

Succession that Works

The 4C Model for Early Identification and Development

As Human Resource leaders, we have a unique accountability to ensure our companies have the talent needed now, and in the future, to be successful. The core objective of your talent management and succession work is to ensure your company's strategy is never constrained by a lack of talent.

Your organization has a clear need to surface and develop leaders – your longer-term viability requires it. Driving this strategic talent agenda is fully dependent upon your company's ability to consistently and accurately answer the following question:

Who can effectively lead us in the future?

Your longer-term success is dependent upon getting the answer more-right-than-wrong.

The examples of companies' fate being determined by leadership selection decisions are endless – Where would we be now after the passing of Steve Jobs had Tim Cook not been identified and developed in the years previous? What would be the fate of Whirlpool Corporation if they had not developed a slate of leaders to take over upon the retirement of David Whitham and later Jeff Fettig? And, how would Procter and Gamble have responded to immense market pressures if David Taylor had not been ready to take the reins as CEO in 2015?

These are the more public examples at the CEO level. However, the impact of succession and development is felt at multiple levels in every company.

So, back to answering the question – who can effectively lead for us in the future?

Leader Success Profile = 4C's

From our research and work with companies across industries, we have found four universal elements in a framework that helps differentiate those that have true potential from those that are more likely to be challenged if put into larger roles. For many talent professionals, this framework has provided a simple and useful model to apply in their daily identification and development of leaders.

The 4C Leader Profile helps leaders and professionals avoid an unusable long list of competencies while ensuring they get beyond the bias and inaccuracies that result from a less structured and subjective approach to leader assessment.

The 4C Profile is both practical and empirically sound. The 4C Profile elements include:

1. **Capacity** – applies thought leadership
2. **Character** – is trustworthy & mature

3. **C**ommunication – engages all key constituents
4. **C**ompetency – applies strategic and functional skills

The order of these elements is important. When assessing, too many times we see leaders and HR professionals focus first, and sometimes solely, on a person's competency. This is because a person's functional skills and experience are easiest to assess and have a clear connection to a specific role. Competency is important however the other three C's are often not fully considered yet are critical in making accurate selection and development decisions.

Figure 1 – 4C Leadership Profile



Using the 4C Profile framework begins with assessing each candidate's hardware. A person's hardware is the raw material that is foundational to leadership success, and points to the kind of roles they can effectively inhabit over time. There is a strong positive relationship between a person's Character and Capacity and the size and variety of roles, situations and environments that they can be successful in.

Hardware defined = attributes and predispositions that are largely ingrained. It is our personal "wiring" and is difficult to change.

A person's *Character* goes beyond their honesty, as important as that is. Character is comprised of the persons' attributes that have been shaped over their early life. This includes the ability to regulate behavior, maintain perspective in difficult times, persevere and apply sound judgement. This level of maturity can come with age yet is not always associated with age. Employees can exhibit this maturity early while others may have the inability to manage in a seasoned and mature way their whole career.

A person's *Capacity* is their ability to manage complexity and solve problems. Each of us have a limit to our capacity. Those that have the ability to navigate through complexity, think broadly and solve difficult problems can provide unique insights and a level of competitive advantage to your business.

As a company, it is important to know which employees exhibit the highest levels of character and capacity, and then invest in their development. Your talent acquisition activities should also be focused on sourcing and assessing candidates with great hardware.

A person's software is much more malleable. If a person has strong capacity and character, they can develop as a communicator and influencer of people. They will also be able to develop the leadership and functional competencies required of the role and provide unique value in their roles because their wiring is strong.

Software defined = capabilities that can be developed - the area of focus to maximize performance and potential.

A person's *Communication* is not simply their ability to send and receive clear messages. It is their ability to read, adjust and influence different styles, types and levels of people. The core of this is a level of empathy and self-awareness. Communication and influence are increasingly important in larger leadership roles. There are key constructs such as Emotional Intelligence (EQ) that can be used with feedback and coaching to successfully develop this area.

A person's *Competency* comprises the skills and ability required of the level and in a role. This includes key functional skills (e.g. ability to manage a P/L) and strategic leadership skills (e.g. ability to form a longer-term plan for market development). Individual development should focus on the specific skills and abilities for immediate application and role success.

Assessing Using the 4C Leader Profile

In making judgements using the 4C Leader Profile, it is critical to involve multiple informed and diverse perspectives in the process. It is through the focused dialogue that keen insights are gathered, and the better selection and development decisions are made.

Figure 2 – 4C Leadership Profile Indicators

<p>Communication <i>Engages All Key Constituents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proactively builds relationships with all key constituents ○ Energizes and inspires greater effort ○ Articulates messages clearly and concisely ○ Actively listens and responds effectively ○ Appropriately conveys compassion and sensitivity ○ Is an effective ambassador for the company ○ Is accessible ○ Is credible 	<p>Competence <i>Applies Strategic and Leadership Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieves strong results across all areas of the strategy ○ Understands market dynamics and opportunities ○ Exhibits sound financial discipline ○ Delegates effectively ○ Maintains clear objectives ○ Coaches and develops people builds strong teams ○ Recognizes and encourages innovative solutions ○ Effectively initiates and manages necessary change ○ Responds effectively to unanticipated change ○ Expects and supports high levels of performance
<p>Character <i>Is Trustworthy and Mature</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Takes personal accountability – owns failures and shares successes ○ Overcomes obstacles and persists to get the job done ○ Delivers on commitments ○ Has integrity – lives the values they espouse ○ Leads in a fair and supportive manner ○ Recognizes and effectively deals with poor performance ○ Encourages and responds well to feedback ○ Puts the needs of the company above their own ○ Is a stable influence 	<p>Capacity <i>Applies Thought Leadership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies and manages the few core issues amongst multiple data and inputs ○ Provides greater insight and thought leadership to a group ○ Views situations from various perspectives resulting in more effective solutions ○ Sees patterns and opportunities ○ Is self-aware, knows their strengths and development needs ○ Effectively manages complex problems and opportunities ○ Is adaptable – open to learning and doing things differently ○ Their decisions and actions convey good judgement

These indicators are helpful, however, you may want to edit or even add a few based on the uniqueness of the Character, Capacity, Communication and Competency requirements of your business. For example, in one faith-based health care organization, they added servant's heart and compassion to the list of Character and Communication indicators.

What unique elements does your company have?

If you find yourself getting bogged down in the detail of the indicators when discussing an employee, I encourage you to move the assessment to an a more general outcome-based litmus test – see the key question for each C in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 – 4C Profile Litmus Questions



In Summary

The 4C Leadership Profile can help you and your leaders identify and develop great talent. However, be sure to make it the foundation of regular dialogue and avoid the tragic trap of coming to a conclusion on people. You should regularly revisit your assumptions and be willing to learn more, with the focus of figuring out how you can put each person in the position to be as successful as they can be.

There are additional tools that can be used to assess an employee or candidate using the 4C profile. As a firm we help companies both structure the approach, facilitate the process, and apply validated assessment instruments for greater precision and development focus.

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CMP is a talent and transition firm in the business of developing people and organizations across the full talent lifecycle – from talent acquisition and leadership development to assessment and outplacement support. To learn more, visit us at www.careermp.com or [request more information](#).