



# Turning Talent Management on its head at Leonardo

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## Why we took a new and inclusive approach at Leonardo

Like all organisations, we needed and still need to develop and retain talent with key skills to secure the future for our business.

We wanted to a more inclusive approach than traditional talent management approaches:

- Blind Spots
- Soft spots

We wanted our people to be the ones who decide if they are ready and we also suspected there were hidden gems ready to be unearthed.





## What we did next...

We came up with the concept of Succeed to Lead.

It was the first of its kind in Leonardo – a programme that employees could nominate themselves for and they could choose their own sponsor to support their application.

Succeed to Lead would be like no other development experience – it would be bespoke to every individual on the programme, tailored to their needs and career aspirations.

It would avoid a generic programme for everyone on the talent list, expecting them all to have the same learning needs and styles.

Succeed to Lead features two common modules to bring the cohort together and these would be unique and special to the programme.





## How we set it up

Having briefed our SLT and gained their buy-in, we created a promotional campaign to reach all of our employees.

We had very clear criteria on what we were looking for which we called 'BADGE' and applicants were asked to submit evidence against this criteria to demonstrate why they should be on the programme.

We had a 6 week window for applications.





## We asked people to wear the 'BADGE'

**Bright and Self Aware:** Intellectually curious with a strong appetite for continuous learning as evidenced in an active Personal Development Plan (PDP). Proven ability to quickly identify and close competency gaps and attain a high level of expertise. Actively invites the opinion of others, gives and seeks feedback.

**Adaptability:** Able to make good decisions despite uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Takes accountability and stands by decisions made by others as well as their own. Able to think and act strategically as well as tactically and know when to step away from day to day activities.

**Drive:** Hunger for high performance, delivering beyond expectations and applying energy to achieve goals as evidenced in appraisal. Acts as a role model internally and an ambassador externally. Maintains a high degree of integrity and professionalism even under pressure.

**Growth:** Considers alternative routes to achieve ambitions. Seeks additional responsibility whilst knowing how and when to effectively delegate. Can build and lead a team where applicable and generate positive energy around them. Shares knowledge, gives people the opportunity and tools to improve their skills, maximise their contribution and achieve a high level of performance. Recognises effort and addresses issues. Exhibits a positive approach to problem solving.

**Endurance:** High degree of energy, tenacity and resilience. High performance over time and across multiple scenarios. Steadfast in challenging times, learns from and bounces back from failure.



## Who did we find?

A naturally diverse cross-section of applicants and approximately 5% of the population.

We had a clear selection process with an initial paper-based review and a second round presentation to the panel.

The panel consisted of 5 Senior Leaders who independently scored the applications in both rounds.





## Key Lessons Learnt

We had a plan to manage expectations and disappointment and 1-2-1 feedback was offered to every single applicant.

We took a 'winner every time' approach to offer something to everyone who had the drive to step forward.

Some of them even came back again next time!





## What does Succeed to Lead look like?

It is a two year development programme – every delegate receives a personalised written curriculum to follow with a blend of self-directed and cohort-wide activities.

Each participant completes an individual and a team project – some of these ideas have been adopted within the business such as our new STEM Returners programme.

A highlight is the leadership module held at RMA Sandhurst followed by a second module at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham to understand what it takes to be a modern-day leader.





## Where are we now?

The Programme is now into its fourth year and the cohort has gone UK-wide. It is highly sought after with more applications year on year.

We have seen increased retention as a result of Succeed to Lead and of the original cohort all of the participants have progressed their careers since starting the programme.

Ultimately we now have a more diverse pool of talent, names we had never considered before and an inclusive approach that enables anyone to succeed.

