Livingston Consulting Group
Leadership Development Philosophy

Most organizations approach leadership development thinking about the tenure of the learner as it relates to the role they have in the organization. Within that approach, someone who has never had organizational leadership responsibility but desires this level of accountability would be seen as an emerging leader, while someone who has been named a leader but is new to the role would be a front line leader. This pyramid thinking often goes right up to the top levels in the organization where leaders engage in executive development.

No matter the organizational level of the development, proper pedagogy would conclude that the learner is in a constant process of growing in knowledge, skills, and behaviors to produce the results that are important to *them*. In our philosophy, the learner takes center stage and will only grow in the areas they see as needed.

True development is helping the leader to see more clearly between their *ideal self* and their *real self.*

The ideal self is the goal the leader sets for themself, which is often influenced by outside forces such as the culture of the organization. The real self is how the leader currently sees themself and, in addition, how others see them.

It is our experience that leaders who are more self-aware have a more accurate view of how they see themselves and how others see them. Hence, the first part of leadership effectiveness happens when an outside view of the real leader aligns with the inner view of how the leader sees themself.

The second part of this equation is how the leader views the alignment of their real self and the ideal leader they aspire to become.

Since leadership has these muti-optics, it never happens in a theoretical or isolated vacuum. There are always three major components to be considered when developing the

leader. At a minimum, these three optics include

- How the leader sees themself
- The skills the leader possesses
- The ways the behavior of the leader affects those who follow

Self-Awareness: How does the leader see themself?

When it comes to leader development, self-awareness is the most critical component. The view that the leader has of themself is vital for getting a glimpse into what kind of leader they are going to be.

The overarching theme in this domain is developing the character of the leader.

Character is often thought of in moral terms such as integrity or honesty. However, the development of the leader's character, while including moral attributes, goes beyond this cursory understanding and includes a number of components to consider in development such as: (a) core beliefs, (b) personality, and (c) emotional intelligence.

Leaderskill: What are the requisite skills the leader must possess?

The skills and talents of a leader become the observable outcome which are often used to evaluate effectiveness and performance.

Our philosophy on leader development goes beyond a mere performance orientation, which is often used by the leader to try to imagine what is good enough to compete in their immediate environment.

While effective in the short-term, a performance focus on leadership development can, over the long view, leave leaders without the skills or talents they will need to compete in the future.

Our development focus takes a longer view of the skills of the leader and is more oriented to mastery.

Those with a mastery orientation focus on what is possible in the development of any competence. For example, a new leader might focus on coaching as a skill to develop talent on the team. If the leader is focused on performance, the coaching focus might be on delivering behaviors are to obtain a strategic outcome. However, the leader who is focused on mastery will understand the development need of the person being coached and target the coaching to the specific need of the individual. The mastery coach always sees more potential in the person, even when they cannot see it themselves.

Followership: How does the behavior of the leader impact followers?

If you think you are leading but no one is following, you are nothing more than a performer in a one-act play.

Fixating on the leader in development is to build their self-awareness and requisite skill, but then say to those they lead that they do not matter very much. A good case could be made that engaging followers is what leadership is all about.

Followers what a say in what they do, how they do it, for how long they do it, and how they are lead. Of all the domains of leadership this could be the one that receives the least amount of attention and yet is crucial to organizational success.