

## Get Better ROI on LD

*Find some diamonds in the rough.*



by Sharon Birkman Fink

WITH BUDGETS BEING focused on production and marketing, HR functions receive lower priority on funding requests. In large enterprises, significant resources may be allocated to HRMS; and yet HR professionals rarely measure and analyze data directly related to development and training. As a result, HR fails to serve as catalyst to improve performance.

Most HR measurements are tactical and transactional. Measures that indicate the effectiveness of OD, including training ROI and human capital ROI, are rare. By identifying high-potential candidates for leadership and management training and allocating training resources to those best positioned to benefit from them, HR can efficiently use its resources and accelerate its impact. *Effective training for the right people* should be the mantra.

*The goal of training* is to accelerate the promotion of qualified candidates into positions of responsibility through training that focuses on and develops the unique assets of each individual. Training should enhance how an individual's personality traits mesh with specific job requirements and enable individuals to work with or lead others productively and effectively.

Use personality assessments to identify what motivates behavior and the needs that drive behavior in positive and productive directions. Each person has his or her own strengths, weaknesses, productive behaviors, and stress behaviors that may be similar to or differ from peers. Personality testing enables you to individualize training.

Before you promote individuals into management and leadership positions, test to identify their strengths, motivational needs and stress reactions, and discover how they can fulfill their motivational needs while contributing to company success. Answer these questions: Does the person prefer to work alone or in a team? Does the person prefer to work in a structured, predictable environment or an unstructured one requiring adaptability and flexibility? Must they have control over what they do and when they

do it? Do they work on the big picture, or implement details? Does the person take initiative to perform the assigned tasks directly or distribute responsibility by working through people?

The answers provide HR professionals with a *cost-effective roadmap* to structure training that bridges generational differences in diverse workplaces, where members of several generations are working together. Each group has distinct learning preferences:

**Baby boomers** (48 to 62 years old) view training as a means to career advancement and prefer such training forms as classroom teaching, independent reading and one-on-one coaching.

**Generation X** (26 to 47) value flexibility and view themselves as free agents who are not indefinitely tied to any organization. Their training expectations are for self-focus and building a portable repertoire of skills.

**Millennials** (18 to 25) want training that is multi-sensory, immediate, team-oriented and driven by positive feedback. For them, everything is about speed, freedom, customization and interactivity, and digitalization.

Of course, each member of a generation will have his or her own strengths, weaknesses, behaviors and learning preferences. Personality testing brings those characteristics into focus.

### Training Application

When approached in this way, management training accelerates the promotion of qualified employees who help the company grow and evolve. Structure training to emphasize strengths and measure whether personality traits mesh with specific competencies required for the leadership task. Competencies often go beyond hard skills and experience to include the ability to productively work with or effectively lead others by accepting feedback, advancing teamwork, and demonstrating workplace satisfaction.

Qualities that make a difference in performance can be found within individuals not previously tapped for leadership roles, and a well-designed personality assessment can find these "diamonds in the rough" and give you more bench at minimal cost. By identifying which candidates have potential to be leaders and their potential leadership styles, personality testing establishes a systematic program for developing leaders. This can help you overcome a leadership deficit. LE

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**ACTION:** Find your diamonds in the rough.