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Succession Planning

Case Study



A multinational organization needed to address succession planning at the C-suite and the next two levels.

Situation

A multinational organization needed to address succession planning at the C-suite and the next two levels. The company had experienced double-digit growth for a sustained period of time which created increasing pressure on readying successors. Avant's assignment was two-fold. Firstly, help the client navigate the dynamics of pending leadership changes and prepare its emerging leaders. Secondly, enable best practices in action learning methodologies to develop leaders and to strengthen the global business organization, while addressing pressing enterprise-wide business needs.

In addition, the company needed a consistent, enterprise-wide methodology for assessing talent, determining experiential and developmental needs and making intentional decisions about talent management. Avant created a targeted assessment methodology that was deployed worldwide to more than 75 leaders across a nine month time frame. Avant provided support through the development process by coaching the participants and the sponsors to guide executive growth and ultimately succession.

We focused on helping the client navigate the dynamics of pending leadership changes and prepare its emerging leaders.

Client Solution Specifics

- Conducted a leadership assessment for each participant to identify personal strengths and development needs relative to potential global leadership roles.
- Implemented an interview-based, 360-degree process to help each leader understand how others perceived his/her strengths and identify improvement areas for specific leadership competencies.
- Designed a career progression plan that identified possible career paths. Each path included specific roles and learning experiences that would build his/her abilities relative to future career assignments. The plan was reviewed with the leader and his/her executive sponsors whose support was essential.
- Delivered coaching to leaders and their respective teams throughout the program. The team coaching focused on dynamics that impacted performance and team effectiveness.
- Established regular alignment meetings and development update meetings. These meetings were held at the most senior levels – division president or C-suite. This practice drove consistency and helped the organization calibrate who was ready for moves in the organization, as well as created transparency for the participant.
- Coaching was provided to the executive sponsors to enable behavior change, understanding one's capacity/motivation for change and making organizational moves. This included navigating the dynamics surrounding each move.
- Data across all participants were reviewed quarterly with the CEO and the CEO's direct reports.
- Built formal feedback loops to assess program effectiveness (through the eyes of customers). The data were reviewed with the Chief Human Resources Officer. Continuous improvements were made based upon those insights. Additional data were also used to measure overall effectiveness – promotions, successful role transition, engagement scores, etc.

Outcomes

- The development program identified and prepared a significantly greater number of global leaders and enabled the client to continue its growth around the globe.
- The Board of Directors had confidence that the process provided a planned, intentional and measured method to address global succession.
- In nine months' time, 13 leaders had been promoted, based upon readiness and/or development needs. Today those leaders are vying for officer roles and leading more complex portfolios than they had in the past five years; including a few whom became officers.
- Participants were clearer about their standing within the company and what they needed to demonstrate (through new experiences, intentional leader development) for next level leadership.
- Transparency and trust were enhanced throughout. Participants were clear about gaps perceived by the organization and what the company would do to address those gaps – many of which were experiential. As such, participants came away with the sense that they were not "type caste" for certain roles – the company was investing in their professional growth and being intentional about setting up developmental assignments and senior leader transitions.
- No voluntary turnover occurred at the peer level, during or after the leader transitions.
- The senior executives we coached were more consistent and aligned when assessing core factors of successful global leadership. The customized framework was built based on their business principles and culture.
- Best practices were developed for measuring critical thinking dynamically rather than traditional static methods.

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