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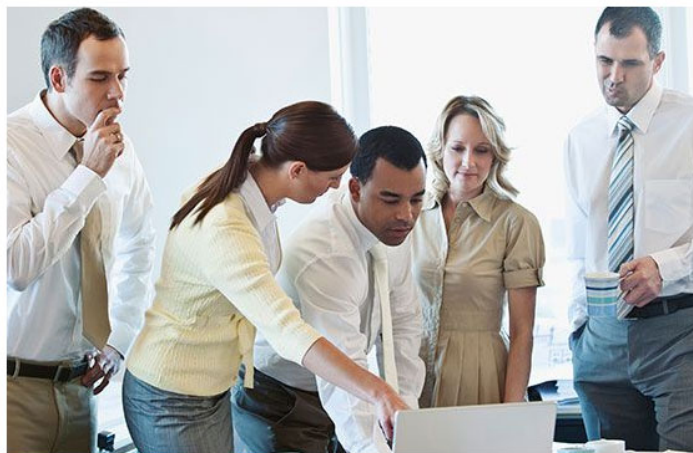
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Leadership Team Development: Four Things You Need to Know

[In an interview with Inc. magazine's Adam Vaccaro](#), Gap International CEO Pontish Yeramyian says **85% of executives surveyed agree that talent can make or break a company**. Even though these executives overwhelmingly agree that empowering employees to succeed is crucial for long-term success, **less than half said they would invest any innovation efforts in leadership development or performance training in the coming year**.

This contradiction between what can be and what is actually done appears to be due to a disconnect between how employers think and how they act regarding talent development. According to CEO Yeramyian, this disconnect is understandable. In terms



of real-world performance data, most leadership development programs fail to demonstrate improved behavior or a clear ROI. She says, "Before companies can invest serious energy into leadership development, they must put plans in place that guarantee strong outcomes of the programs." **When planning talent development initiatives,**

executives need to focus on expected outcomes and results.

[A recent blog from the Center for Management and Organization Effectiveness, Leadership Team Development: Here's What You Need to Know, offers a solution.](#) The authors propose that the large discrepancy between companies wanting better leaders and their willingness to invest in it may be due to a lack of understanding about the value of developing leadership bench strength. To fill that gap, they outline

four aspects of what executive team leadership development is and how a company's greater appreciation for it can pay off big time.

1. Poor Leadership is Expensive – Developing good leaders requires an investment of both time and money, and a company may be more inclined to invest in other areas of the business, such as technology or R&D. However, poor leadership can be a huge drain on a company's assets. The list below covers a few of the negative effects of bad leadership. Your company simply can't afford the far-reaching costs of poor leadership—now or at any time in the future.

- High employee turnover
- Low employee loyalty to the business
- Inflexible or change-averse employees
- Disengaged employees
- Undeveloped or underdeveloped skills
- Low confidence and low productivity
- Wasted knowledge and experience of veteran workers
- Bad decision-making
- Poor customer service

2. Leadership Training is not the same as Leadership Development --

Companies may opt out of leadership development because they may believe results are unproven and such efforts don't work. Before investing in any program, it's essential to know the difference between leadership training and leadership development.

Training is important, but it can be one-sided, one-dimensional, one-directional, and offer a one-size-fits-all mentality. Training focuses on compliance, maintenance, and standardization.

Development involves a cognitive shift. A good development program helps prepare your leaders to handle unexpected obstacles, adversity, losses, and even their own success. Since the goal of leadership development programs is to prepare the next generation of workers to lead the business, guiding and helping employees grow earlier on means much less disruption to the system when unexpected changes arise.

3. A High Level of Organizational Support Is Required – True leadership development requires organizational support combined with a shared vision of where you are headed. Team members are unlikely to maximize the success of the team without a clearly defined course. Without shared vision, individual achievement takes precedence and team members work to promote their own successes. When given the time to build mutual trust and camaraderie, and when supported by the organization's culture, a cohesive team becomes a powerful competitive advantage for the company.

4. Investments in Leadership/Team Development Pay Off – [In a massive 40-year study conducted by Development Dimensions International](#), respondents reported seeing a higher frequency of observed positive leadership behaviors among leaders after they completed development programs. Over 81 percent of study participants said they felt more engaged in their jobs with a leader who had been through leadership development initiatives. **Even more importantly, the companies participating in the study estimated their ROI between 147 and 633 percent.**

The challenge for employers is how to develop leaders in a way that grows the skills, attributes, and competencies allowing someone to be successful in your organization. As you consider your own leadership development initiatives, be sure to look for content, skills, and competencies that align with your business goals.

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