
High-Potential Leader Development: Learning Agility and Readiness for Senior Roles Course

8 – 12 March 2027
Amsterdam





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Programme Summary

High-potential leader development is a five-day training course for managers identified as successors for senior roles, at strategic level, culminating in an individual accelerated development plan agreed with their sponsor. Organisations invest in talent pools, yet many high performers stall when they reach roles that demand broader judgement, influence and resilience. The approach separates potential from performance, builds learning agility and self-awareness, widens the enterprise perspective and turns development into planned stretch experience. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in high-potential leader development for future senior leaders.

The Business Case

When high potentials are promoted before they are ready, or leave because their development stalls, organisations lose both the investment and the succession cover they were counting on. Structured development shortens the time a successor needs to be ready, reduces the risk of derailment in the first senior role and signals to talented managers that the organisation is serious about their growth.

- Succession Readiness: Improves as each successor works on agreed gaps through planned stretch assignments.
- Retention of High Potentials: Rises as development is visible, sponsored and linked to future roles.
- Senior Appointment Success: Strengthens as derailment risks are identified and addressed before promotion.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Nine-Box Grid: Separates current performance from future potential and frames the self-assessment in Session 1.
- Learning Agility: Defines the ability to learn from new experience that is assessed and developed in Session 2.
- Leadership Derailers: Draws on Hogan research on behaviours that emerge under pressure to identify personal risks in Session 2.
- 70-20-10 Learning Model: Structures development through experience, relationships and formal learning in the plan built in Session 5.



Intended Participants

- Managers placed in a talent pool or named as successors for senior positions.
- Functional leaders expected to take on broader enterprise responsibility within the next few years.
- Leaders returning from a first international or cross-functional assignment.
- Talent and leadership development leaders who design and sponsor high-potential programmes.

The programme serves government entities, energy and industrial companies, banking and financial services, and healthcare organisations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to distinguish potential from performance and assess their own readiness for a senior role.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate their learning agility and identify behaviours that would accelerate it.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose personal derailment risks and design safeguards against them.
4. Participants will be able to analyse issues from an enterprise rather than a functional perspective.
5. Participants will be able to construct a sponsorship and network map that supports their development.
6. Participants will be able to justify an accelerated development plan built on stretch assignments.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Potential, Performance and High-Potential Leader Development

What does potential mean, and how ready is the participant for a senior role?

- Potential Versus Performance Indicators
- Nine-Box Grid Placement and Talent Review Practice
- Senior Role Requirements and Readiness Gaps
- Personal Values, Motivation and Career Aspirations
- Feedback Gathering From Managers and Peers

Day 2: Learning Agility and Derailment Risks

How quickly does the participant learn from new experience, and what could undermine success?

- Learning Agility Dimensions and Self-Assessment
- Reflection and Feedback Habits That Accelerate Learning
- Leadership Derailers Under Pressure
- Overused Strengths and Blind Spots
- Resilience and Personal Energy Management



Day 3: From Functional Expert to Enterprise Leader

How does the participant think and decide beyond their own function?

- Enterprise Value Chain and Cross-Functional Trade-Offs
- Strategic Thinking and Scenario Questions
- Commercial and Financial Literacy for Future Executives
- Executive Presence and Concise Communication
- Influencing Without Formal Authority

Day 4: Sponsorship, Networks and Stretch Experience

Who supports the participant's growth, and which experiences build readiness fastest?

- Sponsors, Mentors and Coaches: Distinct Roles
- Stakeholder Network Mapping and Visibility
- Stretch Assignment Design and Risk Balance
- 70-20-10 Model in Practice
- Talent Conversations With Line Managers and HR

Day 5: Applying High-Potential Leader Development

How are readiness, agility, perspective and sponsorship combined into one plan?

- Readiness Gap Summary for the Participant
- Derailer Safeguards and Learning Habits
- Stretch Assignments and Sponsor Actions
- Peer Challenge of Development Plans
- Accelerated Development Plan Presentation

Methodology

The programme is built around structured exercises and peer review. Participants analyse career cases of leaders who progressed and leaders who derailed in public and commercial organisations, complete self-assessments, and test their plans with peers acting as a talent review panel before applying each tool to their own development.

- Suggested activity: Placing anonymised profiles on a nine-box grid and debating potential.
- Suggested activity: Analysing a case of a promising leader who derailed after promotion.
- Suggested activity: Designing a stretch assignment for a peer and testing its risks.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes an accelerated development plan for the next senior role. It contains a readiness gap summary, learning agility priorities, derailment safeguards, two or three stretch assignments, a sponsor and network map and review milestones, ready to agree with the line manager, sponsor or talent review panel.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is high-potential leader development suitable for managers not yet in a formal talent pool?

Yes. It suits managers who aim for senior roles as well as those already named as successors. It assumes management experience but no prior leadership assessment.

Which models underpin high-potential leader development in this programme?

It draws on the nine-box grid, learning agility, research on leadership derailers and the 70-20-10 learning model.

How is the high-potential leader development plan used at work?

You take back a plan to agree with your sponsor or talent panel and to track through stretch assignments and review milestones.

How does high-potential leader development differ from succession planning programmes?

It develops the individual successor, while succession planning programmes equip HR and executives to design the organisation's succession system.