The Dynamic Duo of Assessment and Development
Laying the Foundation
Jobs and Wozniak
Ben and Jerry
Simon and Garfunkel

Sometimes two things, when brought together, create a value beyond simple addition.
When the combination is just right,
1 + 1 can equal 3,
or maybe more!
So, how does this relate to assessment and development?
We’re glad you asked.
Many organizations have separate assessment and development strategies that are led and executed by different teams of people.
This division of labor isn’t necessarily a bad thing.
But when the two functions are disconnected, or not aligned with organizational strategy, neither will meet the organization’s needs.
In other words, without alignment, \(1 + 1\) can equal less than 2.
Imperative

Assessment and development must be tightly aligned with your business drivers and talent strategy—and with each other.
How We Got Here
Let’s understand the disconnect by reviewing how each function addresses leader/executive development within an organization.
Assessment is:

• Associated with selection, promotion, and succession.
• Touted for technical qualities and measurement accuracy.
• Used to diagnose strengths, gaps, and initiate development efforts.
Assessments range from inventories, to 360s, to simulations and assessment centers.
For development, assessment should provide focus and specificity about **skills, behavior, and capabilities** that the individual or population needs to improve.
Assessment-driven Executive Development

**Features** individualized development planning or coaching as a follow up strategy to the assessment.
A Positive

Assessment typically features in-depth tools, diagnostic accuracy, and the opportunity for deep personal insight—critical for true leadership growth.
A Negative

Run the risk of placing more emphasis on initial assessment activities than on issues like rigorous development planning, access to learning resources/support, and development accountabilities.
L&D-driven Executive Development

**Focus**
Is on providing the best available resources to drive the leadership capability necessary to meet business challenges.
L&D-driven Executive Development

May be viewed in terms of curricula, or in a broader spectrum of learning resources, including: action learning, special projects or assignments, and coaching.
L&D-driven Executive Development

A Positive
Takes into account the need for high-quality content, audience relevance, holistic learning, and emphasis on application.
A Negative

When assessment is excluded, liabilities include:

• Relying on underpowered assessment.
• Lack of breadth, depth, and specificity of insight.

This can lead to lack of personalization and individual ownership for participants.
Liabilities

The disconnect between assessment and development can result in several vulnerabilities and missed opportunities.
1. Leader skill gaps aren’t optimally addressed.
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1. Accurate assessment of a leader population results in data that clarifies where the leadership skill gaps exist.
Leader skill gaps aren’t optimally addressed.

1. When assessment data isn’t the starting point for development, identified skill gaps—and gaps in the organization’s leadership capability—aren’t addressed.
Leader skill gaps aren’t optimally addressed.

1. **Result:** Valuable development resources can be spent building the **wrong** leadership capabilities.
2. Individual development needs aren’t recognized or addressed.
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2. When individual leaders or a large cadre of leaders attend a development program not connected to specific development needs, some skill gaps get ignored, while strengths are inefficiently reinforced.
Leader skill gaps aren’t optimally addressed.

2. **Result:** These learners will be less likely to buy into, and personally engage in, development when learning is a series of generic, one-size-fits-all events.
3. Difficulty measuring effectiveness of development initiative.
Difficulty measuring effectiveness of development initiative.

3.

Assessment data is critical as a baseline to gauge behavior change after development.
Difficulty measuring effectiveness of development initiative.

3.

Result: The impact of development is very difficult to determine.
Why are assessment and development disconnected in so many organizations?
It could have to do with the focus of the different disciplines, or siloed structures.
Regardless, an opportunity is missed to achieve a bigger payoff!
What opportunity is missed when assessment and development are disconnected?

The **golden opportunity** to optimize leadership capability and, ultimately, to help address business priorities and meet critical goals.
What does a fully integrated approach look like, and how does it work?
When a business-focused architecture guides both assessment and development?

1. There is clarity about WHY the individual or group is being assessed.
2. There is clarity as to WHAT ACTION needs to be taken on the assessment data.
3. The right amount of (HOW MUCH) assessment can be employed for each purpose and level.
Avoid the **Risks!**

When assessment and development aren’t aligned, the organization can face significant risks.
Avoid the Risks!

If assessment and development initiatives aren’t aligned with the critical needs of the business, the effort will struggle to have the leadership capability to meet those specific needs.
Avoid the **Risks**!

Assessment and development systems and structures created separately, and/or at different times, can cause disconnects that:

- Cause confusion
- Consume resources
- Require reverse engineering of some of the previous designs
Make an integrated approach a reality in your organization. 
Here’s your “How To” guide.

Address your golden opportunity with an assessment that connects your leadership decisions to your business strategies.