

Creating Real Value in a Downturn: Coaching and Assessment Tools

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Today's difficult business climate is challenging organizations to carefully reflect on how they are managing and developing their talent, particularly given the fact that many companies need to reduce their workforce.

In such a climate, strategic decisions regarding talent development become even more important, and talent competitive companies will be using this time to proactively identify and develop their leadership. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that, "Despite layoffs and recession-starved budgets, many employers are investing in leadership development programs, hoping not to be caught short of strong managers when the economy recovers." (Mattioli, Feb 9, 2009).

One of the ways that companies are focusing their leadership development efforts while managing costs is an emphasis on informal learning opportunities. The research company Bersin & Associates identifies informal learning as "now more important to success than the traditional disciplines of performance consulting." This is particularly true for leadership development, where supportive skill building is crucial for success as well as return on investment. As one of IOR's Biotech clients stated, "You are not going to successfully develop leaders in a training program. It's a process, not a program."

Coaching is growing in popularity as a way of encouraging information learning and it can be made more powerful and applicable through use of assessment instruments. The International Profiler (TIP) is a particularly effective tool for generating

coaching conversations across 22 dimensions of behavior that are essential for working in a multicultural environment.

What makes TIP so effective is its non-evaluative nature. The tool can be used to identify the areas a person is emphasizing during intercultural encounters. For example, it illustrates that someone might be putting more effort into active listening as opposed to flexible behavior. This could be an

advantage or disadvantage for the employee depending on the context. Working with a coach, the employee can better determine which dimensions to emphasize and why.

The focus that TIP places on context is especially useful for global leadership development, which should ideally be designed to help leaders explore the various contexts they encounter in an increasingly global workforce. Context is the key to determine effective leadership

behavior and there are many variables to consider. Formal learning environments don't allow for such in depth considerations, which is why coaching provides a more successful format for development.

Leading companies will view this financial downturn as a good opportunity to re-examine how they identify and develop their talent. Providing more informal learning opportunities and incorporating assessment instruments are important strategies for developing the global leaders that you will need in the near future.

[For additional information on assessment tools and the Tip click here.](#)

