging experience of the process.

Delivery

The program was designed as an integrated capability-building initiative and delivered virtually.

The participants were given the flexibility to access and complete the assessment process and learning content at their own pace and convenience. Moreover, **more than 75%** of the participants accessed and completed the learning journey on their phones.

Participant Journey



Completed Assessment Centre process



Received Personalized Feedback



Created own IDPs in the System



Went through a 4-month long Learning Journey

Live Self-Webinar Learning Sessions Courses

The initiative covered all **17k+ managers.** Further, **follow-up initiatives** were designed for smaller clusters using **detailed talent analytics.**

Impact

17k+

Managers

50k+ exercises assessed by 60+ assessors 1.5k+

IDP Sessions

1k+ hours of rich one-on-one interactions

75k+

Learning Goals

Average 5 learning goals per participant



What impact is the democratization trend having on current talent processes in organizations?

The impact of the democratization trend on talent processes is likely to be extensive. As it continues to gain momentum, it will gradually cover a broader range of processes in the talent lifecycle, such as onboarding, promotion, learning, and career management. Many organizations are already redesigning their people development process to make them more democratic.

More significantly, the democratization of these processes will entail major changes in their design, execution, and employee experience.

Expert Opinion

Many organizations are already in the process of going digital with their talent processes. What sets digitalization apart from democratization?

Democratization of talent processes is a broader trend beyond digitalization.

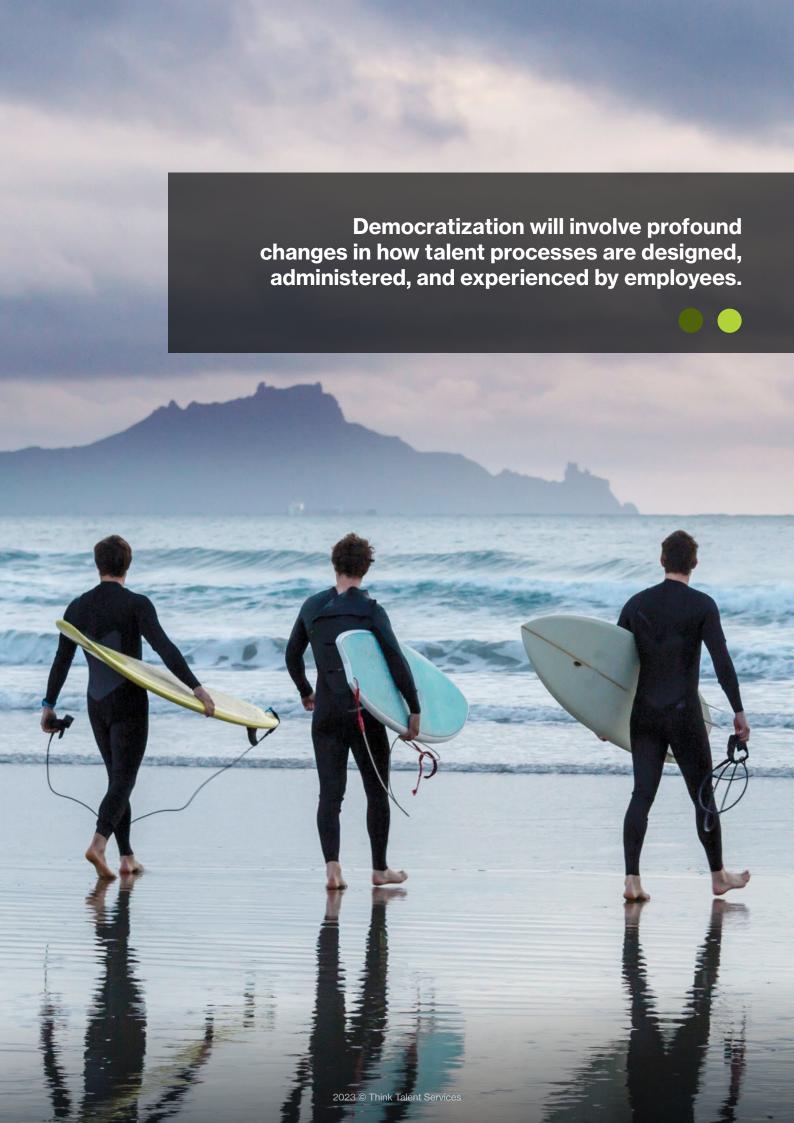
At the same time, we must understand that digital tools play a crucial role in enabling democratization.

For example, an organization may intend to broaden coverage of critical learning opportunities but will not be able to achieve this without effectively utilizing digital platforms.

Recommendation

How can organizations ensure that their talent practices are in-line with this trend?

It is better to take a gradual approach, cascade this new mindset, and approach one process or program at a time. This process will require HR teams to adopt a new mindset and build more profound consulting and design thinking capabilities. HR teams must also reflect deeply and be willing to revisit long-held beliefs while updating processes and policies to give more choices to employees. Finally, democratization necessitates intense communication and training for employees to ensure that they understand and effectively utilize the broader set of choices and opportunities available to them to take charge of their own development and career growth.





Leaders of the future have an interesting road ahead. ——

Thile they will have more technology to rely on to run organizations, they will need a deeper understanding of people and people competencies around them to excel. They will need to work on two important questions:

- "How do we create a collective and collaborative synergy between technology and people capabilities?
- "How fast should a leader learn and adapt to stay relevant and effective?

The answers to these have far-reaching consequences and will go beyond altering processes and headcount at the workplace.

The work environment has changed at a much faster rate in the last two decades than it did in the previous four. Technology has changed the way we work and communicate.

Global influences and comparisons are getting more stark. Stakeholders now come with shorter memories, decreased loyalty, and higher expectations.

Diversity is in. So is the hybrid working model. Yet, an organization has to run, and our leaders have to deliver. So, what works? To answer that, let us look at some **common pitfalls** of today:

Focusing on the same age-old mantras

These may have worked superbly and delivered excellent results for years, but they warrant renewed consideration. Covid times have brought in many new normals, including new ways of leading. Newer business models and leadership styles have to evolve in multiple dimensions to create successful new-age mantras.

Hierarchy-based leadership, run on command and control

This is passé. Future ways of work will look more at project-based leadership and task force leaders. Their ability to lead and deliver will be valued more than the titles and hierarchies of the organization. Being comfortable with always being in a beta version of leadership styles, continuously evolving as the environment and needs change, may well be the new mantra.

Running an organization for profits only

This may not be a welcome idea for the newer generation. People are looking to serve a larger purpose through their work. They are fine working with an organization with a lower focus on money as long it helps them find meaning in what they are doing. That is an important point for future leaders to bear in mind.

Loyalty is a given

Well, not anymore. Future leaders have to work hard to retain talent and engage year after year. It is not just about money or promotions. It goes beyond that. Each organization in each sector needs its own unique cycle of attract-engageretain model for its talent pool. The definition of loyalty itself is worth examining—what does it really mean in the new world of work?

From the Think Talent Vault

Developing 'Future-ready' CXOs for an Agri-sciences Major

Our client, a leading Indian Agri-sciences major with ambitious plans for global expansion, recognized the crucial role their senior leaders would play in their strategic growth plans. The CEO and other senior leaders also felt that existing leaders needed to equip themselves with a newer set of skills to be better prepared to handle the challenges of rapid growth in a rapidly changing business environment.

To address this challenge, they partnered with us to conduct a thorough capability analysis, create personalized development plans (IDPs) for each leader, and execute various development plans tailored to their unique needs and learning orientations.

Interactions with the senior leadership team and other external stakeholders brought out new capabilities for future success that had not traditionally been in focus internally.

Some of these new capabilities included personal adaptability & resilience, leading in an environment of ambiguity & change, and bringing more empathy into one's leadership style and approach.

The program consisted of two phases:

- "Exploring development areas and planning individual development for each leader
- "Driving personalized development journeys in clusters basis the leaders' needs and orientations

Success Anchors

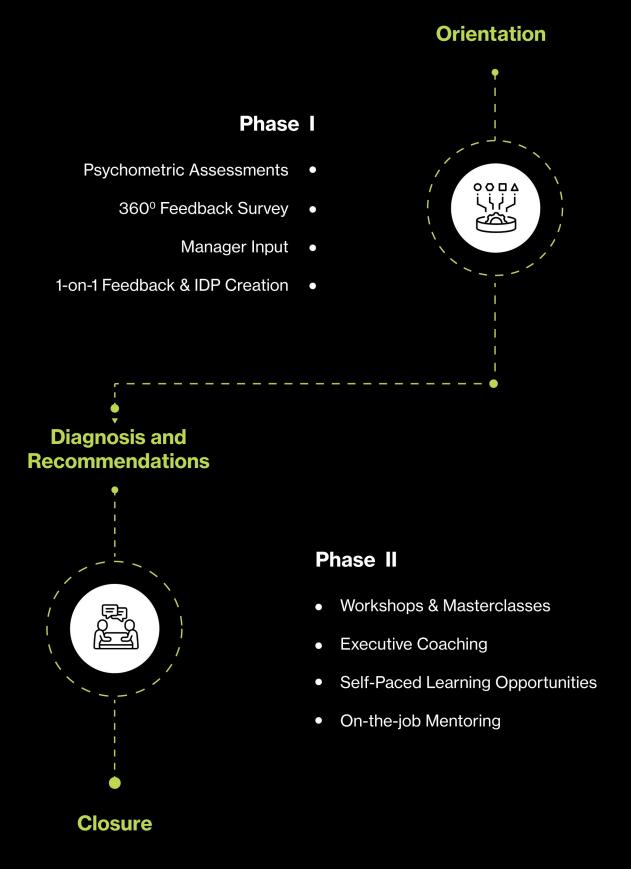
The program needed to provide participating leaders with an immersive and personalized learning experience. To achieve this, the program design seamlessly blended on-the-job goals, regular mentoring & coaching sessions, phased workshops, and masterclasses.

It resulted in an increase in their self-awareness and brought a change in their mindset. It also helped the leaders to understand the dynamic expectations associated with their role in the organization.

Impact

We successfully developed a 'future ready' leadership pipeline for the organization, impacting 100+ executives over six months.

Program Flow







Expert Opinion

For a leader to evolve to be worthy and respected in the near future, they have to master the following skills, to begin with.

The attempt must be, as far as feasible, to make these a part of the DNA.

Self-awareness

To know as much as you can about yourself. Seek feedback from all corners, reflect on each of those points, see what you can do about them, and work on yourself. Create a long-lasting impact.

Learning & Preparedness

The more you learn, the more prepared you are for any situation. Never lose an opportunity to reach out, be curious and pick up pearls of wisdom from all around you. Ask questions to explore. Listen fully to comprehend and retain. Interact to get various perspectives. Practice to perfect your learnings and let go of everything that has outlived its time and utility.

Decision-making with limited outcome certainty

With newer business realities emerging daily, the situations demand quick and clear decisions

from leaders. There is often limited information, experience, and expertise. The key is the ability to decide with whatever information, resources, and time are available. Decisions have to be taken even when the dynamics are high.

Developing other leaders

Today's leadership is about leading a team and making the team self-sustainable and future-ready. Be ready to groom yourself. More than that, be ready to develop other leaders in your team who can develop more leaders under them. Developing a leadership pool is a big ask for all leaders now.

Being tech-savvy

There is no going back on this. Learn when you can rather than when you must. Mastering technology will enhance your productivity, connectivity, and continuity inside and outside your organization. The world is marching ahead, and you better not be left behind.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

Leaders of tomorrow have to run their assignments with an entrepreneurial mindset. This requires a lot of risk-taking, agility, resilience, and visioning. The canvas is changing, and so are the demands on the new-age leader. Ask yourself, are you future-ready?

- Saurav Mohanty

READYING FOR THE FUTURE





No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river, and he's not the same man.

- Heraclitus

My interpretation of this quote is that we need to have a bi-focal vision to grow. One - how am I changing in interacting with the world around me? Two - how is the world around me changing?

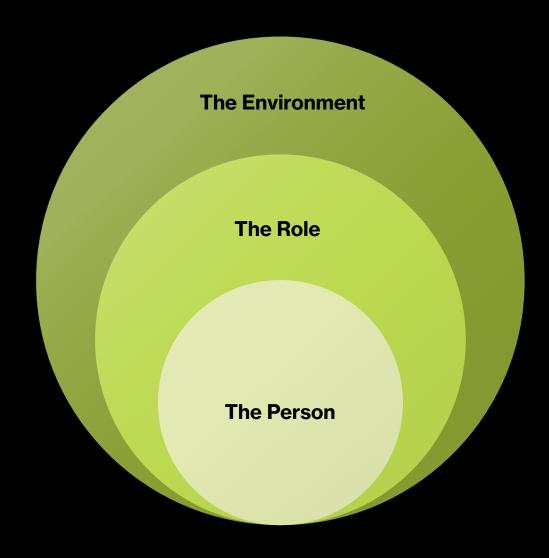
The most important competence that future leaders will need is learning, and to be more accurate, learning to learn.

Over the years, with inputs from leaders from corporations, not-for-profits, government, and politics, three broad elements emerge to focus on for leadership development continuously. The **Self on a Journey**, our **Roles as Leaders**, and the **Environment**. On the following page, you will find a pictorial description of how we see it.

For people development professionals, in fact, for all leaders who have a component of people leadership in their roles, this may be a construct to refer to once in a while.

Learning Construct

for Leaders





The Person

Understanding and Accepting the Self

Learning and Evolving Personal Skills

Ability to Shift Assumptions and Habits



The Role

Non-static Expectations

Porous Boundaries

Expanding beyond own Sphere



The Environment

Organizational Changes, Local and Global

Stakeholder Dynamics

Shaped Leadership Behaviors



Expert Opinion

eveloping future talent is a huge responsibility. At the same time, appreciating that each of us has a very limited role to play is important. Talent will find its own path. An analogy that comes to me often is the difference between a forest and a garden. Both grow and have their unique beauty. Nature helps the forest grow.

Organizations are deliberate structures and perhaps need a more 'tending than growing a garden' approach to talent.

Often though, some common pitfalls may limit the impact of talent development efforts.

Risk and Pitfalls in Talent Management



Overbalancing in the direction of what 'others' are doing, not creating one's own Talent Development agenda



Not being able to differentiate between (visible) immediate performance behaviors and longterm value creation behaviors



Investing in assessment and not carrying through to the next steps of development



Focusing on individuals more than on capability clusters



Overusing extrinsic motivation tools

Watching out for these may well enhance the impact of talent management actions and enable a more sustainable talent pipeline.

- Bimal Rath





Maintaining that success, especially in times of radical technological, geopolitical, and socioeconomic change, demands an incredibly consistent approach and a willingness to ride out the turbulence.

A handful of resilient organizations that invest in this are the ones that take a people-centric approach, build strong on-the-ground capabilities, and democratize decision rights.

Organizations willing to make this commitment, and sustain the same, will position themselves to win in the long run.



There is a big difference between being resilient once and being able to systematize this as a repeatable capability, both for individuals and organizations.



About the Company

Established in 2010, we at Think Talent Services have guided over 250 organizations across several industries by focusing on four key offerings, i.e., Talent Assessments, Capability Development, Coaching & Mentoring, and 360-Feedback & Development planning.

Today, we are a team of 50+ members along with 50+ delivery partners and 50+ coaches to help us seamlessly deliver services to our clients.

Our offerings allow extremely personalized experiences for participants while enabling the scaling of interventions for rapid and consistent deployment.

Deep customization and content expertise allow us to deliver highly contextual offerings.

We partner with several global players bringing their IP and methodologies to our work and developing our intellectual property through research focused on talent. Some of the **fundamental themes** around which our work has evolved over a period of time include:

- " Developing futuristic leadership capabilities
- Providing modernintegrated solutions tomanage talent at scale
- Democratizing learning in the modern workplace
- " Empowering organizations to build resilient talent pipelines

We have tried to better understand the world of talent and leadership through our experiences and insights, often garnered from interactions with various individuals from different walks of life.

Talent Assessments

Solutions to help organizations add rigor and scale to selection, promotion and development processes

Capability Development

Scalable learning programs to build leadership and develop talent clusters at all levels

Coaching & Mentoring

Digital platforms and solutions to help organizations scale up coaching and mentoring initiatives

360 & Development Planning

Scale up feedback and development planning for employees using digital platforms







Developing leaders across levels to build a strong pipeline for the organization

LEADERSHIP • TALENT • CULTURE

Corporate office

Think Talent Services Private Limited 501, 5th floor, Tower-A, Spaze I-Tech Park, Sector-49, Sohna Road, Gurgaon-122018

Phone Website E-mail

+91-124-4201824, +91-8828158509 www.thinktalent.co info@thinktalentindia.com