



## Performance Architecture and Leadership Competency Development: A Critical Crossroads for Business Success and Sustainability

**Diane Foster and Anne Griswold**

- *Want to know how to find a pro-active approach to move your leadership development efforts?*
- *Are you a full strategic partner in your organization in building the Performance Architecture required for managing change and staying globally competitive?*

Over the years, there has been a huge well of literature and work done on how to insure the leadership in organizations required to produce high productivity and positive work cultures.

Obviously, there are no easy answers. However, as two senior coach/consultants working on this all over the USA, and globally, we have some conclusions that we believe are critical to leadership and business success in 2017 and beyond. We want to frame what we've learned as a critical crossroads for business of "Performance Architecture and Leadership Competency Development."

Our views are based in our training in organization and career development and as leadership development professionals, working with leaders in organizations of every type and size, (from 5 in a non-profit to thousands in high tech to > 25,000 employees in a global pharmaceutical). They are also grounded in current research from institutions and other professionals.

We would like to share the details of a method, structure and processes of what we have seen work successfully: the Why, What, How, and Who of the solutions we've seen as valuable.

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<sup>1</sup> We define Performance Architecture as the art and science of improving performance in the workplace through real world techniques – strategies that build and support a sustainable workplace, culture and output.

## WHY NOW?

We believe that the current global economy and changing work environments demand more from leadership than ever before, and therefore deserve more best practice support.

We see many colleagues, clients and organizations struggling to build truly strategic performance in organizations for a lack of solid business leverage for performance and development issues, and sustainable bottom line results

Let's begin by looking at operating assumptions that business typically holds today; and the issues that can sabotage both performance objectives and building sustainable work cultures:

- **Talent is key to organizational functioning, success and sustainability. Gaining the "right" people and "best and brightest" is important. Issue:** Too many times there is a mismatch with the leadership competencies required for building performance and taking the organization forward in the future. First focus remains on bringing in technical and organizational skills, but this is only ½ of the equation required, the other ½ of the equation includes strategic and relational skills.
- **Development is often a reactive not proactive aspect of business. Issue:** Reactive developing is not strategic as the need for development seems too great and development time too long, and expensive. We know that real development can take years. It needs to start with a plan and as soon as possible. In today's marketplace, leadership development is a requirement for retaining high potentials. True development also requires leadership accountability and responsibility, and this means having development thought through strategically.
- **Development is often thought of as a subset of Human Resources or Talent Management. Issue:** Development has the greatest impact when it's a part of the culture-building that begins with the overall business strategy put together by the highest levels of leadership in the organization and matched as carefully as possible to the Vision/Mission/Goals and key initiatives of the business. It is generally an HR responsibility but driven by the Executive Team.
- **Development is often seen as an expense not an investment Issue:** Leadership needs to understand that they can't build resilience and sustainability in today's dynamic market place without getting to the strategic level on how critical investing in their culture and future is. Quote: "If you think training and development is expensive, try ignorance."
- **Development is often executed as programmatic/training Issue:** As behavior scientists who have done both training and coaching, we know that development is not going to happen without the buy-in of the individual being developed and a link to the specific problems/issues they are trying to solve. It takes skill-building activities that can be worked on and learned from in "real-time," and processed by the leader in the workplace. It needs to be approached with sophistication by employing adult learning theory, and from multiple learning channels. Generally these critical lessons can't be learned in one passing "Instruction." Real development for making an impact on organization performance doesn't occur without multiple experiences and applications. This is why coaching works better than training, and together they get lasting results.

- **Business does not see its job/responsibility as needing to develop people. Organizations expect the talent/employees they hire to have the competencies for leading and collaborating with others to have come from education and life. Issues:**
  - Millennial and particularly new graduates are expecting their development to come from the organization. High Potentials will go to the organization that can produce new opportunities and learning for them.
  - Business has few screens for "fit" and discerning what assumptions and leadership skills the hires have received in their previous positions and work cultures. They draw their employees from very different learning institutions with sometimes very different multicultural norms and standards.
  
- **Business expects/ assumes because of technical expertise and education and experience, talent will know how to do the other often unarticulated skills expected for the job, including managing and leading others. Issue:** Increasingly our educational systems are geared to produce functional, technical expertise. The cost of getting degrees in these functional arenas in today's educational system frequently doesn't leave resources for the broader educational base which many leaders enjoyed themselves in times past -- a humanities or even business degree as well. There are different competencies required in this global market place, with more to learn than ever before. Yet, there is poor support for education, and less ability to focus on deeper thinking.
  
- **Business has relied on "Personnel" or "Human Resources" for "fixing people problems." Issue:** This is a particular challenge for smaller organizations that don't have staff to keep up with the number and kind of issues that come up in our increasingly complex global economy. They are frequently ill-equipped to deal with needs for leadership development, coaching, and as well as all other aspects of talent management. Hiring, compensation, and labor issues take precedence.
  
- **Business has always expected any new hire to stay and grow with the organization. Issue:** This is not a current model. Currently the trend is for employees to move to a new organization whenever they see a better opportunity, especially for more development which currently is slightly ahead if not equal to better pay.
  
- **Business pace has accelerated and this touches every aspect of the organization. Issue:** We don't have "time" to develop people. Business works on doing it over rather than doing it right. The adage: "go slow to go fast," applies relative to Development. Changing and improving leadership behaviors always take time.
  
- **Business assumes that development is "solo" focus for leaders one at a time. Issue:** The best development creates an environment where everyone can learn from others at every level, every day. This informs the solution that incorporates peer accountability. It is also why the concepts of building "Learning Organizations," and "Coaching Cultures" have achieved great popularity and success.

**If these incorrect assumptions create challenging issues, then what's the solution?**

## WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN:

We believe the answers to addressing the Issues listed above can be found by focusing on the following:

1. **Creating a Business Strategy for Development of Leadership/Talent.** Of course, this starts at the top. The strategy needs to be developed/built around the vision, mission and goals of the business including the culture that is desired for this to flourish. This strategy should include the core leadership competencies for that organization that have been identified as expected/needed for current initiatives, as well as for future growth.
2. **Accepting practices that align with the fact that talented potential business leaders already have a deep-seated love of learning and growing.** The concept of a "learning organization" that holds this as standard, and rewards this type of initiative has proven successful. It delivers multiple learning opportunities, based again on the leadership competency model or risks losing the "best and brightest" leader candidates, especially the millennial, who expects this support
3. **Building work cultures of high trust and transparency across the whole of the organization, where each leader has the capability to build the team capacity. Each leader in each business unit is operating off of the same competency definition and picture of that behavior, and in modeling this, reinforcing the capability of their team-members and peers to keep all employees and stakeholders happy, motivated and productive.** The elevation of this concept of leadership and having a plan to support it is key. Top leaders need to understand that the subordinates and clients are the ones that fully understand the dynamics of what gets in the way of productive work cultures and bottom-line performance against goals. Leaders that are capable of staying in inquiry and initiating dialogue with their teams are keys to the organization's success.
4. **When Leadership Competency Development meets Performance Architecture well it requires holding a strategic "systems view" - one that touches every facet of talent management that any leader will experience.** Insuring consistency of language and concept with these facets: hiring, (including position-description writing, recruiting, interviewing and on-boarding); performance management; leadership development; succession-planning; and career development is critical. **Each leader and each business unit contributes to increasing the leverage of this performance architecture because they are working from the same model or design from the start. The consistency of this shared understanding about the concepts and desired end-result of building leadership competency in this organization reinforces a higher level of collaboration and a more positive workplace culture for productivity.**

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<sup>1</sup> For further information go to: <https://diane-foster.com/systems-approach/>

## HOW TO GET THERE?

Research shows that people don't produce because an organization says they should. They produce for other people—who they can trust, collaborate with, understand, easily communicate with, find solutions with, find accountable, and admire. They don't produce by being "managed" as part of a process, but they will produce for "leaders" who they respect and trust and who grow their capacity to find new solutions, better results, improved stakeholder relations. Ultimately they want to better themselves as people and become better leaders.

## The Cross-Roads To Organization Success Driven by Systemic Leadership Development



**So, the answer to the culture and the kind of productivity we see needed is found in PEOPLE - in the Leader/Manager-Employee Relationship, and consistent clarity of the PEOPLE INSURING THE STRATEGY THROUGH GREAT PROCESS TO GET THE GREAT RESULTS**

These great relationships don't just happen automatically. Insuring it is a focus is the catalyst for the whole system to work. Building great relationships means Leaders need to grow in their own leadership competencies: to do individual development, team development, communicate and listen, build trust, demonstrate managing for results, good planning, great strategy, build collaboration all around - and on it goes.<sup>1</sup> But for building high performance architecture and a positive sustainable, culture, leadership competency needs to evolve and be cascaded down through the whole organization.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Competency Model below or review it at [www.diane-foster.com/skill-kit-for-leaders/](http://www.diane-foster.com/skill-kit-for-leaders/)

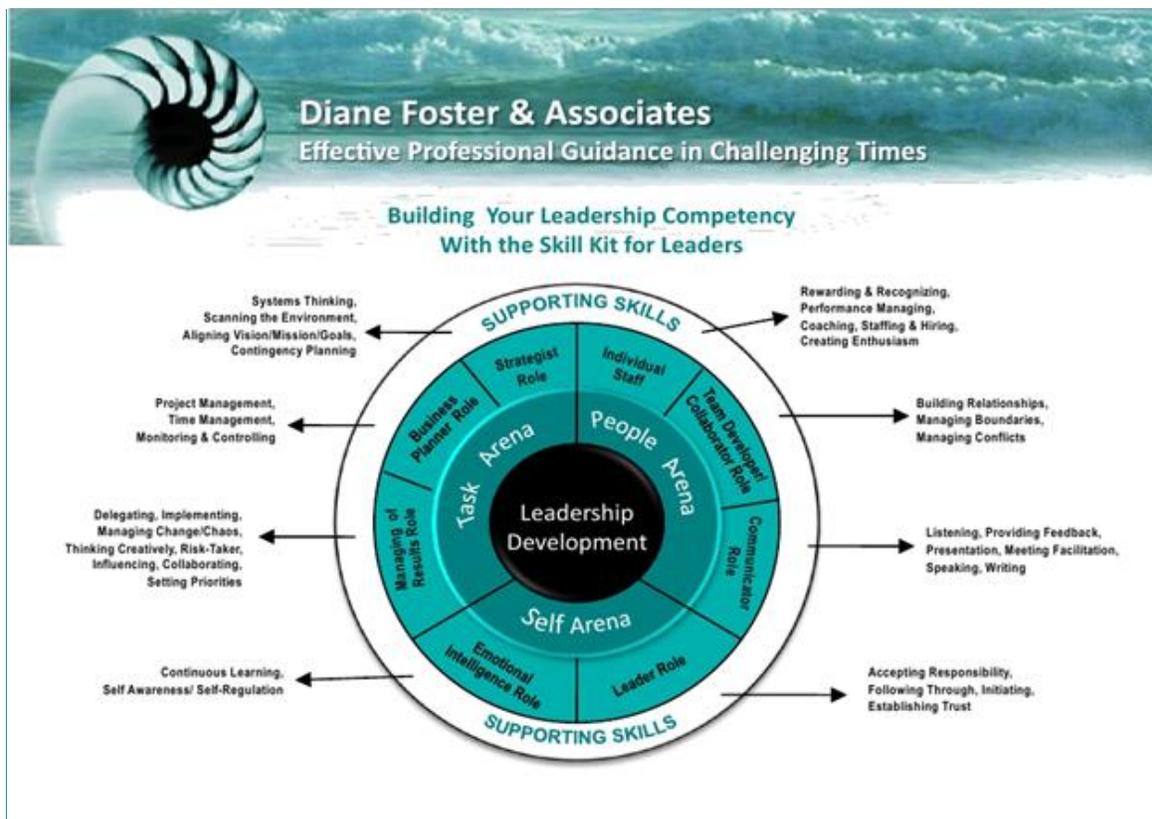
## WHAT IS ACTUALLY MEANT BY "LEADER COMPETENCY?"

The dictionary defines competency as "having suitable skill, knowledge, and experience for some purpose; properly qualified." See our competency model below. It is based on the Harvard Leadership Studies below.

Where do leaders learn these competencies in an organization?

- First, we suggest they need to learn the behaviors and skills that their organization deems critical to success. This is where the leadership competency model is critical.
- The leaders may have many of these skills/competencies, but for new ones they need new mental models or "real-time" examples of what these behaviors look like.
- Validated behavioral skills against which to measure their own improvement, and a common language with which to discuss these is helpful.
- A clear definition that is agreed upon by the organization gives them a standard, a language, and a mental picture, especially when it is used widely across the whole organization.
- Wide use of the descriptors for these leadership competencies by use in all aspects of Talent Management, as mentioned above, leads to greater ease in measuring these.
- And, what gets measured gets more deeply embedded, producing the behaviors for continued growth and improved alignment.

## Our Program Develops 42 Leadership Competencies ([www.diane-foster.com/skill-kit-for-leaders/](http://www.diane-foster.com/skill-kit-for-leaders/))



<sup>1</sup> Diane Foster has achieved success with customized versions of this process in organizations in many different industries, government and non-profits with her Skill Kit for Leaders program. Anne Griswold has used it successfully in 4 different Fortune 100 organizations.

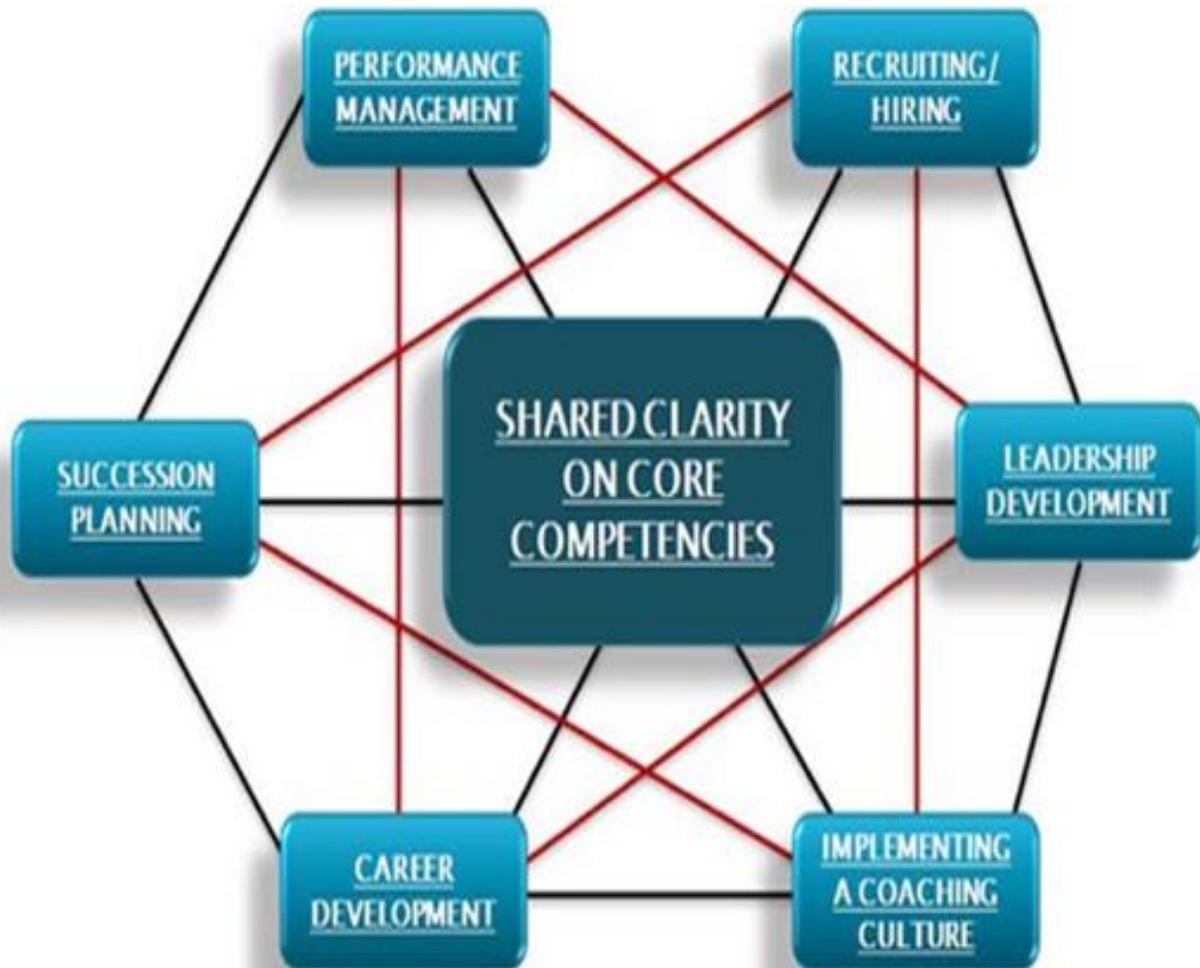
We know that organizations can achieve success at this critical "Cross-Roads of Leadership Competency Development and Performance Architecture," because as coach/consultants we have been privileged to help them implement programs that are successful with the model discussed above.

Here is our own proven process for what we know works :

1. **A "Competency Modeling" Session for the Executive Team for agreement on critical organizational and leadership competencies to support the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the organization.** The team needs valid behavioral definitions of each chosen competency. Included is an articulated vision of use of these competencies with a consistency of approach across the organization (a vision of the "Performance Architecture/Use of the Competency Model.)
2. **Assessments of Needs:**
  - Professional Confidential Needs-Analysis on organizational culture conducted by an OD professional
  - Implementation of 360 Leadership Assessments that are customized to the Leadership Competency Model
3. **Getting buy-in** to the process and program by all stakeholders at all levels: (Labor, HR, Cross-Functions; Board)
4. **Great communication from top** leadership that mandates alignment of use of leadership competency development program - for each piece of Talent Management/Performance Architecture: Hiring; Performance Management; Leadership Development; Succession Planning; Career Development.
5. **Access to Multiple Delivery formats:**
  - Training for Leaders as Coaches in their roles
  - HR representatives as coaches
  - Team Coaching by leaders and/or HR on leadership competency development
  - Individual Coaching on their Leadership Competency-Based Development plans
  - Special Trainings focused on specific competencies
  - Coachable Moments (Noel Tichey)
  - Peer accountability
6. **Multiple Measurement Tools:** Self-Evaluations; 360's; Performance Reviews, assessments and models for further understanding and development (self-awareness).
7. **Constructive Feedback loops established:** Making it a standard to announce progress to the whole organization, with 1:1 meetings, team meetings, whole staff meetings, and whole organization meetings.
8. **Celebrations/Acknowledgements/Recognition:** Find milestones and moments and even big events for announcing goal achievements.

We know this isn't easy and it takes time, great focus, and a commitment to a Performance Architecture but the effort and journey will lead to overall business success. We know, because we've seen it work! We hope to see you on the path!

## The Architectural Structure for Creating High Performance with Leadership Competencies



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## **Diane Foster, M.A. Career Development, Certified Master Coach**



Diane Foster has provided organizational coaching and consultation on leadership and change for over 30 years to hundreds of leaders in every industry. A career development specialist and assessment expert, she has an international reputation for achieving lasting results with her clients on the triple bottom line: people/planet/profitability. Her strong background in organization development, adult learning and psychology, has enabled her success with business leaders from around the globe. She supports her clients to align development issues with strategic business goals, and thereby maximize individual satisfaction and business results. Schooled in neuroscience research, and positive psychology she has a fundamental deep belief in the power of human potential and enjoys supporting her clients in finding and realizing theirs.

Her broad experience includes being adjunct faculty in OD, Leadership, Assessment, and Coaching at such institutions as University of San Francisco, John F. Kennedy University, the College of Executive Coaching and the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland's Coaching Certificate Program.

## **Anne Griswold, MA Organizational Leadership, Senior Consultant**



Anne Griswold is a coach, mentor, consultant, facilitator, designer and adjunct faculty in the fields of organizational development, leadership and learning. At its core, Anne's work is to "create environments where people can be awake" moving them from everyday habitual responses to mindful, conscious behavior which assures greater influence impact and personal joy.

With more than 25 years of experience in developing leaders at every level of organization and across multiple industries, Anne has worked with hundreds of executives to implement change using initiatives which range from 1:1 coaching/mentoring and team initiatives, to change management, organizational development, design & facilitation of corporate-wide programs and processes.

Anne has held many roles over the years being both an internal executive, a sole proprietor of her own consulting firm as well as an adjunct professor in a variety of Universities. She has also held many positions on volunteer boards. She is a master facilitator certified in many assessment tools and specializing in the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI).

Anne has earned a B.A. in Communications from the University of Maine and an M.S. in Management Science/Organizational Development from the Antioch New England Graduate School, and a Masters of Arts in Organizational Leadership through the Graduate Institute.