MASTERING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Module 1: Workbook

Translating business priorities into leadership needs

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3
Programme Details 4
Programme Purpose 4
Explanation of Features 4
Participant Code of Behaviour 5
Document Details 6
Programme Map 7
Module 1 8
Learning Outcomes 8
1 Effective leadership 9
1.1 What is effective leadership? 9
1.2 Blackmore Four's definition of effective leadership 12
1.3 Defining leadership needs 15
1.4 Why Leadership Needs Analysis is critical 18
1.5 Typical reasons leadership needs are not assessed 19
1.6 The impact of ineffective leadership on performance 20
2 Strategic priorities 24
2.1 Strategic planning for the business 24
2.2 Strategic plan in action: how to create strategic priorities 28
2.3 Translating strategic priorities into leadership needs 30
3 Leadership Needs Analysis 31
3.1 What is a skills framework? 31
3.2 International examples of skills frameworks 32
3.3 Defining what kind of leadership is useful for your business 36
3.4 Practical: conducting a Leadership Needs Analysis 37
Conclusion 40

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Introduction

Welcome to ***Module 1: Translating the business priorities into clear leadership needs***. You may be here because you are part of the leadership team in your business who wants to make a profound impact in the way your business performs. Perhaps you are a professional ready to launch from manager to leader, and you are hungry to equip yourself with the most appropriate skills. Or maybe you are a business consultant who would like to expand upon your offering to your clients.

Whatever your reason for being here, welcome. This programme is a three-part series that is going to equip you with very real skills in making a positive, strategic, long-term impact in your business. The coursework is set out to inspire you to think, stretch yourself, and to HAVE FUN whilst learning!

You may feel apprehensive about embarking on this journey. You may have doubts, asking yourself:

- Do I have the capability to make a profound impact on the business?
- Do I have what it takes to create action out of strategy?
- Am I leadership material?

Keep this in mind: the barrier between you and anything you want to do or achieve is a learnable skill.

However, with any skill, it takes dedication and lots of practice to refine that skill.

Let's begin.

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Programme Details

Programme Purpose

There is a difference between what we might think of as 'great' leadership and leadership skills required to maintain or improve business performance. Business leaders often fall victim to relying on the skills they think are required; however, we cannot shoehorn universally accepted skills as the 'right' fit for every business's needs. These needs are subject to change, and are based on the current skills that already exist in the business.

Businesses typically have a vision and strategic priorities to meet. To attain these priorities, we need a collection of skills. After all, leadership is not just down to the MD or CEO; leadership is a team effort, leveraging off the skills to achieve efficient and effective outcomes for the business.

The purpose of this programme is to understand the need for effective leadership and how it relates to business outcomes.

Explanation of Features

Features are used throughout the programme to focus your attention on important aspects:

ACTION

It's time to do something practical. Either complete the exercise electronically or print the page.

DID YOU KNOW?

Interesting facts you may not have known.

EXAMPLE

An example demonstrating the message we'd like to communicate.

SELF-STUDY

Reading or viewing material that will enhance your knowledge.

Participant Code of Behaviour

Do not use pencils in sessions - work completed in pencil is not authentic	Ask as many questions as you deem necessary to help you understand the topics
Do not copy anybody's work	Please complete pre- and post-work assignments - even if you are not sure of the answers
Please refrain from leaving sessions unless absolutely necessary	Leave the session in a discreet manner if you need a nature break
Please switch off your mobile phone and eliminate other distractions during sessions	Behave respectfully towards your fellow learners and your facilitator
Do not disengage or allow your mind to wander	Enjoy your learning journey and have fun in the process

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Source List

References are made throughout the module.

Participant Responsibilities

- ✓ You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your time responsibly.
- ✓ Please arrive timeously for each online session.
- ✓ Please complete the programme evaluation form at the end of the programme before you leave the session. This will assist us in improving our service and learning materials.

Facilitator Responsibilities

- ✓ The Facilitator is there to guide and support you during the training intervention.

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Programme Map

Module 1:

Translating the business priorities into clear leadership needs

Module 2:

Assessing the current leadership capabilities in your business

Module 3:

Planning, prioritising and implementing leadership development

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Module 1

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module you will be able to:

1. Understand and define what effective leadership is
2. Define leadership needs
3. Understand why a Leadership Needs Analysis is critical
4. List reasons why leadership needs are not always assessed in business
5. Describe the impact of ineffective leadership on performance
6. Outline a strategic plan for a business
7. Devise strategic priorities
8. Translate these strategic priorities into leadership needs
9. Describe what a skills framework is
10. Provide examples of skills frameworks
11. Define what kind of leadership is useful for business by conducting a Leadership Needs Analysis

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1 Effective leadership

1.1 What is effective leadership?

Leadership is a complex topic which has been studied over the decades, and still does not prescribe to one universal definition. Its critical need has only intensified in our current day's fast-paced, increasingly complex and globalised environment. Leadership, to this day, is a hot topic for debate owed to its complex nature.

Warren G Bennis, University Professor of Business Administration and Founding Chairman of The Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, has been quoted saying that *"leadership is the most studied and least understood topic of any in the social sciences"* and *"never have so many laboured so long to say so little".*

Let's contemplate some examples of leadership definitions:

EXAMPLE

- "*An influencing process aimed at goal achievement*" – Stogdill
- "*Leadership is the art of mobilising others to want to struggle for the shared aspirations*" – Kouzes and Posner
- "*Leadership is simply influence*" – Maxwell

ACTION 1

Please provide your personal definition of leadership below. There is no right or wrong answer – but we encourage you to start self-reflecting on how you personally define this concept:

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Although we may differ in our definitions of effective leadership, there is likely one thing we all agree on: effective leadership is accepted by business leaders and academics as pivotal to the success of any business.

And what of management? What difference is there between management and leadership?

Management can be described as working within the familiar, where one works within the confines of at least some predictable guidelines. When managing, one is required to plan appropriately, allocate resources and ensure appropriate supervision. The use of policy, process and procedure may be heavily relied upon.

Leaders are viewed as visionaries and strategist, unlike the responsibilities demanded by managers to monitor and control performance, and maintain order and stability in an organisation. Some academics argue that management and leadership have distinct roles and responsibilities whilst others express that managers and leaders are complementary; one can't separate the two.

SELF-STUDY

For richer insights, read our article titled When you say Leadership, do you really mean Management?

However, for ease of our studies we'll focus on the notion of leadership. To better understand the evolution of various concepts of leadership, let's take a journey through the history of leadership theories, which include:

- Trait
- Behavioural
- Situational
- New Leadership

Great Man theory [1840s] and trait theories [1930s–1940s]

Are leaders born, or are they reared? During the 19th century, the accepted perspective was that individuals possessed innate traits, insinuating that either you had the makings of a leader – or you did not.

The Great Man theory rested on this hypothesis, firmly believing leaders could not be 'made' or upskilled. That meant that only the 'elite few' would possess unique qualities that made them effective leaders. Such examples include Napolean Bonaparte, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi and Julius Caeser.

This Great Man theory later on evolved into what we refer to as trait theories, which challenged preconceived ideas of leaders being born. In other words, the belief shifted to traits of successful leaders being inherited or acquired through upskilling. The focus became on investigating the ideal combination of characteristics that make up the most effective leader, and studying the various traits of leaders. A consistent, agreed upon list of traits were still not finalised by 1950, which led to the abandonment of this trend of thinking.

In current day, psychometric assessments are an example of trait theory principles, and are often used for selection purposes. These assessments pay attention to key personality traits, and furthermore, may be used for personal performance and development.

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Behavioural era [1940s - 1950s]

From trait theory came behavioural theory which offered an almost opposite stance, given previous beliefs. Behavioural theory suggested that leaders were made, not born, and that certain behaviours could be learned. This perspective put attention on the actual behaviour of the person, and not the characteristics or traits they were born with. However, it did not take into consideration the situation or environment of that leader.

Research later on birthed different patterns of behaviour that were combined together, and came to be known as styles. This was especially poignant around management training – one of the most popular being Blake and Mouton's Managerial grid.

This theory is popular today, especially when it comes to leadership programmes, which is largely focused on the development of key leadership behaviours and skills. This, therefore, supports the belief that leadership is learned.

Situational era: contingent and situational theories [1960s]

As time passed, more attention was paid to the environment as a significant variable in the dynamic around leadership. This trend of thinking dominated the situational era, where the focus is on how leadership manifests in situations – rather than just a concrete set of skills or behaviours demonstrated. The leader is then challenged to consider the context in which they work, and adapt their approach to fit the environment. As the most appropriate style rests upon the type of situation, this approach came to be known as the contingency theory of leadership.

As a pioneer of contingency theories of leadership, we may consider Fred Fiedler, who focused on the critical importance of context for effective leadership. This paradigm of thought suggests that there is no 'one size fits all' set of skills, behaviours or styles. Furthermore, Fiedler believed that because leadership styles were largely fixed, leaders should be placed in environments that are appropriate to their styles.

New Leadership: Transactional, transformational theories [1990s] and others [2000s]

Fast forward to today: we now recognise that fixating on one part of leadership simply cannot address the complexity of effective leadership. Given our ever-changing, fast-paced, technology-driven environments that continue to evolve, there is a need for leadership theories that support this very backdrop. This need paved the way for the new leadership era, which abandons previously accepted notions around leadership being uni-directional, top-down influencing processes. Instead, we now look at leadership as complex interactions between leaders and followers, the context they find themselves in, and the system as a whole.

Source: *Evolution of leadership theory | BMJ Leader*

So what?

What is poignant is that we should observe that current trends demonstrate that leadership does not occur in isolation. Just like a sports team is lauded for their performance on the field, similarly to the business who achieves success, this does not occur in isolation. The direction, vision and support provided by the team captain, coaches, committee members and board are an example of leadership working together to bring success for the team to life.

Leadership is a team sport.

To improve your business's effectiveness, it's critical to first identify what leadership capabilities you need, and then align them with the business strategy.

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1.2 Blackmore Four's definition of effective leadership

Hopefully you recognise that we are not attempting to adopt a rigid definition for leadership that we wish to impose on you. However, given our own research and practice, we invite you to consider our own conclusion on what leadership is. We at Blackmore Four define leadership as:

A distinct set of capabilities and behaviours that determine and drive the purpose, values and direction of the organisation.

We also state that effective leadership is:

1. Contextual: dependant on the operating environment or circumstances of the business.
2. Relational: influencing behaviour of others requiring an understanding of the leaders and followers.
3. Destination-focused: based on a purpose, a vision or specific goals – a shared reason for being.
4. A shared process: requiring nurturing from different sources as an organisational attribute.

We appreciate that context changes, relationships change (people leave, join, grow, engage, disengage), aspects of our destination change and certainly the things that inspire collective behaviour changes. The requirement for leadership is therefore subject to ongoing and complex change which makes the notion of 'good' leadership fluid not static.

Given this constant state of flux, how do you ascertain what leadership your business needs?

ACTION 2

1. Please provide a short summary on how your business currently ascertains what leadership it requires?

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ACTION Cont...

2. What are the factors that influence the need for leadership in your business?

3. What have you done to understand those factors and formulate an understanding of your needs?

ACTION Cont...

4. How do you know the answer is right or specific enough to action?

5. What are you doing to fulfil those needs?

1.3 Defining leadership needs

Simplifying your leadership needs to a generalised set of skills and behaviours assumes there is either 'one best way' of leading, or that people expected to lead within your organisation can determine the specifics themselves.

In some cases, effective leaders emerge with no pre-identification or planned development – that can happen – but we don't think leadership is something that should be left to chance, no more so than you would leave the future success of your business to chance.

There are many credible sources that offer help identifying the most important leadership skills or behaviours, but how do you know how relevant they are to your business and what they would look like in practice?

SELF-STUDY

Before attempting to answer the below questions, read this piece of research published in the Harvard Business review: The Most Important Leadership Competencies, According to Leaders around the World.

ACTION 3

1. Respecting the research approach and the validity of the participants involved, the outcome suggests some clear guidance on what makes effective leaders. However, do you think the respondents/business leaders know what makes themselves or others effective? Why/why not?

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ACTION Cont…

2. Research aside, what do YOU feel are the most important leadership skills and behaviours for your business? (Based on nothing else, but just your discretion at this moment in time.)

3. Think of a colleague/leader you hold in high regard. Invite them to nominate what they think the top 10 leadership skills are. List this below. Thereafter, compare their list to the list published by the Harvard Business Review. Then, compare their list to yours. Note any findings/similarities/discrepancies below.

Hopefully, the above exercise has demonstrated to you that even robust academic research is not a fool-proof solution to rely upon. We often refer to what is 'best practice' or widely accepted international insights. Of course, research is insightful and it helps frame universal leadership competencies, but the challenge you have as a business leader is taking this list, along with every other piece of research conducted on leadership, and determining which leadership attributes are most relevant for your business and why, and how to apply that within your own business context.

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1.4 Why Leadership Needs Analysis is critical

Leadership is variable and subject to complex change so identifying the specific needs of your business requires some objective analysis. If you intend to assess current capability and develop leadership to help enable your business strategy, then it is worth taking some structured time to get the Needs Analysis right.

Many businesses will invest relatively large amounts of money in leadership development (which we will unpack in further detail in Modules 3 and 4), but without specific identification of your leadership needs, an understanding of the context and how leadership changes can be applied, it is often of little value.

SELF-STUDY

Consider reading this Forbes article, Leadership Development is a $366 Bn Industry: Here's why most programs don't work, which gives good insight into some of the issues that are created out of insufficient localised Needs Analysis.

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1.5 Typical reasons leadership needs are not assessed

"You have to be honest and authentic and not hide. I think the leader today has to demonstrate both transparency and vulnerability, and with that comes truthfulness and humility."
Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO

Like most aspects of business, leadership requires some focus and effort to get it right and there are plenty of other priorities competing for your personal and collective time. The *absence of time* (capacity) to spend on identifying the specific leadership needs of your business is often cited as a reason for not doing it.

However, leadership is not optional for many people involved in running a business. Whether you focus on it or not, the way in which your thoughts and feelings spill out into what you say and do is being watched and is influencing the way in which others in your business think, feel and behave. It's happening, so you can either hope that every leader in your business is getting it right (and possibly spend time on the consequences of getting it wrong), or you can invest a small amount of time upfront making sure you have an accurate identification of leadership needs.

Once you have accepted the need to invest some time on this, the question is *when*?

If the nature of leadership is important to the future success of your business, then you have to make it a priority … and if not now, then at a very specific time in the near future; not when everything else is done, because it never is. If you do not, then it is not that important to you, and if it is not that important to you then other people will know that because they look to you for leadership.

The final two reasons for not doing this are *relevance* and *cost*. If a business relies on people to run successfully, you may accept that the business relies on effective leadership. It is simply incorrect to say identifying the leadership needs of your business are not relevant if you separately accept that leadership is a critical organisational attribute. The magnitude of this exercise will depend on the scale and complexity of the organisation – your approach to Leadership Needs Analysis should fit the context – but the core principle of understanding what kind of leadership is necessary for your organisation is relevant wherever there is a social group expected to work coherently towards common goals – a team.

The cost involved in conducting this analysis might simply come down to the cost of your and your team's time. That is not insignificant, but it is already budgeted. The cost of not focusing on this is even more intangible but is borne through misalignment of effort, reduced productivity, efficiency or engagement (task and business).

As with any other investment, it is important to be clear about the costs and benefits of investing in leadership, or not investing in leadership, or not investing in the right kind of leadership.

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1.6 The impact of ineffective leadership on performance

"Most people think of leadership as a position and therefore don't see themselves as leaders"
Stephen Covey

We can all assume that ineffective leaders cost the business massive losses, but what concrete data is there to back up these claims?

According to Smart CEO, the impact on most businesses which suffer poor leadership practices operate with a 5-10% 'drag'. This may equate to millions of losses each year.

You may have often heard that people don't leave jobs, they leave 'bad bosses'. Research shows us that when leaders do not demonstrate behaviours such as providing direction, coaching and motivating their employees, the culture and morale takes a knock. Unfortunately, ineffective leadership is the root cause of high staff turnover and loss of productivity.

Moreover, there are frightening findings:

- Ineffective leadership costs the average business an amount equal to 7% of their total annual sales.
- Between 9–32% of a business's employee turnover can be avoided with more effective leadership.
- Effective leadership is said to generate between 3-4% improvement in client satisfaction, and 1.5% increase in revenue growth.

A leader in research in the corporate world, DDI, has formulated a 'cost of poor leadership' calculator which demonstrates that one ineffective leader could cost a business over £10,500.00 over the period of one year, owed to low productivity, turnover and employee opposition.

SELF-STUDY

This article by Forbes, titled Ineffective Leadership and The Devastating Individual and Organisational Consequences, outlines the devastating impact a poor leader can have on a business.

There is a plethora of research that demonstrates concrete evidence of financial loss suffered at the hands of poor decisions made around leadership, and how this is directly correlated to failing to achieve business goals.

If there is ineffective leadership in a business, beyond the impact on the bottom line, there are a number of other ramifications that may manifest:

Absent vision

If leadership fails to provide adequate direction, followers become lost. Employees don't know what the goals are of the business are, and they have no clue as to why they are required to adopt specific processes. They may approach their roles in a check-list manner, doing what they need to get done but without a common, shared goal.

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Poor alignment

Ineffective leadership inhibits the development of alignment and may result in fragmented departments, work roles and working in silos. This means that each employee neglects the importance their work plays in achieving the business objectives.

An effective leader will communicate with employees regularly to convey a range of information and develop synergy. Encouraging employees to share ideas and engage in open discussions benefits the company and ensures that everyone is aligned in pursuing the same goals.

Breeding mediocrity

Ineffective leadership can slow down any improvement in the capabilities of management within the business. Through vicarious learning, middle management may begin to imitate leaders' style of managing people and business decisions. This goes on and flows down the chain of command, eventually becoming a culture in the organisation and resulting in low morale.

Battered morale

Ineffective leadership can result from employees feeling misdirected or uncertain about the company and their jobs. Poor communication contributes to this issue. In some cases, failure to address negative employees or poor performers leads to low morale, because good employees often have to pick up the slack.

Tension between employees and managers can affect productivity, performance and wellbeing. Additionally, employees feeling they are being let down or criticised by managers can end up feeling disillusioned and demoralised.

DID YOU KNOW?

Poor leadership = higher costs = lower profit

The impact on the business's culture is correlated to increasing business costs and reducing profit in the following ways:

Increasing staff turnover

Ineffective leadership can result in higher employee turnover. Employees who are not motivated and feel burned out from a poor culture begin looking for other jobs. Companies struggle when they lose top performers and experienced employees, and must replace them with new hires.

There are a range of costs associated with replacing an experienced employee, including the cost of covering the position while vacant, the cost of finding a replacement and the cost of getting a new person up to speed.

Failing to meet goals

A consequence of ineffective leadership is failing to inspire employees to deliver their best results and meet their potential. In order to achieve the best results, employees need to be committed to the business and to achieving goals, both financial and otherwise. Without a supportive culture or encouraging leader, financial goals will likely not be achieved.

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Reduced client satisfaction

More effective leadership can generate a 3-4% improvement in client satisfaction scores and a corresponding 1.5% increase in revenue growth. Ineffective leadership will have a negative impact on client satisfaction and therefore on overall revenue.

Reduction in productivity

Productivity is the most impactful way that leadership helps or hinders the bottom line. Ineffective leadership negatively impacts employee satisfaction, which then negatively impacts employee productivity.

While it is unrealistic to expect workers to be 100% productive through every working day, research finds that most businesses are operating with a 5-10% productivity drag that more effective leadership practices could eliminate.

The good news is that when organisations undertake leadership development training there is enormous potential for organisations to improve their bottom line, which we will cover in Modules 3 and 4.

Ask yourself honestly; at this moment in time can your current leaders support, delegate, inspire, celebrate, and challenge their staff to perform at the highest level?

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ACTION 4

Research a company that either was salvaged and turned around by the appointment of new leadership, and why, OR research a company that went bust owed to poor leadership decisions. Outline your case study below. You may be encouraged to share your findings during our sessions.

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ACTION Cont…

Source: Zenger Folkman white papers available here.

2 Strategic priorities

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work but rather, teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

2.1 Strategic planning for the business

Any business worth their weight in gold possesses a business plan; this roadmap not only assists the business to plan for the future, but it is a management tool in identifying and analysing the internal and external factors that can affect operations. Some of these factors are out of one's control, including economic conditions, the weather, changes in technology, competitors, etc. It also includes issues unique to the business, such as staffing and hiring, management policies, estimated cash flow, etc.

Let's revisit your business plan to complete the next part of our practical.

ACTION 5

1. What is the business's mission / vision?

Mission statements define your business's purpose and its primary objectives.

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2. What is the purpose of the business?

Ask these questions to guide your thinking:

Why are we doing what we are doing?
What is the reason we are in the business we are in?
What is our passion for the business we're in?
What's our higher reason for being in this specific business?

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ACTION Cont...

3. Provide a current SWOT analysis for your business:

3.1 Strengths

3.2 Weaknessess

3.3 Opportunities

3.4 Threats

ACTION Cont...

4. What are the core values and beliefs of the business?

   The 'shoulds' and 'shouldn'ts' that guide your business's decisions, attitudes, behaviours and performance. There should be 5-10 commandments upon which your vision for the future is built upon. It will be the basis for selection, performance review evaluations, promotion, and retention of key players going forward. When your values are clear, all your decisions are easier.

5. What market is the business after?

6. Who is your ideal customer?

ACTION Cont…

7. What is the business's brand promise?

   To identify your business's brand promise, ask yourself these questions:

   What specific need can we best satisfy for our clients – better than any of our competitors? What is our absolute value-added proposition or market differentiator?

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8. What is our BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) for the business?

   This is something that may take some time to figure out, so do not rush this process. In the words of Jim Collins, Your Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal should be thought out for 10-25 years into the future. Ask yourself, what would make your business lofty and legendary? What would challenge the business to greatness?

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2.2 Strategic plan in action: how to create strategic priorities

How did you find the above exercise? Creating the who, what, why and when of a business can often be a bit of a box-ticking exercise.

The reason we have brought in the business strategy as a core piece of work into this module is because often times strategic purpose, vision and values is at risk of being created in isolation from the whole business. The risk is that many businesses may in fact hire a consultant to help form their vision and values, but then do not know how to effectively embed them within the organisation. As a result, they are left 'hanging around' and fall prey to being wheeled out for a new business presentation to show brand personality.

To get these elements to connect and work with your business requires a more holistic approach. This means taking a step back, looking at the organisation in its entirety, and defining brand and purpose in a way that is internally relevant and can be underpinned through practical examples and a real-world narrative.

Start with a narrative

In simple terms, the strategic narrative is your business story. It is the human side of the business and should articulate the purpose of your business – what is the reason for its existence? What are your long-term ambitions? What behaviours are employees expected to exhibit and follow? Essentially, it is the glue that aligns and drives the organisation forward.

DID YOU KNOW?

A strategic narrative provides an organisation with a backbone, the strong core around which everything else can be built.

A narrative will ensure everyone is on the same page and clear about where the organisation is heading and how it intends to get there. It is also an essential component when creating high-performing teams.

SELF-STUDY

Learn more about creating high performing teams by reading this article.

Devise strategic priorities

Reflecting on the past, your company's reason for being did not come out of nowhere and it is important to remind people of the drivers that led to its creation – it is also known as your brand DNA. Additionally, when looking to the future, you and/or your leadership team will inevitably have a vision, but are you all on the same page when it comes to telling that story, which in turn inspires your strategic priorities?

Everybody may in fact have a different take on how they see the business. This is why agreeing on the strategic priorities is so important - to ensure everybody is clear and on the same page. However, the process must start with the board and must have collective commitment in bringing it to life.

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The need for buy-in and clarity is critical because, once formed, it is the leadership team who will then be the guardians and keepers of the strategic priorities. That is not to say that once the priorities are agreed by the leadership team, it is cast in stone – far from it. What works in principle may not work on the 'shop floor'.

This is where leadership comes in. Once formed, the strategic priorities are then put forward to the business, the cycle of feedback begins, and it is where the board needs to actively listen and communicate to ensure all employees are on board and engaged.

Creating strategic priorities

The important thing to consider about strategic priorities is that not only must it be relevant, realistic and inspiring, but it also needs to be believable, relevant and firmly grounded. It must be personal to the business and be an accurate representation of the business's past, present and future that employees will recognise and identify with.

To begin creating strategic priorities, refer back to your previous exercise. This activity should have supported the process in understand why the business exists, where it's headed, how it intends to get there. That leaves the task of how to make this clear for everyone to understand. How can we make this clear for everyone to understand?

By going through this process, a business can begin to establish strategic priorities that are unique to their own circumstances which provides a foundation from which everything else can flow.

SELF-STUDY

An article titled *A Better Way to Set Strategic Priorities* may enrich your learnings; read it here.

Providing a constant through times of change

Despite shifting circumstances or technological developments, what an organisation stands for should remain constant, even if the destination they are aiming to reach may change. The strategic priorities should be robust enough to withstand these pressures.

People want to know that their efforts matter and what they are working towards has meaning. A carefully considered, well-defined and articulated strategic priorities document provides this. It is the guiding light that ensures everyone is aligned, exhibiting shared values and inspires them to play their part in realising the organisation's ambitions.

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2.3 Translating strategic priorities into leadership needs

The assembly of a leadership team that is unified around the strategic priorities is the *most important prerequisite* for successful strategy execution. Putting the right people in the right seats is a prerequisite to successful strategy execution because strategy typically requires new levels of cross-functional integration. Leaders who resist this type of consensus can undermine successful execution of strategic priorities. Consensus on and commitment to the strategy provides a litmus test for determining who on the leadership team should do what.

SELF-STUDY

Harvard Business Review has published a fascinating article on How Smart Leaders Translate Strategy into Execution.

What kind of leadership is useful for your business?

It is worthwhile to break this down and apply a logical sequence to ensure you develop an objective, accurate picture of what your leadership needs are. It is important to listen out for and distinguish between genuine leadership needs and a generalised assessment of current leadership.

In our next section, we'll take a deeper look into this.

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3 Leadership Needs Analysis

By now, you will (hopefully!) agree that your business requires a very specific set of leadership needs to put your strategy into action. These needs can be referred to as competencies, behaviours and/or skills.

DID YOU KNOW?

Competencies are 'sets of behaviours that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results' (Bartram et al, 2002).

In the business context they are behaviours that support the attainment of objectives within the context of that specific business's strategy. Competencies are sometimes also called 'capabilities'.

But how do you define those leadership needs in a scientific, objective manner? This is where we refer to a robust skills framework to guide your thinking.

3.1 What is a skills framework?

A skills framework provides a rational, consistent, and practical basis for understanding people's behaviours at work and their likelihood of succeeding in certain roles and environments.

DID YOU KNOW?

A skills framework can also be referred to as a competency model, a competency framework or leadership model. Can you think of additional synonyms for a skills framework?

It's imperative that you use a leadership model broad enough that you do not exclude business-relevant leadership competencies but something that is based on valid research. If you are a member of a professional membership body, then they might have something you could use.

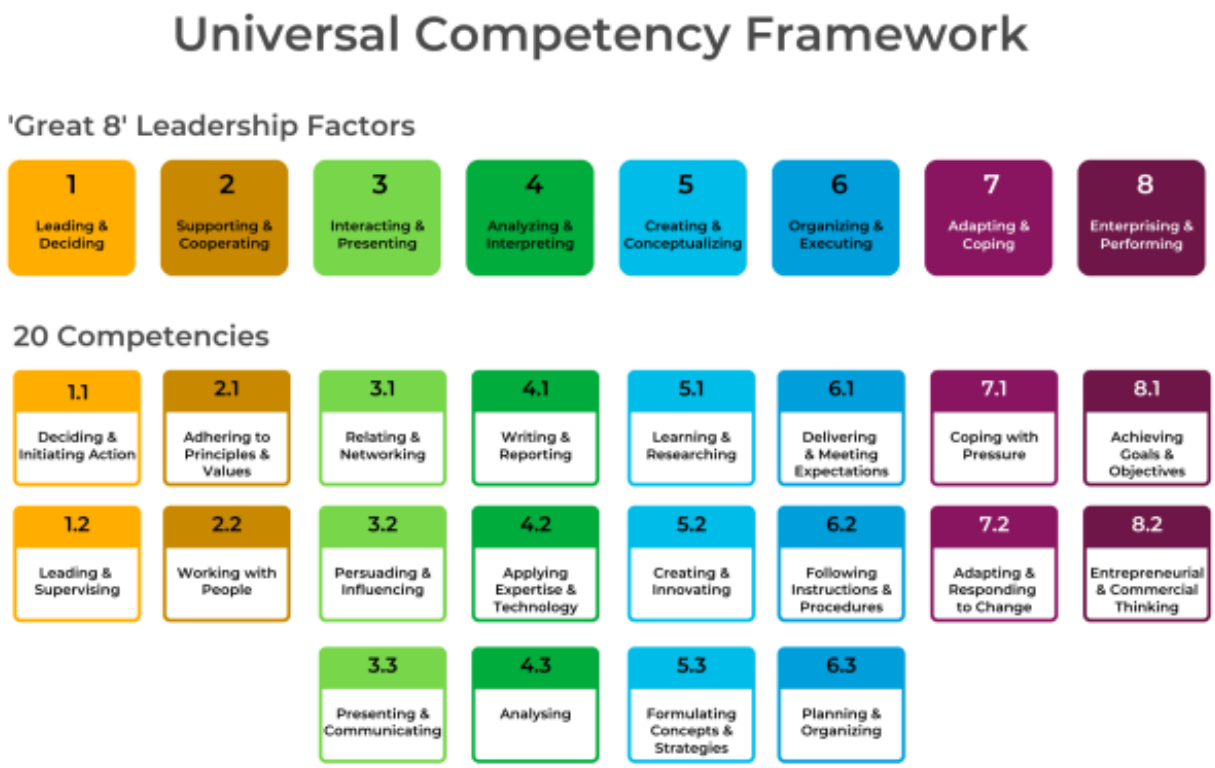
However, in this programme, we will introduce you to a few internationally recognised frameworks that are at your disposal, as well as introducing you to our very own.

3.2 International examples of skills frameworks

SHL

SHL is an assessment and talent consultancy which is known globally. Their science and technology profess to maximise the potential of a company's greatest asset – its people. From Talent Acquisition to Talent Management, they express supporting their clients by creating diverse, agile, and innovative workforces.

SHL devised their own Universal Competency Framework (UCF) from their wide-reaching program of research on workplace behaviours, so it can be used to build competency models for all types of jobs or to map existing models onto a universal set of competency components.



Source: [Universal Competency Framework (UCF) | SHL]

Korn Ferry

Korn Ferry is a global organisational consulting firm. They work with clients to design their organisational structures, roles and responsibilities. They help businesses hire the right people and advise them on how to reward, develop and motivate their workforce.

Korn Ferry acquired Lominger Limited Inc, which was a provider of leadership development tools. The Lominger framework was developed based on empirical data and the experience base of Robert W. Eichinger, Michael M. Lombardo, David Ulrich, and others.

LOMINGER International
A KORN/FERRY COMPANY

Highest Skill
Middle Skill
Lowest Skill

Jenn - Self Sort - 12-12-10

APOLLO GROUP™
HUMAN RESOURCES

Factor I: STRATEGIC SKILLS

Cluster A - Understanding Business
- 5. Business Acumen
- 24. Functional/Technical Skills
- 61. Technical Learning

Cluster B - Making Complex Decisions
- 17. Decision Quality
- 30. Intellectual Horsepower
- 32. Learning on the Fly
- 51. Problem Solving

Cluster C - Creating the New and Different
- 2. Dealing with Ambiguity
- 14. Creativity
- 28. Innovation Management
- 46. Perspective
- 58. Strategic Agility

Factor II: OPERATING SKILLS

Cluster D - Keeping on Point
- 16. Timely Decision Making
- 50. Priority Setting

Cluster E - Getting Organized
- 39. Organizing
- 47. Planning
- 62. Time Management

Cluster F - Getting Work Done Through Others
- 18. Delegation
- 19. Developing Direct Reports and Others
- 20. Directing Others
- 27. Informing
- 35. Managing and Measuring Work

Cluster G - Managing Work Process
- 52. Process Management
- 59. Managing Through Systems
- 63. Total Work Systems

Factor III: COURAGE

Cluster H - Dealing with Trouble
- 9. Command Skills
- 12. Conflict Management
- 13. Confronting Direct Reports
- 34. Managerial Courage
- 57. Standing Alone

Cluster I - Making Tough People Calls
- 25. Hiring and Staffing
- 56. Sizing Up People

Factor IV: ENERGY AND DRIVE

Cluster J - Focusing on the Bottom Line
- 1. Action Oriented
- 43. Perseverance
- 53. Drive for Results

Factor V: ORGANIZATIONAL POSITIONING SKILLS

Cluster K - Being Organizationally Savvy
- 38. Organizational Agility
- 48. Political Savvy

Cluster L - Communicating Effectively
- 49. Presentation Skills
- 67. Written Communications

Cluster M - Managing Up
- 6. Career Ambition
- 8. Comfort Around Higher Management

Factor VI: PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Cluster N - Relating Skill
- 3. Approachability
- 31. Interpersonal Savvy

Cluster O - Caring About Others
- 7. Caring about Direct Reports and Others
- 10. Compassion

Cluster P - Managing Diverse Relationships
- 4. Boss Relationships
- 15. Customer/Student Focus
- 21. Managing Diversity
- 23. Fairness to Direct Reports
- 42. Peer Relationships
- 64. Understanding Others (groups)

Cluster Q - Inspiring Others
- 36. Motivating Others
- 37. Negotiating
- 60. Building Effective Teams
- 65. Managing Vision and Purpose

Cluster R - Acting with Honor and Character
- 22. Ethics and Values
- 29. Integrity and Trust

Cluster S - Being Open and Receptive
- 11. Composure
- 26. Humor
- 33. Listening
- 41. Patience
- 44. Personal Disclosure

Cluster T - Demonstrating Personal Flexibility
- 40. Dealing with Paradox
- 45. Personal Learning
- 54. Self-Development
- 55. Self-Knowledge

Cluster U - Balancing Work/Life
- 66. Work/Life Balance

Source: [Lominger Assessment Instruments: An Overview of Research Background and Support (kornferry.com)]

Goleman Group

Goleman Consulting Group services are based on decades of independent research linking individual and team Emotional Intelligence to improved performance. They provide customised services that deliver the benefits of stronger EI to an entire organisation.

Their framework is based on Emotional Intelligence specifically, relating to twelve competencies, by Daniel Goleman:

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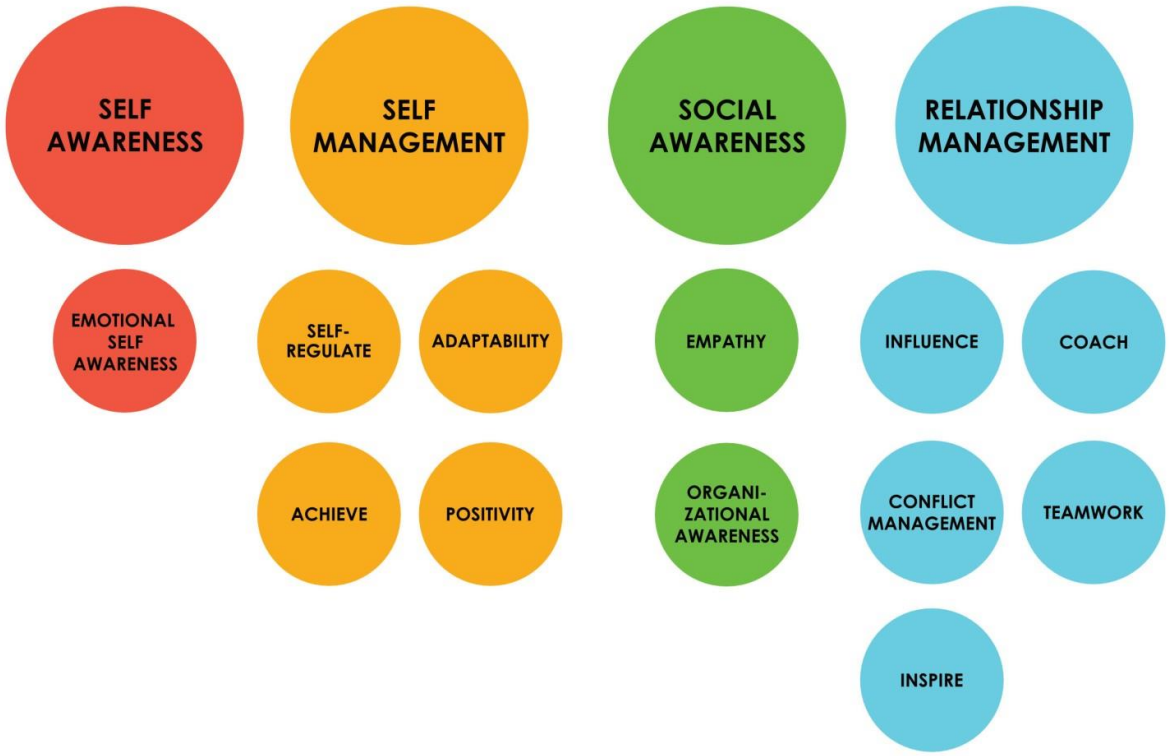

Source: [Goleman Consulting Group – Driving Greater Performance Through Emotional Intelligence]

Blackmore Four

Blackmore Four works with ambitious business leaders to achieve outstanding levels of business performance through effective leadership, management and organisation of their people. We identify, define, assess and develop the leadership and management skills that are most likely to drive business success.

We provide actionable insight to design and develop organisations that are change-ready, willing to adapt and fit for your future. We focus on solutions that address our clients' specific challenges in a targeted way with measurable impact.

In 2022, after much research and development, we launched our own framework, titled the Blackmore Four Leadership Library. This framework was digitised and launched in July 2022.

Strategic	Operational	Personal	Interpersonal
Ambiguity	Action oriented	Emotional self-regulation	Building relationships
Complexity	Solution seeking	Composure	Alliance with seniors
Creativity	Timely Decision making	Values	Charisma
Decision quality	Technical expertise	Ethics	Providing Direction
Innovation	Information sharing	Integrity	Credibility
Working with paradox	Planning	Learning oriented	Working with colleagues
Global perspective	Organising	Courage	Client-centric
Political awareness	Prioritising	Perseverance	Delegation
Problem solving	Analytical	Personal disclosure	Embracing differences
Process management	Maintaining high standards	Adaptability	Fairness
Strategic	Business acumen	Stress management	Motivating others
Appetite for technology	Commercial acumen	Drive	Negotiation
Vision	Financial acumen	Personal development	Patience
Entrepreneurship	Numerical acumen	Knowledge of self	Team building
Purpose		Reliable	Influence
		Self confidence	Persuasion
		Optimism	Develops others
		Achievement orientation	Inspires others
		Time management	Conflict management
			Written communication
			Verbal communication
			Presentation skills
			Approachability
			Compassion
			Active listening
			Reading people
			Humility
			Empathy
			Organisational awareness
			Trustworthy

DO NOT

3.3 Defining what kind of leadership is useful for your business

It is important to base your analysis on a clear and consistent understanding of what you are trying to achieve. We are framing leadership being anchored on a destination – possibly a moving target - but your company's stated vision or purpose, coupled with business plans or specific business objectives, often form a good basis for ensuring all participants of your analysis have a shared understanding of what you're trying to achieve.

Remember to invite input from all stakeholders, and not make assumptions. Perception of what kind of leadership is required might vary depending on your vantage point and circumstances. If the people you are seeking to lead do not have a voice, then you are missing a critical source of input. This is not a democratic process, but it is important to understand various stakeholder perspectives.

Lastly, remain objective. We have suggested leadership is an organisational attribute; treat it as a set of skills and behaviours that can be acquired and developed by anyone. Keep Needs Analysis separate from assessment to avoid personal interest skewing the input. It is natural to identify something as being necessary if you have it, especially if others do not.

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3.4 Practical: conducting a Leadership Needs Analysis

Referring to the information you captured around the business vision and other strategic items, you may appreciate the big picture of your business which has been documented. However, it's time to start getting more granular.

EXAMPLE

Think of the strategic priorities you have for the business (example given below).

	Strategic priority:
1.	EXAMPLE 1: Launch three new products by June 2023.
2.	EXAMPLE 2: Attract three major clients by December 2023.

Nominate as many as you think you have, or need.

	Strategic priorities:
1.	
2.	
3.	

Next, align the **strategic priorities** to the **competencies you require** to achieve that goal. No need to rewrite them – simply ensure you align the numbers correctly. Think objectively about what skills the business would need, aligned to the priorities – not necessarily what you have (or have access to) in your team. Remember to refer back to the framework you have chosen to utilise!

EXAMPLE Cont...

	Skill/s required
1	EXAMPLE 1: Innovation (The action or process of innovating. "Innovation is crucial to the continuing success of any organisation.")
2	EXAMPLE 2: Interpersonal skills (Interpersonal skills are the behaviours and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively. In the business world, the term refers to an employee's ability to work well with others.)

Your answer:

	Skill/s required:
1	
2	
3	

And voila! You have now completed a list of critical skills you need in your business to make your strategic priorities a reality.

DID YOU KNOW?

We use the terms competency, skills and behaviours interchangeably – and invite you to adopt the language which suits your business best.

DID YOU KNOW?

Remember that doing this exercise in isolation is based on your frame of reference and professional expertise. Although this information alone is tremendously helpful, you are encouraged to encompass the views of others for this to truly be an accurate depiction of the skills and behaviours your business requires.

ACTION 6

It is now time to go forth and prepare you own Leadership Needs Analysis! You can choose to either conduct this by pen-and-paper, utilising the above examples to guide you. You are welcome to choose which Framework you wish to utilise, as outlined in Section 3.2. where we unpacked international examples of frameworks.

If you wish to complete your Leadership Needs Analysis digitally utilising Blackmore Four's web application (as opposed to by pen-and-paper as per above directions), please email contact@blackmorefour.co.uk to receive your link.

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Conclusion

You've made it to the end of Module 1 – congratulations! You've absorbed a plethora of highly complex, detailed material. You may not feel confident just yet, but you have learned the theory and cultivated the skills in turning the strategy part of your business into something practical. One of those core, practical pieces is to ensure that you have the skills in your business to breathe life into the business's vision. Remember that this is a journey, and to consolidate your learnings, we encourage you to re-visit what you have studied, teach it to others, as well as put it into practice. Do remember that a member of the Blackmore Four team is available to support you if you have any questions about what you have learned so far.

All the best!

ACTION 7

As your last activity, please engage in a moment of self-reflection to highlight what you have learned in this Module: