The Dynamic Duo of Assessment and Development
Building a Strategic Integrated Framework
Building an integrated development architecture?
We know.
It sounds massive.
And it is.
But we can help.
Use this guidebook as your “how to” manual to make your integrated assessment and development dream come to life.
For greater success in fully realizing leadership development and growth in your organization, you must address all components of the framework.
DDI’s Integrated Assessment and Development Architecture

TALENT GROWTH: Strategic Alignment and Governance

Assessment Strategy

- Audiences
  - High-Potentials
  - Mid-Level Leaders

Individual Development Strategy

Cohort Development Strategy

- Special Groupings (i.e. GMs)
- First-Level Leaders
- Senior Professionals

Audiences:
We often want to jump to the core solution when beginning a development initiative, but strategic considerations about how the overall process is aligned and governed are an important first step.
An initiative is more successful when the organization’s environment and business strategy are examined first.
It’s critical to understand:

• The problem to be solved.
• Who the stakeholders are.
• What success will look like.
• How solutions will be kept alive on an ongoing basis.
Too often, when governance, accountability, and sustainability are not considered, initiatives fail.
Start with the business context and identify the critical few business drivers that are essential for organizational success.
Four Recommendations for Strategic Alignment and Governance

WHY?

Business drivers have direct implications for the skills required for executives and leaders to achieve desired outcomes.
Four Recommendations for Strategic Alignment and Governance

2. Define the growth initiative’s purpose.
This will help you lay the foundation for creating a sound business case and identifying initial approaches for integrated assessment and development activities.
Four Recommendations for Strategic Alignment and Governance

3. Define accountabilities for both participants and senior sponsors.
Four Recommendations for Strategic Alignment and Governance

**TIP:** Identify the stakeholders and establish a steering team to ensure ongoing guidance, commitment, and engagement.
Four Recommendations for Strategic Alignment and Governance

4. Define the resources available to participants as they advance in their development journey.
Four Recommendations for Strategic Alignment and Governance

Questions to consider:
• Will there be a curriculum? If so, what kind?
• Will there be a need for rotational or developmental assignments for key participants?
• Will internal mentors be assigned? If so, who?
Let’s RECAP!
Four Recommendations for Strategic Alignment and Governance

1. Start with the business context and identify the critical few business drivers that are essential for organizational success.

2. Define the growth initiative’s purpose.

3. Define accountabilities for both participants and senior sponsors.

4. Define the resources available to participants as they advance in their development journey.
Next up!

Time to create the assessment strategy.
Two questions to consider when thinking about the integration of assessment and development are:

- What is the purpose of the assessment?
- How will the data be used?
The answer should lie in how the data will be used, **but** also in the degree of the development effort’s rigor.
The next step is to create alignment between business needs and the capabilities to be assessed.
Don’t just accept the existing competency model!
Challenge the process by investigating the criteria that will be needed for future success and ensuring that this is part of the assessment design.
STOP!

If you haven’t ensured strategic alignment, there is no need to go any further.
**TIP:** Start by using business drivers to align the business and assessment criteria.
Four Considerations for Assessment

When crafting the assessment strategy, there are four critical items to consider.
Who is to be assessed?
The methods used for senior leaders will need to be different from those used to assess first-level leaders. This detail leads us to our next two considerations.
Four Considerations for Assessment

2. How deep does the assessment need to be?
Four Considerations for Assessment

3. What is the scale of the rollout?
Four Considerations for Assessment

4. What is your communication strategy?
**TIP:** Participants will need to know:

- What is being assessed.
- Why the assessment is taking place.
- How the data will be used in their development journey.
**TIP:** Stakeholders will need to know:

- How they will get feedback on assessment data.
- How they will leverage that data as talent analytics.
- What the process will be for participants flowing through assessment phases.
- What handoffs will be needed between different players supporting the learners’ development efforts.
Shall we RECAP?
Four Considerations for Assessment

1. Who is to be assessed?
2. How deep does the assessment need to be?
3. What is the scale of the rollout?
4. What is your communication strategy?
So why go through the effort of assessing your leaders?
Assessment can actually catapult leaders into development.
When your leader population is accurately assessed, the resulting data make it clear where the leadership skill gaps exist.
When assessment data are used as the starting point for development, skill gaps—and therefore gaps in the organization’s leadership—are addressed.
When leaders participate in development that is connected to specific learning and development needs, they are more likely to buy into, and personally engage in, development.
So...

We’ve considered strategic alignment and governance.

We’ve thought about our assessment strategy.

You have one guess as to what comes next...
Time to think about our overarching development strategy!
We’ve found that both individualized and group development efforts are crucial to helping leaders grow their capabilities.
It’s helpful to distinguish between these two (hopefully integrated) pathways.
What is Individualized Development?
It includes in-depth, personalized development based on the participant’s assessment findings.
What is Individualized Development?
The personalized planning process includes documenting the specific learning goals, actions, learning methods, applications, timelines, measures, and support to create a plan for each participant’s unique needs and learning goals.
What is Cadre or Group Development?

This approach is best thought of in terms of common curricula and other group-based learning methods, such as action learning teams and peer learning groups.
Now that we understand the difference between individualized and group development, let's talk strategy.
Individualized Development Strategy

Strategy is needed to ensure leaders have a clear execution plan for their development and the right environment in place to support achieving those plans.
Four Considerations for Individualized Development

When crafting the individualized development strategy, there are four critical items to consider.
Facilitate a clear understanding of what an individual development plan must look like.
Four Considerations for Individualized Development

2. Determine the range of resources that will be available to the learners.
Four Considerations for Individualized Development

3. Establish an ongoing process for reviewing, checking progress, and completing the plan.
4. Hold participants and stakeholders accountable.
Accountability is the most important element in the process. Often, plans don’t get executed and development doesn’t take place due to shifting focus.
RECAP?
Four Considerations for Individualized Development

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2. Determine the range of resources that will be available to the learners.
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4. Hold participants and stakeholders accountable.
Now let’s switch gears and think about cadre-based, or group development.
Group development initiatives often target:

• High-potential leaders.
• Transitioning leaders.
• Leaders within a particular level or business unit for in-role development.
Cadre Development Strategy

The most common approach to group development is to offer a curriculum or a broader learning journey consisting of:

• Courses.
• Action learning.
• Group-level experiences intended to foster learning partnerships and networks.
There are many factors to consider when formulating a strategy and design for developing cadres of leaders or executives.
Cadre Development Strategy

The strategy needs to include factors such as:

• Alignment with business strategy.
• Alignment between assessment and individual development.
• Senior leaders advocacy.
• Learner communication and engagement.
• Application sustainability.
• Measuring return on investment.
Questions to think through:

• Is the curriculum connected to organizational strategy and business drivers?

• What does the assessment data tell us about critical capability gaps?

• What are the unique needs of your learner audience?

• What kinds of learning programs “work” in your organizational culture?
Cadre Development Strategy

To get your program off the ground, you must consider:

• Communication
• Engagement
• Alignment to audience and culture
• Ensuring sustainability
Cadre Development Strategy

Questions to ensure sustainability:
• What will be participants’ required follow-up steps?
• Who will be accountable for what outcomes?
• How will you measure success and impact?
You guessed it. RECAP!
To realize leadership development and growth in your organization, you must address **all components of the framework.**

- Strategic Alignment and Governance
- Assessment Strategy
- Individualized Development Strategy
- Group Development Strategy
Want more detail?
Read our white paper.

Learn more about DDI’s solutions.
Visit our website.

Contact us to start building your integrated framework today.
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