Center for Creative Leadership®

Developing Future-Fluent Asian Leaders:

Myths We Must Debunk

Partner:

ADP®

CONTENTS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"Developing Future-Fluent Asian Leaders: Myths We Must Debunk" study findings are based on the survey of senior HR leaders, and interviews with heads of HR in Asia. The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) research team rolled out a survey to 248 HR leaders across Asia to identify top-three leadership development challenges they face and the biggest myths around leadership development they deal with. The research team subsequently interviewed 28 heads of HR working for Western and Asian multinational corporations (MNCs) and local enterprises in Asia. The leaders belonged to a mix of industries, including financial services, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), technology, retail, infrastructure, and professional services companies. Research conversations centered around leadership development priorities, challenges, myths, and future outlook. We use the term "HR leader" and "CHRO" to refer to executives who have responsibility for human resources function at a country or a regional level in Asia. These executives may hold "Director," "Vice President," "President," "Executive Officer," "HR Head," etc. titles.

FOREWORD

Developing Future-Fluent Asian Leaders: Myths We Must Debunk

Humanity is facing the greatest disruption of our lifetime. The past few months have challenged all of our assumptions on business models, workflows, technology, and people.

As the future scenarios and projected health and economic impacts change on a daily basis, organizations are scrambling to pull together their best people as 'guides' to find the way out of the current chaos. Human resources and leadership functions are under extreme pressure not only to develop leaders to deal with the here-and-now challenges, but also to proactively prepare organizations for the recovery. And fast!

Disruption is also an opportunity to reset the leadership development function, and view it with a very objective lens, without biases and prejudices. Myths and urban legends are aplenty in the leadership development world. Just to name a few:

- Asian leaders and female leaders are harder to develop for global leadership roles, or leadership development should mainly focus on the executive teams

- Attending (only) classroom-based leadership development programs will make better leaders

- Digital training is less impactful than face-to-face development

If organizations continue to hold on to these relics, they will struggle to develop leaders at the required pace. It is certainly time to debunk leadership development myths and energize the function. This research aspires to do just that.

We believe this is the time for the business community, business leaders and political leaders across all countries in Asia-Pacific and the world to rise up and commit to bold and coordinated actions, within their own business and beyond, that support humanity to win the battle against COVID-19.

The Center for Creative Leadership has spent the last 50 years focused on inspiring this type of enlightened leadership and cultivating qualities of courage, empathy, agility and multi-dimensional thinking that have become more important than ever for leaders right now.

We take this opportunity to thank the senior HR leaders who participated in the research, and helped shape the key findings.

We hope you find *Developing Future-Fluent Asian Leaders: Myths We Must Debunk* research useful and timely as you prepare your next cadre of Asian leaders to take on perhaps the hardest challenge of their professional journey.
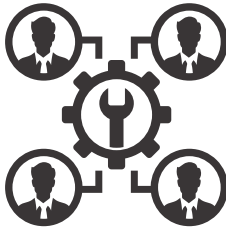
Peter Hadley
President, Asia-Pacific,
ADP

Elisa Mallis
Managing Director and Vice President, Asia-Pacific,
Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)
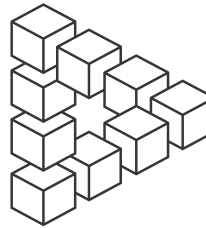
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Three Key Takeaways...

1.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT REMAINS A KEY CHALLENGE...

Capability enhancement to align with rapidly changing business needs, developing next-generation leaders, through managing and communicating change, are the top three priorities that keep CHROs up at night.

2.

5 PARADOXES HR MUST MANAGE TO DRIVE A FUTURE-FLUENT DEVELOPMENTAL AGENDA...

Owing to the current and future environment of extreme disruption and ever-changing context of business, technology, people, economy and society in Asia, the need for leadership development is more pronounced than ever before. To make their talent future-ready, HR must navigate five paradoxes as they curate their leadership development agenda in Asia:

1. **ASIANIZED YET GLOBAL**
2. **HIGH-TECH YET HIGH-TOUCH**
3. **PERSONALIZED YET SCALABLE**
4. **IN-HOUSE-LED YET PARTNER-CENTRIC**
5. **EXPERIENTIAL YET CLASSROOM-BASED**

3.

7 REALITIES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT HR LEADERS MUST LIVE BY IN ASIA...

1. Organizations must curate compelling development plans to create a strong pipeline of global Asian leaders. Organization posture may be the biggest stumbling block, much bigger than the individual capability issue.

2. Leadership development must happen across multiple levels in the organization to maximize ROI on development initiatives.

3. Organizations must tweak leadership development interventions and journeys to suit the Asian context.

4. Leadership development must happen outside of the classroom as well, via compelling experiences, mentoring, coaching, etc.

5. HR must find sponsors in the senior leadership team to improve roll-out and impact of the leadership development initiatives.

6. Organizations must focus on creating a leadership development culture in the organization, which is a set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors that promote alignment with and commitment towards the leadership development agenda.

7. Organizations deploying digital learning tools must design and deliver those keeping the learner objectives and experience in mind.

"

Developing leaders who are future ready, when scope and scale is changing rapidly, is a challenge.
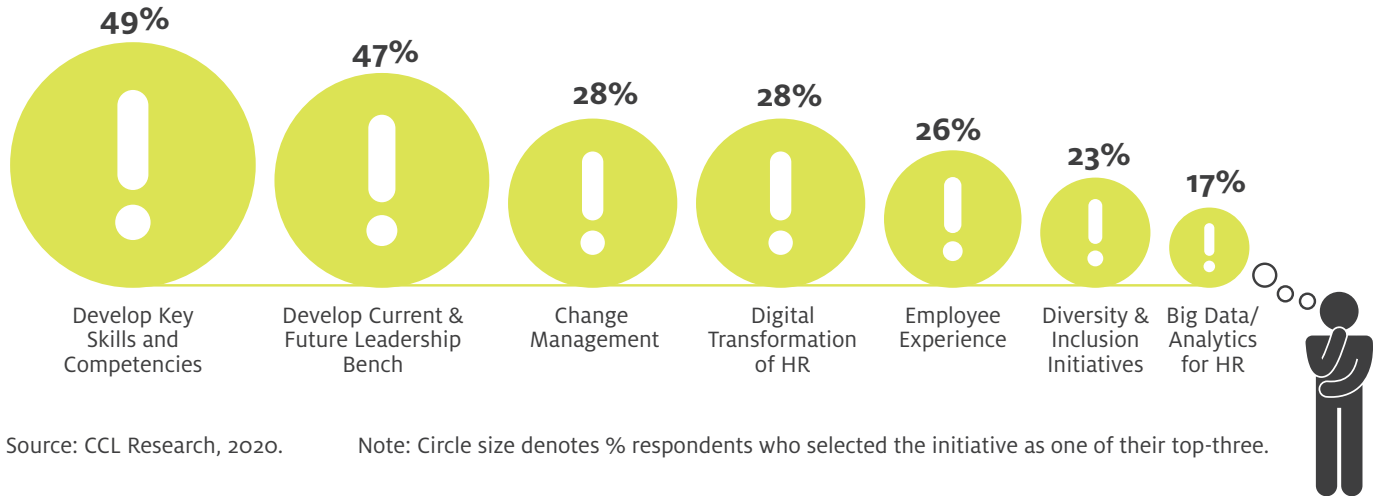
"

INTRODUCTION

KEY HR INITIATIVES

What Keeps CHROs Up At Night?

Graphic 1.1

Key HR Initiatives in the Next 12-18 Months...

49%	47%	28%	28%	26%	23%	17%
Develop Key Skills and Competencies	Develop Current & Future Leadership Bench	Change Management	Digital Transformation of HR	Employee Experience	Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives	Big Data/ Analytics for HR

Source: CCL Research, 2020.   Note: Circle size denotes % respondents who selected the initiative as one of their top-three.

Asia's GDP is all set to overtake the GDP of the rest of the world combined; by 2030, the region is expected to contribute roughly 60% of global growth[1].

Asia is the new center of the world! The past two decades have witnessed an unprecedented shift of global economic growth from the West to the East. This is driven by two critical factors:

1. Sluggish economic outlook in Europe and North America shows no sign of abating, therefore global organizations are 'looking East' to sustain growth. The current slowdown due to the pandemic will hurt the economic growth in the West even further.

2. Sustained economic growth in Asia, especially over the last decade, has increased the purchasing power of Asian countries. This in turn has spiraled consumption of goods, products and services, making Asia a critical untapped market for global enterprises.

HR functions therefore are in a constant overdrive to keep pace (with the economic growth) on the people front – recruiting, engaging, developing talent at a much more feverish pace than ever before; tasks that have become even more complicated due to the constant volatility and ambiguity in the region.

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) research team polled CHROs in Asia around key priorities or initiatives the HR leaders and their teams are focusing on over the next 12 to 18 months (Graphic 1.1). It is not surprising that capability

enhancement and developing next-generation leaders shows up at the top of the stack. As business contexts change rapidly, work and workforce must evolve, thereby underlining the need for newer capabilities and skills. HR is at the forefront of skills development to feed this business need.

Succession planning and leadership development is also a key priority for the HR function. While Asia assumes unprecedented prominence on the global map from a business standpoint, it also becomes the hot bed for talent, spiraling the demand for leaders in Asia, not only to run businesses in the region, but also to inform global companies on how to 'win' in a culturally different context. "Developing leaders who are future ready, when scope and scale is changing rapidly, is a challenge," shared Aditya Kohli, Chief HR Officer at Clix Capital.

Managing and communicating change also shows up in the top-three priorities. Enterprises in Asia, and across the globe, experience a 'VUCA-squared' environment (volatile-uncertain-complex-ambiguous) – thanks to the constantly changing regional dynamics and national policies – unpredictable financial markets, complex geopolitics, rapid evolution of technology, and an environment of hyper-competitiveness, making change management a key priority. Interviewees highlighted that the 'third vector' of change worries them the most, referring to change becoming three-dimensional. While organizations have traditionally worried about the probability of change and risks associated with that, they now need to deal with the speed of change as well. For instance, a new environmental regulation, can wipe off a manufacturing

company in impacted industries almost overnight. The current situation, where a pandemic has brought the world economy to a screeching halt within a few weeks, is a case in point. "The sheer volume of transformation going on is putting a huge strain on organizations, and a lot of them are witnessing change fatigue," said Marieke Bos - van den Berg, Regional HR Director (Asia) at AkzoNobel.

Digitalization is changing everything, from core functions like the way organizations hire and develop talent, to introducing new priorities such as detailed performance tracking. "Earlier, leaders had expertise in one or two areas; however, now the story has changed, and digital is the 'king competency.' If you don't have appreciation for digital, it is very difficult to assume a leadership role," said a regional CHRO of a global FMCG company.

Putting the employee at the center is another priority for HR leaders in Asia. "Consumerization of employee experience is a focal point; if I were in the shoes of the employees, then to me the most important thing is how the work gets done, and how to put the employee in the center," shared Carmen Wee, Board Member, HTX.

As a key driver of innovation, diversity and inclusion (D&I) is being rapidly embraced by organizations in Asia. Owing to a competitive talent landscape, and a consistent focus on attracting and retaining top-class talent, progressive D&I practices are becoming a critical differentiator in the talent market.

> **" Consumerization of employee experience is a focal point; if I were in the shoes of the employees, then to me the most important thing is how the work gets done, and how to put the employee in the center..."**
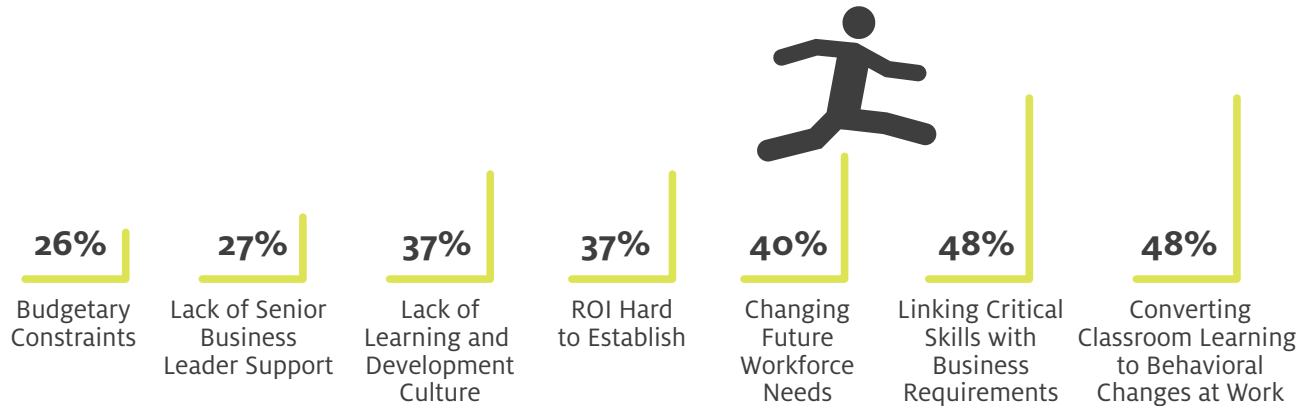>
> **Carmen Wee,**
> Board Member, HTX

1. Praneeth Yendamuri, Zara Ingilizian (Bain & Company), "In 2020 Asia will have the world's largest GDP. Here's what that means," World Economic Focurm Annual Meeting, 20 Dec 2019. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/12/asia-economic-growth/

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

What Stalls Does HR Need to Deal With?

Graphic 1.2   **Biggest Leadership Development Challenges in Asia**

26%	27%	37%	37%	40%	48%	48%
Budgetary Constraints	Lack of Senior Business Leader Support	Lack of Learning and Development Culture	ROI Hard to Establish	Changing Future Workforce Needs	Linking Critical Skills with Business Requirements	Converting Classroom Learning to Behavioral Changes at Work

Source: CCL Research, 2020.   Note: Bars denotes % respondents who selected the challenge as one of their top-three.

The CCL Research team polled CHROs on their most critical challenges in leadership development in Asia.

Linking leadership development initiatives directly with business, and longevity of behavioral shifts, much beyond the physical classroom program, emerged as the biggest challenges (Graphic 1.2). "Most leaders get it [leadership development] academically and intuitively but when rubber hits the road we hear a lot of excuses – no time, other priorities, etc.," explained D N Prasad, Senior Director – Strategy, People & Organization at GovTech, Singapore. He added, "Readiness is linked to an individual's ability to go on a change journey, and change is hard."

Business requirements also keep evolving as business contexts change, competitive pressures mount, technology shifts happen, and regional geopolitical situations evolve. The leadership development function therefore constantly has to play catch-up with the changing business needs. "A set of new capabilities constantly needs to be built – digital, analytics, big data, etc. – technologies that are disrupting the business," highlighted Rajesh Uppal, Sr. Executive Director (HR & IT) at Maruti Suzuki India. Aditya Kohli, Chief HR Officer at Clix Capital, further highlighted the need for developing leadership capabilities to deal with the constantly changing environment: "We found a lot of leaders who could not deal with the recession. As business decline, they struggled to inspire people; leaders for instance stopped communicating, and that was the worst."

Graphic 1.3

Leadership Development Budget Outlook

- 46% Spend More
- 7% Spend Less
- 47% Remain Same
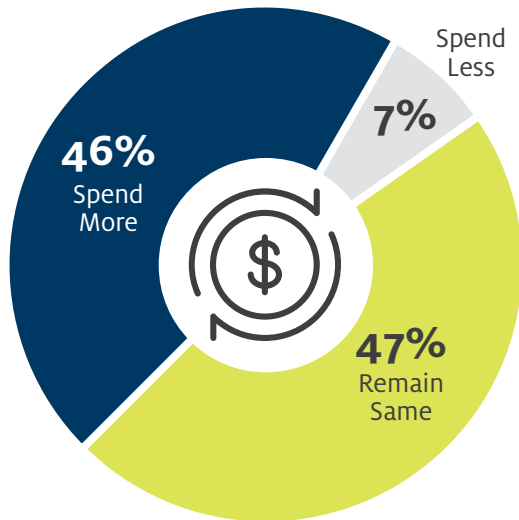
Source: CCL Research, 2020.

Rapidly changing workforce needs is the third key challenge in the leadership development journey in organizations. A diverse workforce has diverse career aspirations, and keeping pace with their development needs can be complex.

Demonstrating returns on leadership development, or the impact of interventions, remains a challenge for most HR leaders who participated in the CCL research. While some interviewees prescribed better and more robust ways to evaluate impact, others shared the futility of getting into the ROI dialogue with business. "More than ROI, it is about getting leaders' attention around the why and what of development," explained Appandairajan Krishnakumar, Head of Talent, Asia-Pacific at MasterCard.

Interviewees also highlighted that lack of a learning and development culture is often the hardest element to fix in the organization. Unless leaders aspire to continuously learn and develop, and that is what leaders inculcate in their teams, any kind of intervention will have only a stunted impact. HR plays multiple roles in this regard – that of people advisor to the executive team on how to develop the right culture, of executor of interventions, guardian of the new culture, and finally auditor of the impact.

Budgets for leadership development are also under constant pressure. As Graphic 1.3 highlights, while most organizations are holding on to their budgets for the next 12 to 18 months, the current volatility and uncertainty due to the pandemic situation will put these plans under duress. "Budgets are often not an issue if HR is able to demonstrate direct or indirect business benefit and there is business buy-in," explained Tanie Eio, HR Vice President at UPS, underlining the need for HR teams to partner strongly with business.

"We found a lot of leaders who could not deal with the recession; as business de-grows they struggled to inspire people; leaders for instance stopped communicating, and that was the worst. "
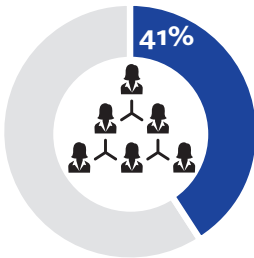
MYTHS TO DEBUNK

DEVELOPING FUTURE-FLUENT ASIAN LEADERS: MYTHS WE MUST DEBUNK

Graphic 2.1.0

41%

41%

39%

MYTH I.

Asian leaders are harder to develop to take on senior global leadership roles

MYTH II.

Leadership development efforts should primarily focus on top-level executives
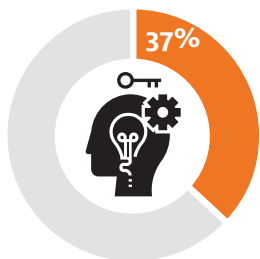
MYTH III.

Organizations can have one uniform approach to developing leaders across different regions, countries, contexts

Note: Pie-charts denote % respondents who selected the myth as one of their top-three.

37%

MYTH IV.

Attending [only] leadership development course(s) will make you a better leader

> " To develop leaders in Asia we need to be mindful of simple things like context, language, pace, learning styles, and cultural differences, and sometimes it is hard for global organizations to appreciate the differences."

Sonal Paprocki
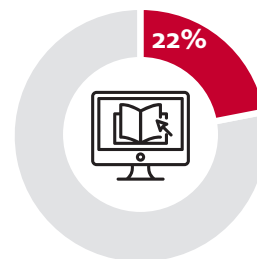VP Human Resources, Asia-Pacific,
NBCUniversal

30%

MYTH V.

HR can lead and execute leadership development agenda without top team/ board buy-in

29%

MYTH VI.

Effective leadership development can happen irrespective of the organization's culture
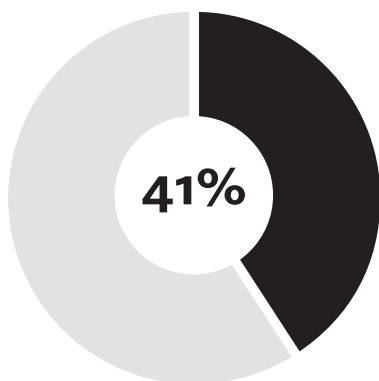
22%

MYTH VII.

Online/digital learning is less effective than classroom learning

MYTH I.

ASIAN LEADERS ARE HARDER TO DEVELOP TO TAKE ON SENIOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ROLES

41%

Note: Pie-chart denotes % respondents who selected the myth as one of their top three.

" **What does it mean to be a leader in Asia - can you bring a global perspective to Asia and take the Asia perspective global? Can a leader be a megaphone for both?"**

D N Prasad,
Senior Director
Strategy, People & Organization
GovTech, Singapore

SAME-SAME BUT DIFFERENT

There is More to Global Leadership than Cultural Fluency

Graphic 2.1.1

THE GLOBAL ASIAN LEADER CHALLENGE

STALLS IN GLOBAL ASIAN LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

ASIAN COUNTRY CONTEXT	COMPANY CONTEXT	INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT
▪ Lack of talent competitiveness ▪ Talent availability lagging economic growth ▪ Expensive global-ready talent	▪ Critical skills hard to develop in Asia ▪ Talent management/development challenges ▪ Low risk approach towards Asian talent due to biases/lack of trust* ▪ Lack of internal alignment to build local Asian talent*	▪ Hard-wired (Asian) culture ▪ Capability gaps ▪ Lack of mobility ▪ Language constraints

*Only relevant for global non-Asian multi-national organizations

Source: CCL, "The Global Asian Leader: From Local Star to Global CXO," 2018.

While there is an ever-increasing need for Global Asian leaders – leaders who can build local business, advise global organizations how to win in Asia, and help local organizations (with regional aspirations) expand outside of the home country – such talent remains a rare commodity. For instance, leaders of Asian origin account for only 4% and 8% of executive leadership teams in Europe and US headquartered companies respectively[1]. This is despite the fact that three in five of the world youth (aged 15 to 24 years) live in Asia-Pacific[2], and constitute the next generation of talent.

As Graphic 2.1.1 highlights, there are three distinct reasons that are holding back Asian leaders from stepping into global roles: unfavorable country conditions, constraints due to organization culture, and individual skill and will issues.

Lack of talent competitiveness or inadequate talent development infrastructure may inhibit growth of talent at a country level. Besides, talent that is available may be too scarce and too expensive.

Organization culture may also be a key culprit. Reasons include inability to develop global-ready leaders due to lack of necessary experience, budget constraints, structural and policy issues, lack of global mindset in senior leaders, non-optimal global talent management and development practices, or lack of clear accountability to develop Asian talent.

Individual capability and aspiration issues may also inhibit growth of local talent. Asian leaders may find it hard to adjust to a 'typical' MNC work style as there may be some cultural nuances that may put an Asian leader at a comparative disadvantage. Lack of mobility may further constrain Asian leaders' ability to take on global roles.

1. https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/The-Global-Asian-Leader-Research-Report.pdf
2. https://www.adb.org/great-expectations

FLAVORS OF GLOBAL ASIAN LEADERS: REPRESENTATIVE PROFILE

ASIAN RETURNEE	REGIONAL CHAMPION	GLOBAL NOMAD	LOCAL EXPAT
▪ Born in China ▪ Educated in the US ▪ Worked in the US ▪ Returned to China during mid-career; with same or different MNC	▪ Born in Indonesia ▪ Educated in Singapore ▪ Worked in 3-5 Asian countries with multiple MNCs	▪ Born in India ▪ Educated in US/India ▪ Worked in several countries in 2-3 regions (and HQ) in the same MNC	▪ Born in Germany ▪ Educated in Europe ▪ Moved to Thailand early in the career and stayed there; worked with different MNCs

Source: CCL, "The Global Asian Leader: From Local Star to Global CXO," 2018.

Asian leaders in a global role may fall into one of the following four categories, shaped by their ethnicity, nationality, early experiences, exposure, and education (Graphic 2.1.2).

▪ An *Asian returnee* is a leader of Asian origin who has educated and mainly worked outside of the region (often till mid-career). Having spent considerable time outside of Asia, she has rich exposure to different cultures.

▪ A *regional champion* is a leader of Asian origin with multi-country and perhaps a multi-company work experience, but mainly within Asia.

▪ In contrast, *a global nomad* is an Asian leader who has diverse multi-country experiences within and outside of Asia, often with the same organization. Since the leader has moved around locations in the same enterprise, he has strong ties, networks, relationships, credibility and trust with key stakeholders.

▪ A *local expat* is a leader who may not be of Asian origin, but has spent most of her working career within Asia. Much like a 'global nomad,' she also has diverse exposure to different cultures.

Besides, it is not too uncommon in Asian-headquartered organizations for home-grown leaders with only in-country experience (entire education and working life spent in the same country) to be deputed on regional expatriate assignments in a leadership role. While such leaders have strong ties with the headquarters, with no experience in another country and with often little or no cross-cultural exposure, such leaders may find themselves set up for failure.

It is, however, hard to paint all Asian leaders with one broad brush. Organizations therefore will need different tactics to develop different 'communities' (or flavors) of Asian leaders.

Irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, experience, and age, leaders in cross-cultural global roles, especially in matrixed modern-day organizations, must display five capabilities highlighted in Graphic 2.1.3. These include courage, curiosity, trust, influence and strategic thinking. In addition to the five critical traits, there is also a must-have hygiene element, aspiration, to step into global roles.

Graphic 2.1.3

MUST HAVE GLOBAL LEADER CAPABILITIES

COURAGE: Overcoming the fear of facing unknown or unfamiliar situations, and having the ability to express ones' opinions freely

CURIOSITY: Hunger to learn something new, seek different experiences, ask questions, and genuinely wanting to know more about different people and cultures

TRUST: To establish and develop deep credibility of ones authenticity and capability within and outside of the global enterprise

INFLUENCE: Power and the ability to personally affect key stakeholders' actions, decisions, opinions in a matrixed, multi-geography environment

STRATEGIC THINKING: Ability to understand organizations' long term strategy, and come up with effective plans in line with the organizations' business objectives within the local/regional/global economic context

Source: CCL, "The Global Asian Leader: From Local Star to Global CXO," 2018.

REALITY: Organizations must curate compelling development plans to create a strong pipeline of global Asian leaders. Organization posture may be the biggest stumbling block, much bigger than cultural fluency and individual capability issues.

In the past decade, Asian leaders have proved their mettle in the global arena. Current CEOs at several large global companies, MasterCard, Microsoft, Google, and IBM to name a few, are leaders of Asian ethnicity. As Asia becomes the catchment area for talent, more Asian leaders are likely to helm global leadership roles in large organizations.

Career mapping of successful global leaders highlighted several common themes. A lot of them were educated outside of their home country, had early leadership opportunities, opted for secondments in a foreign country, and did a stint at the headquarters (if the headquarters were outside of Asia), which helped them network, build credibility in the system, and deliver critical engagements. Three critical experiences stood out in preparing Asian leaders for global roles: cross-border rotations, non-obvious career moves, and stretch roles.

Center for Creative Leadership research points out that stretch or 'crucible' experiences are extremely valuable in preparing for leadership roles in an uncertain environment. Crucible experiences could include participating in a global M&A, cross-business transformation projects, developing a new market, dealing with a tough customer, or even reporting into a 'demanding' manager.

International assignments early in their careers contributed to the success of global leaders. Leaving the 'safety' of home shores requires leaders to tolerate uncertainty and discomfort. The value of making such moves early in the career benefits leaders as well as their organizations. For leaders, it may mean an easy transition since there will be fewer family constraints. For organizations, it may mean rotating leaders at mid-management level, thereby somewhat protecting or limiting the potential risk due to non-performance.

Leaders with diverse professional experiences early in their careers stood the best chance of breaking down organizational barriers to cultivate a more collusive culture. Diverse experiences also help leaders to build credibility, network, and trust within the organization.

> *It just does not work in Asia* is a comment I don't agree to; capability is certainly there, you just need to perhaps use a different lens and find it, nurture it, and develop it. Most Asian countries value relationships and that's how you build trust."
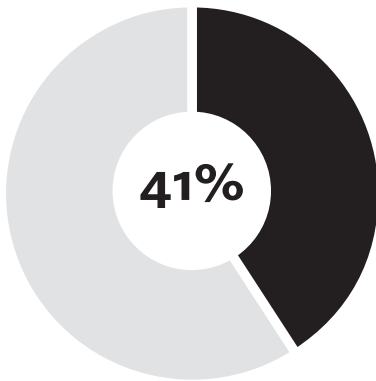>
> **Tiffany See,**
> Head of HR Business Partnerships, Commercial, BHP

DEBUNK PLAN:

1. Invest effort in root causing the 'real' reason for the lack of global Asian leadership pipeline. Organizational posture (or lack of it), not lack of skills, may be hindering the global Asian leader development efforts.

2. Identify key capabilities required by leaders to succeed in regional and global roles in your organization and create development journeys to set Asian leaders up for success.

3. Be deliberate to curate appropriate experiences and help engineer the right career moves for executives to hone their global leadership skills.

MYTH II.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS SHOULD PRIMARILY FOCUS ON TOP-LEVEL EXECUTIVES

41%

Note: Pie-chart denotes % respondents who selected the myth as one of their top three.

> **We need to disseminate development culture across the organization, just focusing on the top management is not enough; people need to learn from each other, get networked, and learn through real-life projects..."**

Aditya Kohli,
Chief HR Officer, Clix Capital

PAINT WITH A BROAD BRUSH

Democratize Leadership Development in the Organization

Graphic 2.2.1

MULTI-LEVEL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

TOP CHALLENGES | **MUST-HAVE CAPABILITIES**

TOP EXECUTIVES

Top Challenges:
- Set organizational direction
- Foster alignments across the organization
- Gain commitment for performance
- Refine and build strong executive persona

Must-Have Capabilities:
- Creating and articulating vision
- Creating strategic alignment
- Developing a leadership and talent strategy aligned with business strategy
- Leading the culture
- Executive image
- Creating a culture of innovation
- Catalyzing change
- Leading outwardly

DIVISION OR FUNCTION HEADS

Top Challenges:
- Set vision and build towards the future
- Balance trade-offs between the short- and long-term
- Align the organization for strategy implementation

Must-Have Capabilities:
- Being visionary
- Driving results
- Strategic thinking and acting
- Creating engagement
- Identifying innovation opportunities
- Working across boundaries
- Leading globally
- Catalyzing change
- Leading outwardly

LEADERS OF MANAGERS

Top Challenges:
- Integrate cross-functional perspectives in decisions
- Handle complexity and manage politics
- Sell ideas to senior leaders
- Select and lead managers for high performance

Must-Have Capabilities:
- Thinking and acting systemically
- Managing complexity
- Negotiating adeptly
- Selecting and developing others
- Taking risks
- Implementing change
- Managing globally dispersed teams
- Building resiliency

LEADERS OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Top Challenges:
- Transition from individual performer to team leader
- Build relationships
- Deal effectively with conflict
- Solve problems successfully

Must-Have Capabilities:
- Coaching
- Leading teams
- Building relationships
- Resolving conflict
- Learning to delegate
- Innovative problem solving
- Embracing change

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Top Challenges:
- Prepare for management or leadership role
- Build a common leadership language
- Increase personal effectiveness

Must-Have Capabilities:
- Leading with purpose
- Delivering results
- Establishing credibility
- Interpersonal savvy
- Embracing flexibility
- Tolerating ambiguity
- Understanding one's own values and culture

Source: The Leadership Development Roadmap: A Guide for Successfully Developing Leaders at All Levels, CCL.
https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/leader-development-roadmap-center-for-creative-leadership.pdf

Organizations typically spend an extraordinary amount of time and resources on leadership development for their senior executives, while often falling short on leadership development for frontline and mid-level managers, a considerably bigger community of leaders who can influence the company's performance quite significantly. Two in five leaders in the CCL research survey felt that one of the biggest misconceptions about leadership development is that it is only for the senior leaders who play a 'strategic' role. Any investment towards leadership development should therefore overtly lean towards senior executives.

Research suggests that although they make up or influence 80% of the workforce, frontline managers receive only about one-fourth of a typical company's leadership development efforts.[1]

The reasons for this imbalance can be plenty – leadership budgets being controlled by senior leaders (and hence senior leadership challenges taking priority); or, 'leadership' being viewed as largely strategic and hence a bias to only train senior leaders who do 'more strategic' roles; or, a more short term return-on-leadership development investment, hence rolling out such initiatives for only senior leaders; or, the ease of managing leadership development programs involving a few (or a few hundred) senior leaders versus perhaps several thousand middle or frontline managers.

1. Vikram Bhalla, Deborah Lovich, Jean-Michel Caye, Christopher Daniel, and Liza Stutts (BCG), "*How Frontline Leaders Can Deliver Breakout Performance*," 21 November 2016. https://www.bcg.com/publications/2016/people-organization-how-frontline-leaders-can-deliver-breakout-performance.aspx

Graphic 2.2.2

FUNDAMENTAL 4 CAPABILITIES

SELF AWARENESS
Understand your behavior's impact on organizational outcomes

COMMUNICATION
Effectively communicate goals and inspire trust

INFLUENCE
Be comfortable persuading, promoting, and delegating

LEARNING AGILITY
Know when to change course, and help others to do so

Source: https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/leader-development-roadmap-center-for-creative-leadership.pdf

Interviewees suggested that it is generally just easier to get signoffs and approvals (with often limited scrutiny) for leadership development programs involving senior executives than it is for large scale, multi-geography programs for frontline or mid-level leaders.

The belly of the managerial community normal curve, frontline managers and middle managers – managers in their first role overseeing teams or managers of managers – are a very critical community for the long-term success of organizations.

Frontline leaders are first time managers who have recently moved from "doing" as individual contributors to "leading" teams of other individual contributors, often owing to their high productivity and technical skills. This is often a challenging shift for these leaders since they are responsible

for others' output and they may have limited skills to drive performance. Middle managers are often leaders of managers.

Frontline and mid-level managers often run core activities that impact customers, influence productivity, drive employee engagement, influence attrition, and are often the face of leadership for the majority of the workforce. Moreover, this community also comprises the succession pipeline for senior leadership roles. Therefore, failing to prepare the next generation of senior leaders means leaving the leadership bench empty for the future.

Inability to equip frontline and mid-level leaders with capabilities they need to support their teams can have serious negative implications on organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Graphic 2.2.3

3 STEPS TO DEMOCRATIZE LEARNING

"Most Compelling Strategy"	**"Most Relevant Content"**	**"Most Efficient Delivery Mode"**
"Companies continue to spend on leadership development, recognizing that it is central to their growth, but a lot of them struggle with the development roadmap."	"We need to constantly evaluate capability gaps and training needs across different levels and departments; start-up environment makes it even harder"	"We need to disrupt new learning experiences through new blended learning, internal subject expert facilitators, and micro-learning, where teams and managers can accelerate on competitive capabilities and to keep transforming."
Amitabh Hajela, *President, Group HR, GMR Group*	**Stephanie Nash,** *Chief People Officer, ChapmanCG*	**Wei-Ling Poon,** *Head of Leadership Development Asia & JPAC, Sanofi*

- Evaluate the expanse of talent – leader levels, departments, functions, geographies, etc.
- Get clarity on 'what success looks like' on the development front
- Plan in detail, mobilize resources, get clarity on timelines, etc

- Understand must-have capabilities across key leader communities and critical gaps
- Do not overwhelm leaders; 'less is more'
- Revisit capability needs regularly and align them with changing context

- Leverage technology to reach people in different places, at different times, through digital learning initiatives
- Insource and outsource faculty and facilitators to get optimal returns
- Curate appropriate experiences for talent to solidify learning(s)

Source: CCL Research, 2020; Jeff Howard, Mike Smith, Clemson G. Turregano, and Sonia Allué de Baro (CCL), "Scaling Leadership Development for Maximum Impact," 2019. https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/scaling-leadership-development-white-paper-ccl-center-for-creative-leadership-pdf.pdf

REALITY: Leadership development must happen across multiple levels in the organization to maximise ROI on development initiatives.

As Graphic 2.2.1 highlights, leaders across multiple levels have very unique challenges and therefore they need different must-have capabilities as they work their way through the organizational hierarchy. The range of skills needed is very diverse, and the needs of each leader may further vary, based on their role, career trajectory, and personal aspirations. Because each individual and position are unique, the learning must be tailored directly to the needs of the role and the person. A one-size-fits-all leadership development program therefore may not provide the highest possible return-on-leadership investment.

CCL research identifies four must-have skills that all leaders, irrespective of their level, must possess. As highlighted in Graphic 2.2.2, all leaders must have a high level of self-awareness about what they can and cannot do, and how their behaviors impact the organization; they must communicate succinctly yet clearly; they should be adept at influencing upwards, sideways and downwards in order to excel in a typical matrixed organization; and, they must be agile learners to survive in a rapidly changing context.

Interviewees suggested three must-do steps in order to take leadership development beyond the senior leadership: create a compelling strategy, ensure that content is most relevant, and that it is easily consumable and efficiently delivered (Graphic 2.2.3).

Before the leadership development team jumps into the program design and delivery mode, it must get the 'lay of the land' in order to create the most efficient permutations and combinations of content and delivery modes. Once the strategy is in place, the organization must evaluate capabilities available now and capabilities needed in the future, map these with the organizational strategy and changing business context, and identify gaps, in order prioritise must-have skills, behaviours and competencies. These may vary by level, function, hierarchy, culture, geography, etc. Finally, once the critical capability gaps and behaviour shifts required are identified, the leadership development team must identify the most efficient, scalable, and impactful delivery modes.

> **For us, leadership development is not only for the top tiers of employees, but for all levels of leaders. Technology has been our biggest enabler for creating an engaging experience. This is done through bespoke mobile apps which are integrated with classroom learnings, MOOCs, and social communities to focus on key leadership competencies for cohorts."**
>
> **Ruchira Bhardwaja,**
> CHRO, Future Generali India Life Insurance

DEBUNK PLAN:

1. Sensitize senior leadership team and get a buy-in on driving leadership development across multiple levels in the organization.

2. Map out the content needs and critical capability gaps across levels, geographies, departments, generations, functions, etc.

3. Curate the most compelling mix of content and delivery modes for different communities of learners in the organization.

MYTH III.

ORGANIZATIONS CAN HAVE ONE UNIFORM APPROACH TO DEVELOPING LEADERS ACROSS DIFFERENT REGIONS, COUNTRIES, CONTEXTS

39%
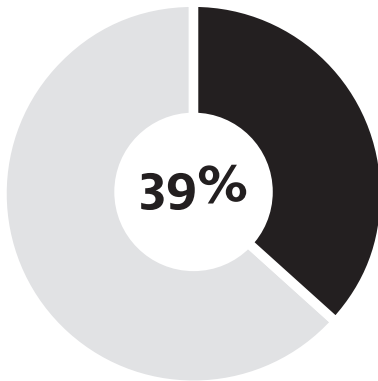
Note: Pie-chart denotes % respondents who selected the myth as one of their top three.

"**Our challenge is to find the right balance between bespoke development versus homogenous development. We have different businesses, in different countries, with different cultures and different levels of evolution, therefore leadership development cannot be centrally controlled.**"

Moira Roberts,
Regional Head of HR, Asia-Pacific & MEA,
Munich Re

LOCAL VIEW WITH GLOBAL LENS

Align Leadership Development Programs to Asian Context

While most organizations combine Asia as one single region or cut it by South, South-East, Pacific and China, there is no one Asia. Every country or sub-region within Asia is hugely diverse. "There is no such thing as Asia," commented a regional CHRO at a global Bank. He added, "Even within South Asia, there are very different cultures in different countries, and understanding these nuances is sometimes the biggest failing of western leaders."

While organizations often extend their global leadership development programs developed at their headquarters or at the group level (by central leadership development teams) to different countries, such programs may only have a limited relevance in Asia. Western business norms may not apply in many Asian countries; for instance, Asian collectivism versus western individualism, command economies versus free economies, etc. Organizations aspiring to develop global Asian leaders need to cater to such cultural and market differences.

Two key areas that differentiate Asia (mainly developing Asia) from the developed West are: talent competitiveness and unique culture. Talent competitiveness often refers to policies and practices that enable a country to develop, attract, and empower the human capital that contributes to productivity and prosperity. Graphic 2.3.1 highlights the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) ranking of representative sets of Asian countries; GTCI highlights what countries do to produce and

Graphic 2.3.1

TALENT COMPETITIVENESS IN ASIA

Note: the size of the circle denotes country population.

Source: https://gtcistudy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/GTCI-2020-Report.pdf
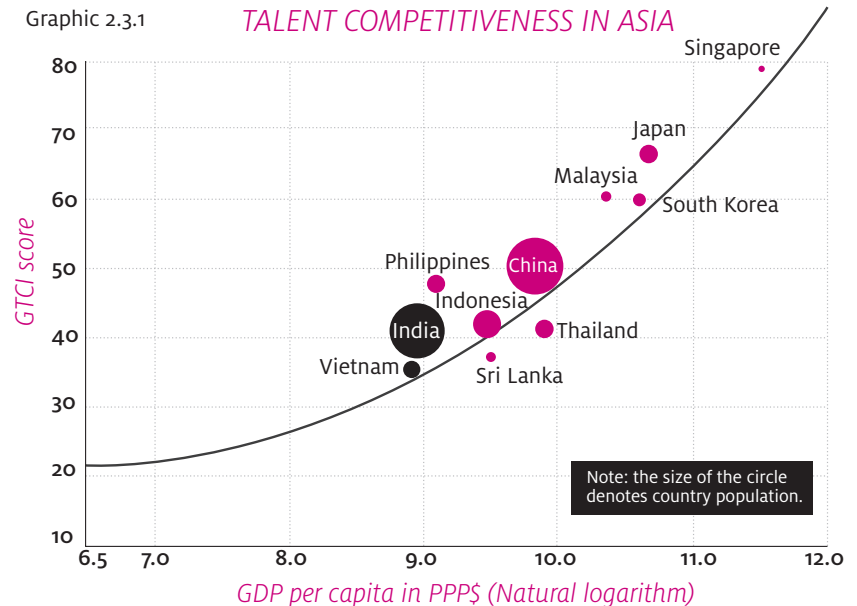
acquire talents (enable, attract, grow, and retain talent) and the kind of skills (vocational/technical and managerial) that are available to them as a result.

Even from a culture standpoint, organizations often talk of Asia as one big block. Asia, however, seems to be an identity but does not subscribe to one culture; Japan, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam are all very different, though they may be a part of one region. For instance, while a Singaporean leader may be an expert executor, an Indian leader may be more comfortable with uncertainties. While a Chinese leader may be comfortable taking unpopular decisions, a Javanese executive from Indonesia will refrain from doing so.[1]

1.   "The Global Asian Leader: From Local Star to Global CXO," CCL, 2018.

Asian culture hard-wiring therefore may impact leaders' ability to succeed in regional or global roles. Graphic 2.3.2 depicts four areas that may define a unique interplay between culture and leadership in Asia. Value attached to hierarchy, level of individualism, focus on harmony, and premium on relationships and networks, influences the leadership style of Asian executives.

Most countries in Asia have a higher power distance. This may be because of the culture, which focuses on the family as a 'primary unit,' and therefore the role of elders. Or, religions (mainly Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism), which teach patience and respect to the father, or the 'enlightened one.' It may also have its roots in the fact that most of Asia has a deep colonial past. There are also social classes and structures in the society that lend to a hierarchy-driven social 'fabric.' And, at least in a few countries in the region, monarchy played a key role in forming hierarchy-based structures.

While there is an undercurrent of hierarchy, in a sharp contrast, decision-making is very collectivist. In order to maintain the societal equilibrium, decision-making in most cultures in Asia is more about addressing the 'we' rather than 'I.' Decisions, since they are consensus-driven, may, however, take longer to arrive at.

In most Asian countries, there is a tremendous premium on maintaining harmony, love, and togetherness. This may, in an extreme situation, stretch to a level that a leader may have to tolerate under-performance by his/her teams. The underlying principle being that anything that destroys harmony is not good – therefore there may be fewer instances of pointing a finger at someone, praising an individual in public (promotes jealousy), pulling up an individual, arguing in a meeting, etc. It may also manifest in the inability of an Asian leader to push back, have an equal-eye dialogue, or deliver tough feedback. The driver for achieving harmony is a family-like approach which is deeply embedded in cultural values. Also, Buddhism and Confucianism celebrate 'patience' and prescribe taking the 'middle path.'

There is also a huge focus on developing and maintaining relationships. Owing to the lack of dependable governance and institutions, hard-wired regulatory environment, and strict compliance requirements and rules in most countries in Asia, leaders build their own security net, which is often 'their network.' So, 'know-who' supersedes 'know-how' in most Asian countries. This focus on hierarchy, collectivism, harmony and relationships, may hinder leaders' journey into a global role as most global organizations, especially multi-nationals headquartered in Europe and US, may have a hierarchy-agnostic, individualistic culture.

Most global organizations toggle between two points of view on leadership development: "we know what a global leader looks like, and the leader should fit that mould, no matter what," and "local contexts need local leaders, hence leadership development should be decentralized".

Graphic 2.3.2

UNIQUE CULTURAL NUANCES IN ASIA

COLLECTIVIST APPROACH
Asia Scores Low on Individualism

DEPENDENCE ON NETWORKS
Basis Friendships, Family Ties, Social Strata, etc.

PERVASIVE SENSE OF HIERARCHY
Caring-Autocrat Attitude

FOCUS ON HARMONY
Non-Confrontational Attitude at Work

Source: "The Global Asian Leader: From Local Star to Global CXO", CCL, 2018.

REALITY: For maximum impact, organizations must tweak leadership development interventions and journeys to suit Asian context.

Centralized functions often have group-level learning and a development (or leadership development) team; members of this team report into a group learning office and that ensures standardization and scale. The center controls budgets, resources, partnerships, vendor relationships, etc. Such learning teams, however, are less aligned with specific business or regional needs.

On the contrary, in a decentralized leadership development model, the development ownership sits with individual regions or business units, thereby making leadership development more specific to the business/regional needs. The development function, however, may have limited connections with the central learning and development philosophy.

Progressive organizations often lean more towards a hybrid leadership development philosophy, where a central team develops very high-level program frameworks, sets standards, and manages platforms and tools, while business units or regions are responsible for tweaking programs to suit regional or local needs. Such a model marries better local connect with the economies of scale. It can, however, be complex and blur accountability lines.

Asian leaders have different development needs, and the teachings and takeaways need to be contextualized in local challenges, business frameworks, and cultural realities. Progressive organizations therefore tweak their global leadership development journeys to suit Asian needs. "What has worked for us in the last 18 to 24 months is that we have shifted our leadership development focus from being US-centric to where the customers are; earlier our flagship leadership programs were run in New York, but now they happen in the region [Asia], in local markets," said Appandairajan Krishnakumar, Head of Talent, Asia-Pacific at MasterCard.

> **Sometimes even at the regional level, we tend to think from an HQ-standpoint, that one solution helps all; we are talking about different cultures, different market realities, and leadership models here in Asia. From my position as the regional head, we need to develop hybrid solutions that we can use in different realities."**
>
> **Hugo Martinho,**
> HR Director, Asia-Pacific, Schindler Group

DEBUNK PLAN:

1. Refrain from 'exporting' leadership development programs and journeys as is to Asia.

2. Invest energy in understanding the business context and culture in Asia and tweak leadership development interventions accordingly.

3. Be deliberate to pick countries within Asia where your organization will place talent 'bets'.

Lessons of Experience

MYTH IV.

ATTENDING [ONLY] LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE(S) WILL MAKE YOU A BETTER LEADER

37%
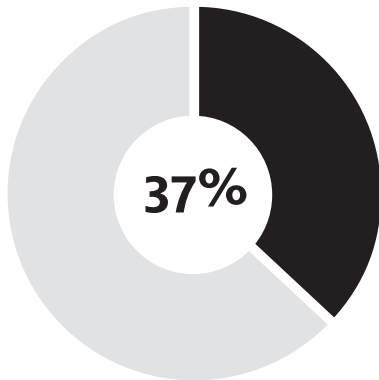
> " We constantly strive to find the most effective ways to provide the right experiences to our talent; for instance, we deliberately put more senior roles outside of the HQ to provide stretch experiences."
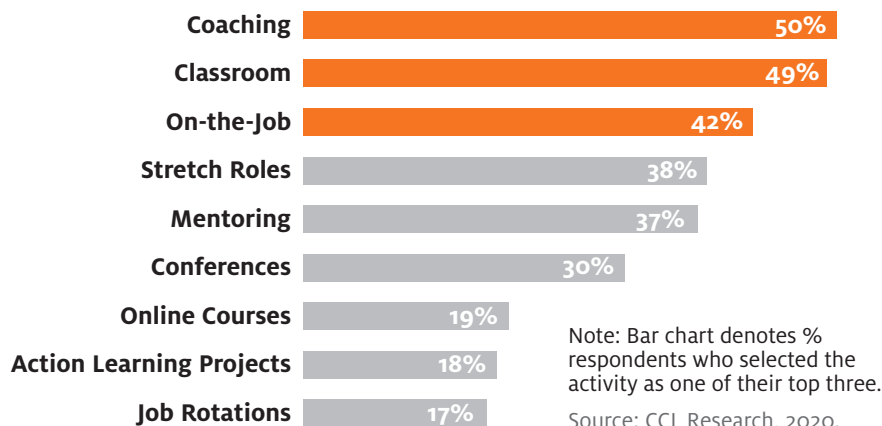
Regional HR Leader,
Global MNC in FMCG Industry

Note: Pie-chart denotes % respondents who selected the myth as one of their top three.

MIX AND MATCH

Enhance Development Impact by Anchoring the Right Experiences

Graphic 2.4.1   *TOP LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Percentage
Coaching	50%
Classroom	49%
On-the-Job	42%
Stretch Roles	38%
Mentoring	37%
Conferences	30%
Online Courses	19%
Action Learning Projects	18%
Job Rotations	17%

Note: Bar chart denotes % respondents who selected the activity as one of their top three.

Source: CCL Research, 2020.

Owing to cost pressures, numerous responsibilities and inability of leaders to take a block of a few days off from their busy schedule, organizations are beginning to look at alternatives to in-person development programs. Graphic 2.4.1 suggests that organizations at the very least complement classroom training with coaching, on-the-job training, crucible or stretch roles and mentoring. Interviewees shared that while classroom experiences expose leaders to new knowledge and help develop new skills, permanence and longevity of the skills and formation of new behaviors typically happens through experiences, on-the-job roles, coaching, mentoring experiences, etc. The recent pandemic situation, which has resulted in the the world's largest forced 'pilot' on work-from-home, has also forced organizations to embrace digital learning.

Coaching emerged as the top leadership development activity, with one in two respondents indicating that it is one of the top-three leadership development initiatives in their organization. Coaching focuses on helping executives learn in ways that let them keep growing afterwards; it is based on asking rather than telling, on provoking thoughts rather than giving directions, and on holding a person accountable for his or her goals.

CCL research points at the efficacy of experiences in shaping leadership capabilities. "There is no substitute for experience as a senior leader, and I think exposure to different environments, different cultures, diverse functions, and a variety of leadership challenges is unparalleled," shared a regional HR head at a global bank. He added, "Ability to move people geographically or among business units is extremely critical in making them comfortable with different contexts; learning by failure also makes the learning curve really steep."

Graphic 2.4.2 — **THREE TYPES OF EXPERIENCES THAT IMPACT EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT**

10% from **COURSES**

20% from **OTHER PEOPLE**

70% from **ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCES & CHALLENGES**
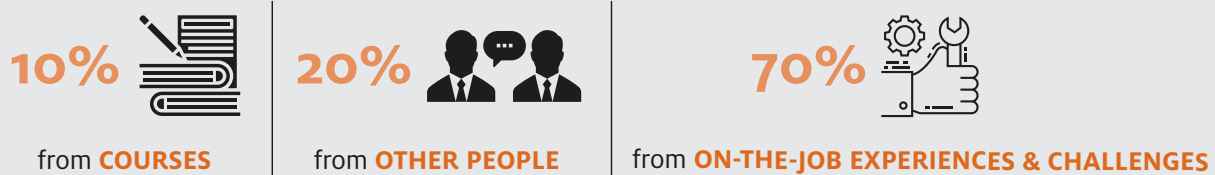
Source: CCL, "The 70-20-10 Rule for Leadership Development." https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/70-20-10-rule/

Graphic 2.4.2 highlights CCL research findings on three modes of leadership development. The '70-20-10' rule, derived from over 30 years of CCL research, explores how executives learn, grow, and develop over the course of their careers. According to the rule, leaders need to have 3 types of experiences to develop, using a 70-20-10 equation:

- challenging assignments (70%),
- developmental relationships (20%), and
- coursework and training (10%).

The underlying assumption of this CCL research is that leadership is learned and that leaders can be shaped; leaders are not born, and leadership is not innate.

CCL research also highlights that all experiences aren't created equal. Which experiences contribute the most to learning and growth? And what specific leadership lessons can be learned from each experience? Among the leadership lessons learned from experiences, 3 are ranked as universally important: managing direct reports, self-awareness, and executing effectively.

To adapt and grow, leaders need to be constantly involved in new experiences and challenges that foster learning. Some of these new opportunities will come their way through new jobs, crises, or significant challenges. It is, however, not necessary to change jobs to experience powerful learning experiences. And in any job situation, leaders need to seek out or strengthen relationships with bosses, mentors, and peers that will contribute to their own growth in leadership.

Graphic 2.4.3 depicts five strategies or tactics organizations deploy to action experience-driven development. These range from identifying stretch assignments, to creating new experiences, all the way to promoting an experience-driven development culture:[1]

I. **Identify stretch assignments.** Some experiences are more developmental than others. And, different experiences teach different things. Identifying stretch assignments includes developing a shared language for talking about stretch assignments; mapping competencies to stretch assignments; creating experience paths for targeted positions or roles – such as a general manager role for those on a high-potential track; and reserving specific key jobs for development only.

II. **Staff for development, not just for performance.** Matching specific individuals with the right experience requires rigor as well. The key with experience-driven development is to factor in the need to hone new skills and perspectives, not simply make assignments based on past success or current role. Staffing for development includes putting processes in place to identify the next assignment needed for each high-potential to continue broadening his or her portfolio of experience; making sure that everyone has a 'development-in-place' assignment – something in the current job

Graphic 2.4.3 — **EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT: 5 TACTICS**

Identify Stretch Assignments | **Staff for Development Not Just for Performance** | **Create New Experiences** | **Enhance Learning from Experience** | **Promote Experience Driven Development Culture**
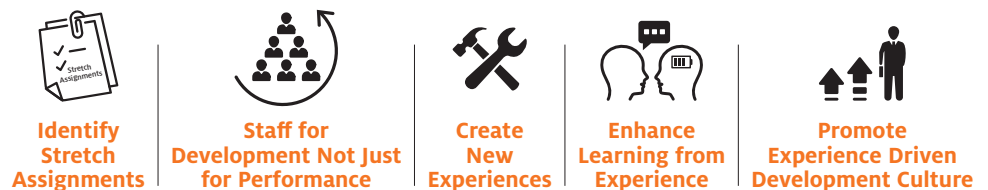
Source: CCL, "Putting Experience at the Center of Talent Management (Whitepaper)," 2016. https://www.ccl.org/articles/white-papers/putting-experience-center-talent-management/

1. CCL, *"Putting Experience at the Center of Talent Management (Whitepaper),"* 2016. https://www.ccl.org/articles/white-papers/putting-experience-center-talent-management/

that will challenge and support targeted development; staffing key projects with development in mind, asking "Who could benefit from this experience?"; developing managers' skills via assignment-based development to be sure they are able to identify, implement, and support stretch assignments.

III. **Create new experiences.** With experience-driven development, talent needs are met primarily through job experiences rather than with training programs. This requires that enough of the right experiences exist to develop people in the ways that are needed. Expanding the array of developmental assignments involves creating new types of experiences to meet strategic needs of the organization – more cross-functional, cross-country, new market, and new client opportunities (for example); including developmental assignments in formal development programs. This might be in the form of action-learning projects, special assignments, or job-rotation experiences; supporting the pursuit of leadership experiences beyond the workplace, such as volunteer work, board membership, or roles with professional organizations which address development needed in the workplace.

IV. **Enhance learning from experience.** Going through an experience doesn't guarantee a person will learn from it. Support is needed. Organizations need to surround development experiences with effective learning practices, including tools for reflecting on experience and feedback; access to relationships for learning, like mentors, peer networks, and communities of practice; coaches who challenge

and support explicit learning goals and experience-driven development; formal coursework and online resources that provide just-in-time learning tailored to the challenges of the specific stretch experience.

V. **Promote an experience-driven development culture.** When learning from experience is embedded in the culture, the gap between doing and developing shrinks. An experience-driven development culture includes hiring and developing – as well as recognizing and rewarding – senior leaders who visibly support experience-driven development; communicating and tracking on-the-job development (not just job moves, but evidence of development); rewarding employees for their own development and for developing others; valuing learning agility as a core competency – recruiting for it, selecting for it, developing it, and making it a normal part of the conversation.

> **When we hire from campus we have a 2-year rotational program. For instance, the consulting team does a rigorous two-year program –** they go from pre-sales to sales, to delivery to management; they have a full spectrum of consulting. At the end of 2 years they get promoted to a team lead. We also pay for skills – **our compensation strategy is changing to incent leaders who exhibit upskilling."**
>
> **Pallavi Srivastava,**
> Asia-Pacific & Greater China Talent Leader,
> Global Technology Services, IBM

DEBUNK PLAN:

1. Be mindful of the 70-20-10 model while designing development journeys.

2. Be creative in adopting tactics to curate compelling developmental experiences.

3. Curate and promote an experience-driven development culture.

MYTH V.

HR CAN LEAD AND EXECUTE THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AGENDA WITHOUT TOP TEAM/ BOARD BUY-IN

30%
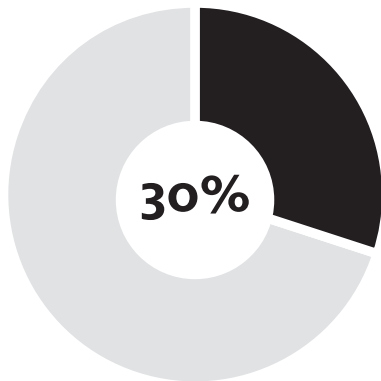
Note: Pie-chart denotes % respondents who selected the myth as one of their top three.

" Senior management needs to buy-in to the leadership development agenda; without champions at the C-suite and Board level, scaling up leadership development is impossible to execute."

Mukta Arya,
Head of HR (SEA) and Head of Talent
Development and Inclusion (Asia-Pacific),
Société Générale

SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR

Take Leadership Development Agenda from Training Room to Boardroom

More than one-in-three survey respondents in the CCL research study selected the myth around HR being able to drive the leadership development agenda solo, without top team buy-in. "There seems to be a contradiction; there is a huge shortage of quality leaders, and leadership development is the biggest worry in everybody's mind, yet people don't want to invest in the development agenda," said Mohan Chakasaril Korah, Advisory Board Member at THP Group, Vietnam.

HR leaders will find it hard to push the leadership development agenda without senior leadership support, since they can influence the resources for development, and demonstrate their intent to free up their team leaders for interventions and journeys. Besides, lack of leader buy-in may hurt leadership development initiatives indirectly since the leaders will not walk the (necessary) talk to instill developmental culture within the organization.

Graphic 2.5.1 lists five critical roles that impact talent development and management across the organization, as well as the behaviors and actions that individuals in those roles must exhibit.

Graphic 2.5.1 *FIVE CRITICAL ROLES FOR TALENT SUSTAINABILITY*

THE ROLE	THE ACTIONS
TALENT OVERSEERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS	▪ Ensure talent decisions are aligned with business strategy ▪ Receive updates on succession planning data on at least an annual basis ▪ Review the performance of high-potential executive talent over time and throughout their careers ▪ Hold leaders accountable to ensure appropriate talent development is occurring
TALENT ORCHESTRATORS CEO AND SENIOR LEADERS	▪ Encourage leaders to share talent across the organization ▪ Support stretch and rotating assignments ▪ Invest time in talent management ▪ Mentor successors and other leaders
TALENT INFLUENCERS LINE MANAGERS	▪ Identify future leaders ▪ Work with HR leaders to make sure appropriate development is available for talent ▪ Identify and develop their successors
TALENT ACCELERATORS HR LEADERS	▪ Design and execute the talent management system that fits organizational needs ▪ Engage senior leaders and line managers in the talent management process ▪ Cultivate a culture of talent development ▪ Monitor the effectiveness of talent management system
TALENT EMPLOYEE	▪ Have an awareness of personal strengths and areas for development ▪ Identify personal and career goals ▪ Communicate career interests and goals ▪ Demonstrate a readiness for learning and development

Source: Anand Chandrasekar and Sophia Zhao (CCL), "Creating a Dynamic and Sustainable Talent Ecosystem (Whitepaper)," 2015. https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Creating-Dynamic-Sustainable-Talent-Ecosystem-CCL-White-Paper.pdf

Graphic 2.5.2
TACTICS TO GET C-SUITE BUY-IN ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1

GET LEADER ATTENTION
"More than ROI, we in HR must get leaders' attention and make the executive team understand why development is important, what are the big gaps, and what can we do about those in order to be future ready."
Appandairajan Krishnakumar,
Head of Talent (Asia-Pacific), MasterCard

2

BE OBJECTIVE
"Make a real business case for development and use relevant metrics, don't go to the CEO with vague ideas; answer why, what, who, when, and where about the leadership development agenda."
Moira Roberts,
Regional Head of HR, Asia-Pacific & MEA, Munich Re

3

POSITION DEVELOPMENT AS INVESTMENT
"If the organization is progressive and genuinely cares about leadership, don't get stuck with splitting hair about RoI; the narrative instead is: It is investment for the future of the organization."
D N Prasad,
Senior Director - Strategy, People & Organization, GovTech, Singapore

4

DEMONSTRATE IMPACT
"Business cares about impact, hence pre- and post-evaluation exercise is very critical; before the training, we do a pulse check on leaders' capabilities and insights, and 6 to 12 months into the training we do another evaluation. We track how these people are developing in terms of knowledge and capabilities."
Rajesh Uppal,
Sr. Executive Director (HR & IT), Maruti Suzuki India

5

MAKE THE DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE CONNECT
"If you are drawn into the ROI conversation, then it is a dead end! The conversation must center around how development can disseminate the desired culture, for people to learn from each other, get networked in other parts of the organization and overcome the greatest challenge any big organization faces, which is to make sure that employees know that what they do on daily basis impacts the strategy of the company."
Amitabh Hajela,
President, Group HR, GMR Group

6

ENGAGE SENIOR LEADERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY
"Senior leaders, by being passionately involved in the leadership development of their teams, themselves build capabilities, and drive innovation and change through learning."
Wei-Ling Poon,
Head of Leadership Development Asia & JPAC, Sanofi

Source: CCL Research, 2020;

Any pan-organization intervention will involve investment of time and resources. HR leaders will therefore invariably need to get sign-offs from executive teams or even boards for leadership development budgets. In order to make a compelling business case to senior leadership teams, HR heads or HR teams must have a credible business case for rolling out the leadership agenda, complete with the business problem, key capability gaps, potential options, selected strategy benefits, and roll-out plans. A key driver in the sign-off process will be the evaluation activity to link the impact of leadership development interventions on business.

Graphic 2.5.2 highlights tactics HR leaders and Learning and Development leaders can adopt to get buy-in from the senior leadership teams and boards on the development agenda.

One, HR leaders must ensure development is top-of-mind for business leaders. Interviewees advised HR leaders to be persistent drivers of the leadership development agenda, bringing it to the fore at various forums – during dialogues with the CEO, business leaders, board directors, etc.

Two, HR leaders must be objective, and must frame the dialogue around leadership development as a solution to a business problem; for instance, lack of succession that may result in a business growth stall, or inadequate capabilities that may result in business being lost to competing organizations.

Three, interviewees suggested that it is best to position development as an investment, not as an expense! And, HR leaders must be prepared for a pushback from business.

REALITY: HR must find sponsors in the senior leadership team to improve roll-out and impact of the leadership development agenda.

"There are two kinds of business leader reactions when you present leadership development plans," explained D N Prasad, Senior Director - Strategy, People & Organization, GovTech, Singapore. "One, poking holes in the proposal because the business leader wants to ensure maximum value, which is good and keeps us honest; or, two, skepticism, because the leader does not believe in the power of leadership development." He added, "In the second instance, the HR leader does not stand a chance. It is similar to coaching; you cannot coach someone who is not ready to be coached."

Four, HR leaders must start with a business challenge and adeptly propose development interventions to solve the business problem. They must also present a comprehensive and credible process to evaluate the impact of interventions. For example, behavioral change can be captured by a 360-degree assessment designed to measure change, or learning teams can also deploy end-of-program evaluation surveys.

Five, HR must always elevate the ROI dialogue from a specific intervention to the longer term impact on driving the desired culture in the organization.

Six, HR must actively engage business leaders in the roll-out plans. Inviting them to be coaches, mentors, in-house facilitators and faculty are smart ways to get implicit buy-in from senior executives. "Leaders learning from leaders is very powerful," reinforced Florence Chow, CHRO at Hitachi Asia & Australia. She added, "It works even better if the leaders are from across the border; they also bring in the cultural fluency aspect."

ROLE OF LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. Play the executive sponsor to the leadership agenda
2. Set clear accountability around talent development in Asia
3. Get involved in the leadership development strategy
4. Take individual ownership of mentoring at least one or more leaders from Asia

" **ROI is a wrong question! When you buy life insurance do you ask for ROI? The question instead should be: In absence of leadership development, how do you perpetuate your organization and build the desired culture at scale?"**

Amitabh Hajela,
President, Group HR, GMR Group

DEBUNK PLAN:

1. Find sponsor(s) on the executive team or board.
2. Tie the leadership development agenda with the organizational strategy.
3. Do not shy away from the ROI conversation with business leaders; build impact assessment and evaluation as a part of the end-to-end roll-out plan.

Leadership
Development
Culture

MYTH VI.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CAN HAPPEN IRRESPECTIVE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

29%
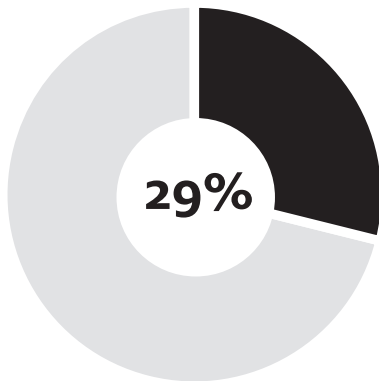
" **Culture often shapes what can and cannot be done within a company context; organizations that embrace development culture are more learning agile."**

Regional CHRO
Global FMCG MNC

Note: Pie-chart denotes % respondents who
selected the myth as one of their top three.

SHARED VALUES IS THE KEY

Make Leadership Development Culture Flow in the Organization

About one-in-three survey respondents in the CCL research study selected the myth around leadership development being independent of the organization culture – that HR can drive the leadership development agenda irrespective of the culture in the organization.

Organization culture by definition is the sum total of values, behaviors, and practices that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization. Graphic 2.6.1 highlights various definitions of the organization culture; essentially, it is how people behave and act, and what they value.

Certain types of cultures, particularly ones around agile learning, innovation, collaboration, continuous excellence, etc., lean more towards promoting a context of leadership development. Cultures that center around complacency, inward focus, hierarchy, are less likely to have much affinity with promoting a developmental environment in the organization. Interviewees highlighted that culture and leadership development often 'feed off' each other, one benefitting from the other.

Interviewees highlighted that great leaders help employees set and manage personal drivers (commitment) that tie back to the larger organizational goals (direction); in the process, employees get a better sense of how their work contributes to the organization's success (alignment).

Graphic 2.6.1

WHAT IS ORGANIZATION CULTURE?

"Set of unwritten behavioral norms and rules that shape the organizational context."

"It is a collection of shared values, beliefs and assumptions in an enterprise."

"It is the operating system of an organization; and therefore it becomes the fundamental element in life of an organization."

"Culture is defined by how an organization handles the 'worst possible' behavior at play."

Organizational culture encompasses values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization.
Wikipedia

"Culture is a glue that binds the people in an organization together."

"Culture is set by the values of the company and how those values drive demonstrated behaviors."

"It is simply the way people think, act, and behave in a company."

"It is the lifeline that allows certain practices and values to move from generation to generation."

Source: Architecting Future Fluent Culture: The Role of HR, CCL, 2018.

There are three levers organizations deploy to curate a workplace where leaders can develop skills to help employees make this connect:

- smarter talent acquisition,
- better emerging leader identification process, and
- comprehensive development process.

For long-term leadership development, senior leaders must strive to create a development culture across different levels in the organization. While managers often erroneously assume that by just running leadership development programs, they are able to create a culture that accepts leadership, it is often a slow and gradual process.

According to CCL research, three conditions must be met in order to create a leadership development culture in an organization. One, belief at the highest level in the organization – at the board or executive team level – in leadership potential, and trust that leaders will benefit from developmental interventions. An overtly skeptical C-suite will inhibit development culture in the organization. Two, a view on what a 'top-notch' leader in the organization looks like – key must-have capabilities and competencies she must demonstrate, mindsets that will make the leader successful, and experiences leaders must have under their belt to be setup for success in their career journey. And three, leaders must also be willing to walk the talk, and set an example for the rest of the organization what a good leader looks like, and how a good leader behaves.

What is HR's role in designing, curating and nurturing the 'right' culture in the organization? CCL research informs that HR needs to play four key roles, and associated responsibilities (Graphic 2.6.2). While cultural transformation is a joint responsibility of the leadership team, HR often emerges as the flag bearer of the exercise.

To be successful in driving any culture change, HR needs to play four critical roles, and deliver on associated responsibilities. These are:

Advisor - Play a trusted partner and subject-matter expert to the leadership team and help craft the cultural transformation journey. HR must advise the executive teams on how to build

Graphic 2.6.2   *ROLES HR MUST PLAY IN SHAPING THE CULTURE*
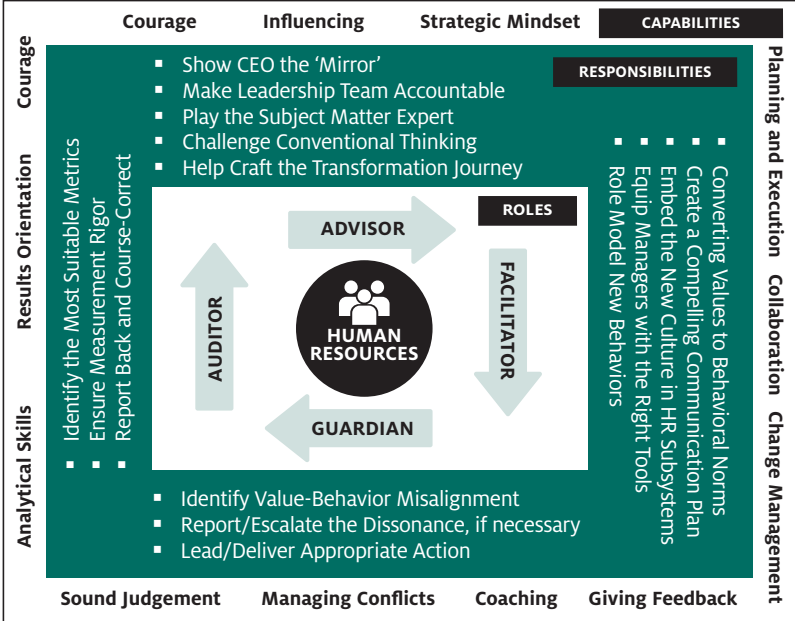
Source: Architecting Future Fluent Culture: The Role of HR, CCL, 2018.

a leadership development culture, and what role must the senior leaders play in this transformation.

Facilitator - Institutionalize cultural changes via effective communication, modify talent management processes and organization design, and equip stakeholders with appropriate tools. In order to facilitate the leadership development culture, HR must create a business case for development, get senior leadership buy-in, curate compelling leadership development journeys, and demonstrate ROI on development initiatives.

Guardian - Ensure consistency of values and demonstrated behaviors in the organization, reporting dissonance, if any, and supporting leaders to align to the new culture. HR must ensure senior leaders walk the talk by driving leadership development initiatives, signing-up for such programs, participating in development journeys for their direct reports, etc.

Auditor - Identify appropriate metrics, measure impact of culture change initiatives, and report back to the leadership team to course-correct. As the organization progresses in developing the leadership development culture, HR must not only evaluate the impact of journeys and programs, but also measure how the culture is evolving.

REALITY: Focus on creating a leadership development culture in the organization, which is a set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors that promote alignment with and commitment towards the leadership development agenda.

In order to play the four roles effectively, HR must have solid credibility and trust within the organization. They may also need to develop appropriate capabilities in their portfolio.

The advisor role requires HR to be a thought leader to the executive leadership team and a subject matter expert on anything to do with the people element in the organization. Key responsibilities include making the leadership team accountable for cultural transformation, challenging conventional thinking, and helping craft the transformation journey.

A facilitator role requires HR to roll up their sleeves and execute cultural transformation. Key responsibilities include converting values to behaviors, creating a communication plan, using the right HR levers and embedding the new culture in HR sub-systems, equipping managers with appropriate tools, and role-modeling new behaviors.

In a guardian role, HR needs to be fiercely protective of the cultural values – identifying value-behavior mismatch, reporting dissonance, and acting "tough" if required.

Finally, the auditor role needs HR to create and own the processes associated with measurement of cultural changes and behaviors. To do a good job, HR must identify suitable metrics, ensure measurement rigor, and report back to the leadership team and course correct.

In order to create a leadership development culture in the organization, HR must continuously play the four roles, one feeding into the other, to make the cultural transformation journey a compelling process.

Interviewees shared several examples of tactics HR teams deploy to curate the developmental culture: One organization has a fixed slot allocated during regular team meetings for collective learning – 10 minute micro-learning capsules and podcasts, followed by a 20 minute group discussion. Another organization invested considerable efforts to link leadership development competencies with the principles sacrosanct to the organization. So whenever there is a dilemma between principles and commercial goals, decisions are made basis 'what is right,' not 'what is profitable,' thereby promoting the desired culture in the organization.

> **"** When we talk about leadership development culture, we think about vision, clear direction, walking the talk, the value we attach to our talent, etc., which often gels the 'development story' together.**"**
>
> **Lynette Tan,**
> Regional HR Director, DB Schenker

DEBUNK PLAN:

1. To roll out a compelling leadership development agenda, start by asking the question – "Will the current culture inhibit or promote leadership development?"

2. Educate senior leaders about the need to walk-the-talk on leadership development.

3. Shape and curate a cultural shift towards a development mindset.

MYTH VII.

ONLINE/DIGITAL LEARNING IS LESS EFFECTIVE THAN CLASSROOM LEARNING

22%
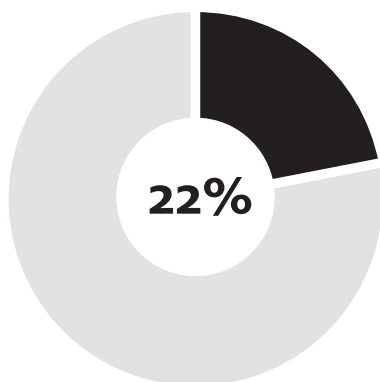
Note: Pie-chart denotes % respondents who selected the myth as one of their top three.

> " When we look back in a few years time, online leadership development will be viewed in two distinct eras – pre COVID-19 and post COVID-19; there is a lot more appreciation and eagerness to embrace online learning now..."

Learning Head
Global FMCG MNC

VIRTUAL YET INSTRUCTOR-LED

Up the Engagement Quotient in Online Leadership Development

Graphic 2.7.1   *DIGITAL LEARNING COMES IN DIFFERENT FLAVORS*

What is a Digital Learning Initiative?

Any learning initiative that leverages technology to reach people that are in different places, at different times, is a digital learning initiative. Initiative can take different forms including:

E-LEARNING | **VIRTUAL INSTRUCTOR-LED TRAINING (VILT)** | **BLENDED LEARNING** | **TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING**

Typically, learning is self-paced and content is delivered through a learning management system.

Source: Six Strategies for Digital Learning Success (Whitepaper), Samir Mehta and Holly Downs, 2016.

The recent unfortunate global disruption due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), and ensuing changes in work flows, remote working practices, rapidly shrinking learning budgets, is in a way the impetus digital learning needed to step in the middle and center of the executive development agenda. "What has changed in the past few weeks is how leaders view digital learning," shared a regional head of HR. He added, "While traditionally, leaders felt short-changed if they were asked to attend an online or a virtual course, the last few weeks have completely decimated that mindset."

CCL defines digital learning as any learning initiative that leverages technology to reach people that are in different places, at different times. Digital learning initiatives can take different forms including: e-learning, virtual instructor-led training, blended learning, technology-enabled learning. Typically, such learning is self-paced and content is delivered through a learning management system.

Interviewees highlighted that introducing a human element to create hybrid solutions makes digital more compelling. Stephanie Nash, Chief People Officer, ChapmanCG, advocated for the right mix of digital and in-person learning, "Got to be a blend of both - technology helps with scale and access at the right time, while personal interactions are also critical since we are still dealing with humans." She reiterated, "I continue to believe human interactions will remain important in the future because if we move everything to be technology based then there is a risk of running into increasing exposure of our data, and ethical issues around artificial intelligence."

Graphic 2.7.2

SIX STRATEGIES OF DIGITAL LEARNING
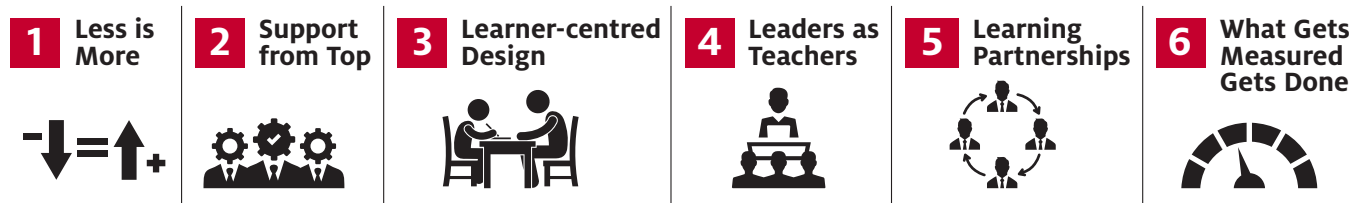
| **1** Less is More | **2** Support from Top | **3** Learner-centred Design | **4** Leaders as Teachers | **5** Learning Partnerships | **6** What Gets Measured Gets Done |

Source: Six Strategies for Digital Learning Success (Whitepaper), Samir Mehta and Holly Downs, 2016.

CCL research suggests that learning can also be highly customized and personalized to suit individual capability gaps and learning pace. It can also be contextualized rather rapidly to suit individual company, industry, country environment, and the learning outcomes can be tracked online, thereby making learners accountable.

Organizations have had mixed success with digital learning methodologies, most often due to cultural impediments. "It is still going to be a culture change moving from classroom to virtual," mentioned Moira Roberts, Regional Head of HR, Asia-Pacific & MEA at Munich Re. Another regional head of HR shared her experience working with young leaders, "Millennials want to learn in bitesize chunks; they want something they can use to learn when they are out and about." Jennifer Lee, HR Director, South East Asia, Dairy Farm Group, shared some multi-mode learning successes she has had with the leadership teams during her career. "Senior leaders I have worked with appreciate e-learning to download knowledge. However, they prefer development opportunities where they can interact with each other, contribute their ideas, and practice in a safe environment." She added, "They want to teach others,

so having them run mini workshops to teach and share experiences with junior folks is what they enjoy most."

CCL research informs that when properly designed, delivered, and evaluated, digital learning initiatives can change a company's corporate culture, improve employee engagement, and increase retention. On the flip side, if done poorly, digital learning initiatives can end up as check-the-box corporate initiatives that give learning a bad name.

Graphic 2.7.2 highlights six strategies that talent leaders can leverage to make digital learning initiatives more effective within their organization.

Digital learning is at its best and most productive if learning initiatives focus on the unique needs of learners in the context of their organization's culture. Culture of learning and leaders walking the talk on promoting online learning goes a long way. Just providing the right resources is not enough; learning teams must encourage and guide leaders through their developmental journey, making sure those participating in a digital learning initiative understand the inherent value of the program in their daily workflow.

REALITY: Digital learning can be equally impactful [as class room learning] if designed and delivered keeping the learner objectives and experience in mind.

Contrary to popular belief, digital learning needn't be completely self-paced. For optimal impact, leadership concepts should be practiced and reinforced continuously in the workplace; embracing leaders as teachers is a powerful way to scale a digital learning initiative through all levels of the organization.

Leaders embracing digital learning need the support of key partners to stay motivated and engaged to ensure that learning is sustained past the online learning session. Two kinds of partnerships can provide the necessary support needed for in-depth learning: accountability partners and learning partners. While accountability partners act as

sounding boards for each other as they experience similar challenges, encourage each other and push each other to move beyond the status quo, learning partners provide support for learning and help learners reflect on ideas and insights from the development experience, and help apply the learnings in real work scenarios.

Finally, what gets measured gets done. Measurement of any developmental effort is important to ensure that return on investment is meaningful. Evaluation of digital learning initiatives must involve measuring the efficacy of the initiative and learner engagement.

" **Technology has increased access and democratized learning, but like democracy very few people use their franchise so you get the government you deserve; same with technology - you can't force people to learn, and hence to bypass this learning inertia, there are micro learning nuggets."**

Amitabh Hajela,
President, Group HR, GMR Group

DEBUNK PLAN:

1. Invest energy in designing and delivering a program virtually led by an instructor, and keeping in mind the learner experience and objectives.

2. Bring in partners with expertise in content, program design and delivery, to co-create and co-deliver compelling solutions.

"No doubt in-person training is important, but that is only 10%; organizations need to expose their leaders to different experiences; the journey will make the leader successful. "

KEY TAKEAWAYS

FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Five Paradoxes...

ASIANIZED YET GLOBAL

It is not an 'either-or'; I believe learning teams at the global head office as well as the regional level need to coordinate to roll out journeys that are based on organizational strategy and culture, yet contextualized for local markets."

Moira Roberts,
Regional Head of HR, Asia-Pacific & MEA, Munich Re

HIGH-TECH YET HIGH-TOUCH

Organizations need digital learning without losing the human element. While we have introduced executive programs through e-learning, our key programs are still about bringing leaders together. We also ensure leaders-learning-from-leaders, which is very impactful."

Florence Chow,
CHRO, Hitachi Asia & Hitachi Australia

PERSONALIZED YET SCALABLE

Online learning helps take development wide and broad, but the key is that online courses should also be personalized to suit learners' pace and style."

Stefano Innocenti,
Regional HR Director SEA & AUS, Luxottica

IN-HOUSE-LED YET PARTNER-CENTRIC

While we have an external partner who does the heavy lifting [in our leadership programs], we also have a strong element of leaders-teaching-leaders, especially to embed key aspects of our organization culture."

Appandairajan Krishnakumar,
Head of Talent, Asia-Pacific, MasterCard.

EXPERIENTIAL YET CLASSROOM-BASED

No doubt in-person training is important, but that is only 10%; organizations need to expose their leaders to different experiences; the journey will make the leader successful."

Virendra Shelar,
Executive Officer - OMRON Corporation; General Manager - Global Human Resources Strategy; President - OMRON Management Centre Asia-Pacific

Owing to the ever-changing context of business, technology, people, economy and society in Asia, the need for leadership development is more pronounced than ever before. Organizations are waking up to the fact that leaders may need to leverage different business skills to be future-ready, skills that are very different from what made leaders successful in the past.

When the CCL research team asked interviewees their opinion on how future of leadership development may evolve, five paradoxes emerged (highlighted in Graphic 3.1).

One, leadership development in Asia must be 'Asianized yet global.' While it is critical to leverage global best practices on what works and what doesn't in developing leaders most efficiently, the capabilities and skills to be developed must be contextualised to the Asian business and cultural context.

Two, leadership development in Asia must be 'high-tech yet high-touch.' While technology and digital learning will change the mode of delivery, the human element in learning will stay equally relevant. Interviewees shared that hybrid models are rapidly emerging where online and physical learning methodologies are converging. For instance, online programs followed by coaching, online learning followed by classroom discussions, etc.

Three, leadership development in Asia will be 'personalized yet scalable.' While digital learning allows organizations to align delivery with individual leaders' pace and style of learning, it is also elevating the coverage of such interventions. Some interviewees referred to the emergence of 'personal learning clouds,' which are a combination of online content, interactive platforms, along with traditional tools.

Four, leadership development in Asia will be 'in-house-led yet partner-centric.' Several interviewees highlighted train-the-trainer type of leadership development models to make program delivery scalable with the help of learning partners. Partners play a key role in training and certifying internal faculty, which then rolls-out the leadership development journeys to the broader organization.

Five, leadership development in Asia will be 'experiential yet classroom-based.' Learning journeys will mirror the 70-20-10 model more closely in the future, with relevant experiences, and mentoring and coaching components supplementing classroom programs.

TAKEAWAYS

Myths HR Leaders Must Debunk

	Myths	Reality	Debunk Plan
1	**Asian leaders are harder to develop to take on senior global leadership roles**	**Organizations must curate compelling development plans to create a strong pipeline of global Asian leaders. Organization posture may be the biggest stumbling block, much bigger than the individual capability issue.**	1. Invest effort in root causing the 'real' reason for the lack of global Asian leadership pipeline. Organizational posture (or lack of it), not lack of skills, may be hindering the global Asian leader development efforts. 2. Identify key capabilities required by leaders to succeed in regional and global roles in your organization and create development journeys to set them up for success. 3. Be deliberate to curate appropriate experiences and help engineer the right career moves for executives to hone their global leadership skills.
2	**Leadership development efforts should primarily focus on top-level executives**	**Leadership development must happen across multiple levels in the organization to maximise ROI on development initiatives.**	1. Sensitize senior leadership team and get a buy-in on leadership development initiatives across multiple levels in the organization. 2. Map out the content needs and critical capability gaps across levels, geographies, departments, generations, functions, etc. 3. Curate the most compelling mix of content and delivery modes for different communities of learners in the organization.
3	**Organizations can have one uniform approach to developing leaders across different regions, countries, contexts**	**For maximum impact, organizations must tweak leadership development interventions and journeys to suit Asian context.**	1. Refrain from 'exporting' leadership development programs and journeys as-is to Asia. 2. Invest energy in understanding business context and culture in Asia, and tweak leadership development interventions accordingly. 3. Be deliberate to pick countries within Asia where your organization will place talent 'bets.'

	Myths	Reality	Debunk Plan
4	**Attending [only] leadership development course(s) will make you a better leader**	**For maximum impact, leadership development must happen outside of the classroom as well, including compelling experiences, mentoring, coaching, etc.**	1. Be mindful of the 70-20-10 model while designing development journeys. 2. Be creative in adopting tactics to curate compelling developmental experiences. 3. Curate and promote an experience-driven development culture.
5	**HR can lead and execute leadership development agenda without top team/ board buy-in**	**HR must find sponsors in the senior leadership team to improve roll-out and impact of the leadership development agenda.**	1. Find sponsor(s) on the executive team or board. 2. Tie the leadership development agenda with the organizational strategy. 3. Do not shy away from ROI conversation with business leaders; build impact assessment and evaluation as a part of the end-to-end roll-out plan.
6	**Effective leadership development can happen irrespective of the organization culture**	**Focus on creating a leadership development culture in the organization, which is a set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors that promote alignment with and commitment towards the leadership development agenda.**	1. To roll out a compelling leadership development agenda, start by asking the question "Will the current culture inhibit or promote leadership development?" 2. Educate senior leaders about the need to walk-the-talk on leadership development. 3. Shape and curate a cultural shift towards a developmental mindset.
7	**Online/digital learning is less effective**	**Digital learning can be equally impactful [as classroom learning] if designed and delivered keeping the learner objectives and experience in mind.**	1. Invest energy in designing and delivering a program virtually-led by an instructor, and keeping in mind the learner experience and objectives. 2. Bring in partners with expertise in content, program design and delivery, to co-create and co-deliver compelling solutions.

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