

## Assessing and Preparing for Success: Developing High Potential Leaders for the Immediate Future

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It is hard to think of an industry or organization that has not been confronted with challenges as a result of the volatile economic times we've faced over the past few years. As organizations move forward and try to negotiate a path out of recession and pursue growth and profitability again, it is critical to determine who will lead the charge now and in the days, months, and years to come. *Are incumbent executives and other business leaders equipped to operate successfully in a new, evolving global marketplace? How are we preparing the next generation of leaders to take over and create the future of business that will return value to shareholders, customers, and employees?* Regardless of the immediate answers to these questions, there is no debate over the importance of recruiting and developing high-potential leaders to step up and face future organizational, leadership, and business challenges.

According to a 2009 study by [Catalyst](#), more than 50% of high potentials surveyed experienced career development or advancement between November 2007 and June 2009. Among that group, "1 in 5 high-potentials continued job-hopping during the downturn". If 20% of high potential employees are changing employers in a time of recession, what can you do to ensure that your talent stays with you and moves up the leadership pipeline? In this month's **AdvantEdge™**, we will discuss the importance of using **assessment simulations** to identify, assess, develop and retain your high-potentials with the intention of supporting them as they move upwards within your organization.

## Why Now?

The recession we currently face has led to cost-cutting in every arena – from the oval office to the kitchen table – and talent recruitment, retention and development budgets have been severely impacted. In addition to cutting or freezing development, organizations are downsizing and asking their employees to do more with fewer resources. In such a climate, it is more important than ever to have the right people in the right positions, and to have a leadership pipeline full of motivated and talented individuals ready to move the organization forward when the recovery hits.

As we see a thaw in training spending as well as a renewed optimism coming from the C-suite, it is important to explore the data and trends coming from our industry. A February 2010 Learning Executive Briefing published by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) suggests that, according to the Learning Executive Confidence Index, learning executives are *“optimistic about the outlook and expectations for the learning function” regarding the “impact on corporate performance, ability to meet learning needs, status as a key strategic component, and availability of resources”*. This sense of stability and modest optimism is reassuring, but in order to achieve the success these executives are looking for it is **vital to have a plan for developing the right skills in the right people in the right positions**.

## What Competencies?

In January of this year, Advantexe published the results of the [2010 Business Acumen Survey](#) aimed at measuring the importance and perceptions of **business acumen skills** to organizational leaders and decision makers, and to determine the support they think they need to build those skills across their organizations.

The results of the survey showed overwhelmingly that respondents recognize the importance of **Business Acumen** and **Business Leadership** skills for organizations hoping to achieve success in difficult times. Building these skills in all employees is important, but it is vital when discussing high-potential talent. The ability to simultaneously manage the business, manage your team, and manage yourself is the key to successful leadership.

During a recession, all employees are challenged, but high-potentials may be stretched the most because of the expectations placed on their performance. In today's market, they are required to understand the key drivers of profitability to help drive costs out of the business (managing the business), keep a team driven and focused when a variety of factors are negatively impacting morale and performance (managing the team), and remain motivated and maintain their own integrity while having the courage to make tough decisions and take action to execute the business strategy (managing yourself).

At the request of several world-class global organizations, Advantexe has created a state-of-the-art **High-Potential Leader Assessment Simulation**. The purpose of the assessment simulation is to measure the readiness of High-Potentials to lead now and in the future as a General Manager of a business. Unlike traditional, linear, paper-based or role-play assessments, computer-based simulations can provide a systemic and dynamic review of current skills and developmental needs. Advantexe had designed an exclusive methodology called the Gap Map™, which illustrates the current strengths and developmental needs of an individual, group, division, or entire organization. The combination of easy deployment and higher levels of quality and effectiveness make it an effective tool for organizations looking to minimize expenses without losing valuable information. When combined with our world-class content, Advantexe's *High-Potential Leader Assessment Simulation* is part of a comprehensive training solution and can meet a variety of needs within an organization looking to recruit, retain and develop the very best talent.

What are some uses for Assessment Simulations within your organization?

## **Determining Gaps**

Assessment simulations can help determine a baseline of the skill and understanding levels of current employees. The ability to identify and measure the gap between a current skill set and a target competency level is an invaluable tool for any organization, and provides individual high-potentials with a valuable view of their current skill set. At a time when employees report they get too little feedback from their managers/bosses, assessment simulations can help provide the feedback that employees – especially high-potential ones – so desire.

## **Individual Development Planning**

On a more individualized basis, assessment simulations can aid in development and career planning. Assessing their own strengths and identifying areas of interest and potential growth are important ways in which employees can take control of their development and career paths. Fostering an environment of growth and productivity in this way is a smart move for any organization. Computer-based assessments can also be a valuable tool for managers going through the promotion process with their direct reports.

## **Identifying Training and Development**

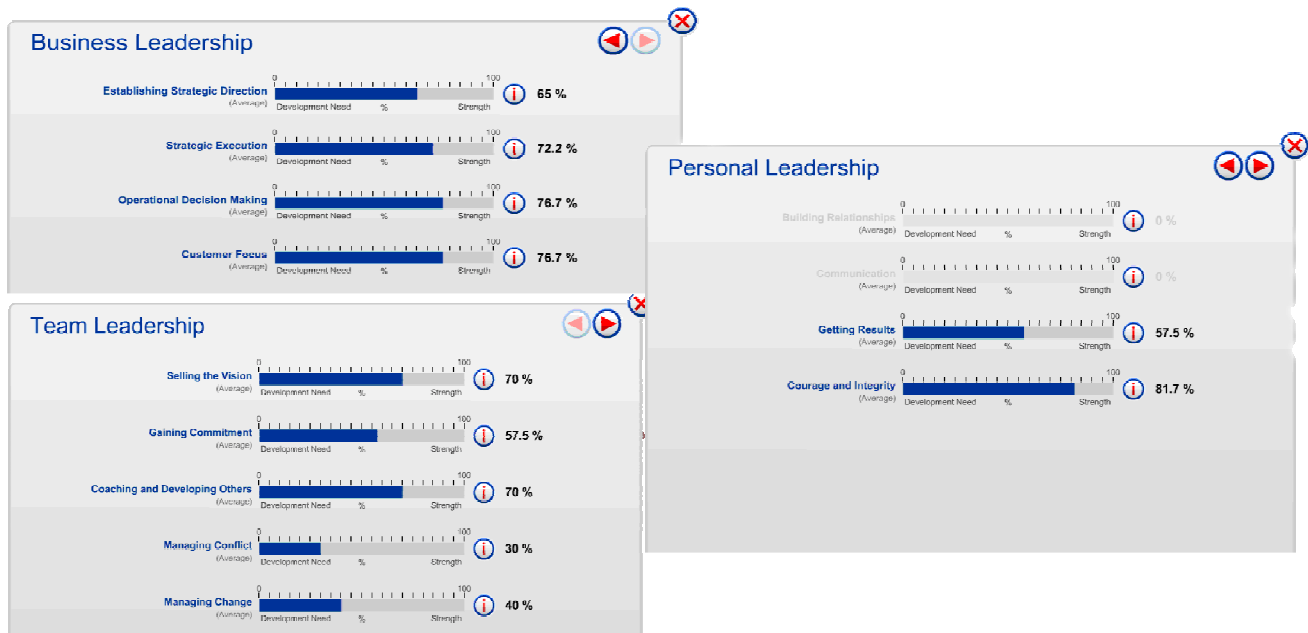
Equipped with a competency assessment of high-potentials or a group of managers or leaders, Talent Managers are able to design and execute appropriate training and development solutions for their employees. Without an understanding of the varied skill sets in your workforce, delivering training and development with maximum impact and effectiveness can prove challenging. Assessment simulation results can highlight areas of strength for continued reinforcement and identify areas where training and development interventions could have significant impact.

## The Options: Assessment Simulation Training Engagements

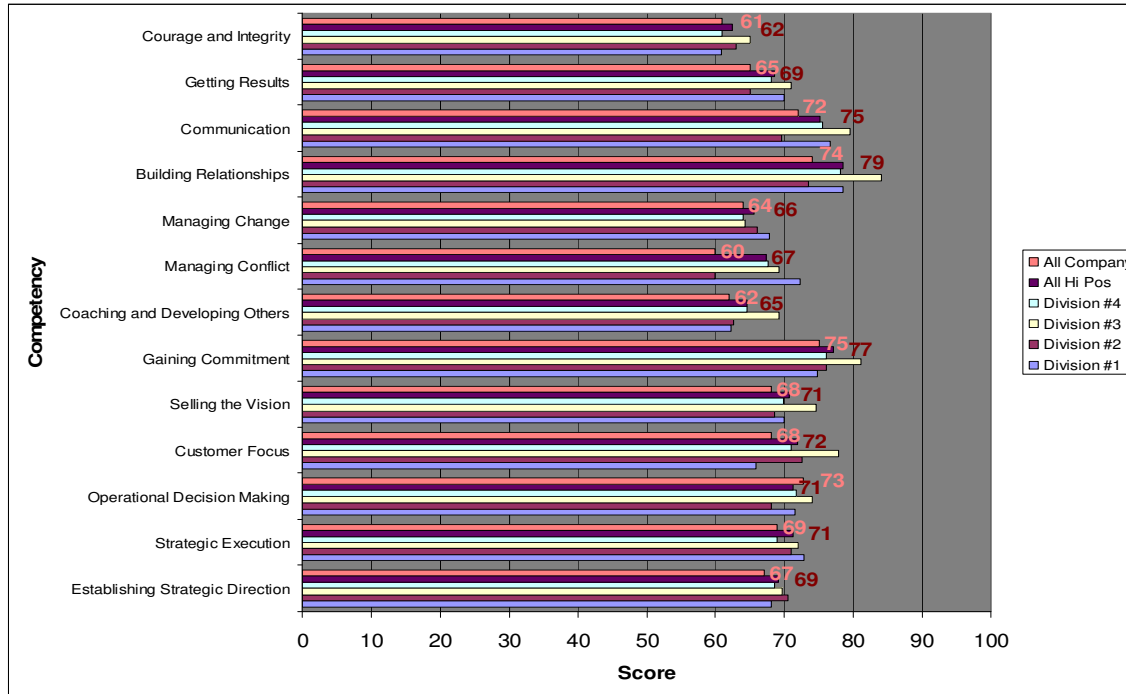
Advantexe's Assessment Simulations can be deployed independently to be used as measurement tools, but are most effective when leveraged as part of a comprehensive training solution. This begins when the target audience goes through the assessment simulation customized to measure their current competency level against an ideal level for their roles within your organization. Participants will receive their results in the form of a Gap Map™ immediately after completing the simulation. The Gap Map™ variables will be aligned directly with your organizational competencies, and decisions participants make throughout the simulation will measure their performance compared to the ideal level for each competency.

**Sample Gap Map™ from the Simulation (available to the participant)**

*\* Additional comparison reports can be generated after participants complete the simulation*



## Sample Cumulative Gap Map™ Results (available to Talent Managers)



Once participants have gone through the simulation and any competency gaps have been identified, you can begin the process of designing a training program with content and application exercises to build the skills that will close those gaps. This training can vary in length from two to five days and be delivered either live, over the web, or using a combination of the two formats.

Following any training engagement, there is the option for participants to go through a follow-up Assessment Simulation to ensure that gaps have been closed and to quantify the impact of the program. In addition to follow-up simulations, Advantexe also recommends continuing learning through webinars and other elearning opportunities that will remain available to participants once training is completed.

## A Chance to try it...and deploy it

For the first time ever, Advantexe is making the **High-Potential Leader Assessment Simulation** available for individual assessments. **On March 22, 2010, at 11:00 am EST**, Advantexe will conduct a webinar introducing the assessment simulation and detailing how your organization can have full and complete access to three (3) free uses of the tool. A \$5,985 value – each deployment is \$1,950 per person – you will have the ability to test the system and receive:

- An individual Gap Map™ for your three high-potential leaders
- A report and access to our database that provides comparisons to your high-potential leaders and other high-potential leaders from different organizations, industries, and countries.

Because of the high value of this offer, we are limiting the webinar and usage of the assessment simulation to 15 organizations/Talent Managers. Please sign up right now to reserve your spot and three uses of the High-Potential Leader Assessment Simulation.

## Overview of the High-Potential Leader Assessment Simulation

The High-Potential Leader Assessment Simulation places you in the role of a General Manager in a large \$3 billion diversified multinational company. As a high-potential leader you will rotate through the company's three business units as the General Manager with full P&L responsibility. In this position, you must help to establish the strategy of the business unit, execute that strategy, and get results. You will manage a team of Functional and Business Directors, some with whom you've worked in the past and others with whom you have not yet met or developed a relationship. Over the course of up to three business years your decisions will be evaluated against a set of general leadership competencies. At the completion you will receive your own Gap Map™, which will give you a score for each competency. After completing the simulation you will then receive a comparative Gap Map™ outlining your scores in relation to a large group of high-potential managers who have taken the assessment simulation.

**[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO RECEIVE YOUR EXCLUSIVE INVITATION](#)**