CASE STUDY
Developing a Talent Assessment Program to Groom Future Leaders in a Retail Organization
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BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The client is a large retail organization with a strong desire to promote potential leaders in the company. The biggest challenge was to first gain a thorough understanding of the talent makeup throughout the company and determine which employees could potentially be promoted into leadership positions in the near future. Given the unique culture within this organization, a second challenge was to ensure that the employees identified as future leaders exhibited the core values and demonstrated behaviors consistent with the company culture.

The HR leadership team recognized that to get this type of critical information it was imperative that a flexible technology system be used to capture a wide variety of information on potential leaders. The organization chose viaPeople to help them in this initiative. Their decision was based not only on the high level of flexibility in the viaPeople software platform but also because of the viaPeople consulting team's expertise on talent assessment and succession planning practices.

SOLUTION

viaPeople recommended a three-step process to identify which current employees in the organization could be promoted into leadership positions in the future.

STEP 1: Identified Talent Assessment Criteria

The viaPeople consulting team (comprised of Industrial Organizational Psychologists) interviewed members of the HR team to identify all of the criteria that would be necessary for the assessment. Included in the list of attributes were:

- Past work experience

- Educational background

- Technical skills/knowledge

- Gender (to ensure that more women were represented in leadership positions)

- Critical competencies and behaviors that illustrated company culture and values

The viaPeople consulting team designed a customized talent assessment inventory to capture all of the necessary information on these potential leaders.

The team then helped the organization to determine the critical competencies for accurately identifying leadership potential. Because of the unique organizational culture, the leadership competency model highlighted areas of particular importance to the organization including teamwork and shared goals, customer focus, and empowered and passionate employees. The model also captured more traditional differentiators of leadership talent with areas such as continuous learning and technical/industry expertise.

STEP 2: Assessed Talent Pool

The online talent inventory was configured to assess the organization's specific talent assessment criteria, and the workflow was designed to include input from both leaders and their managers. When the system launched, potential leaders were asked to provide talent-related information, as well as a self-assessment of their leadership competency performance. Simultaneously, managers were also asked to provide ratings of leadership competency performance for potential leaders.

STEP 3: Provided Customized Reports

viaPeople prepared customized reports to help the organization identify talented individuals who truly exemplified key leadership expertise and qualities. The reports were tailored to allow the Human Resources team to surface those potential leaders that had the educational background and work experience to fulfill a larger role in the organization. The data also allowed the team to increase the diversity of its leadership population by finding more women in the organization who could assume a leadership role.

RESULTS

The Human Resources team utilized the reports to form a better understanding of their leadership pool and begin ramping up programs to support career coaching and development. The data allowed the organization to focus their resources on developing the most critical leadership areas to build upon the existing talent landscape. Ultimately, the talent assessment process enabled the company to make promotion decisions based on reliable data identifying the best candidate for the leadership role, and substantially increased diversity at leadership levels.