The Six Core Elements of Early Talent Development Programs

Mission & Measurement	Support & Operations	Talent Profile	Learning & Development	Community	Brand & Reputation
Strategy	*Tactics*	*Product*	*Path*	*Stakeholders*	*Image*
• What is the point of the program? • How will you know if it's working?	• What does the program look like? • How will it work? • What are the inputs?	• Who do we need? • How do we get them? • Where do they go afterwards?	• How will the program develop the participants? • What is the experience?	• Who will this program serve? • Who will serve the program?	• What does the program stand for? • How is that communicated?

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Mission & Measurement

What is the point of the program?

How will you know if it's working?

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Program Objectives
- Why does the program exist?
- Value v. alternatives (e.g. build v. buy, direct early talent hires...)

Number of Participants - match with workforce plan

Expectations
- With each stakeholder group
- Timelines

Evaluation/ROI
- Metrics/KPI's
- Timelines
- Demonstrating progress towards goals
- Demonstrating overall value
- How might measurement change over time?

Connection with Overall Talent Management Strategy
- Workforce development plan
- Business needs

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Mission & Measurement - Maturity Phases

Conceptual

- Need clarified and program purpose defined
- Creating a program is justified (versus alternatives)
- Aspirational goals defined
- Expectations drafted for both participants and stakeholders
- Value of program defined and clear to at least a single executive stakeholder

Foundational

- At least invested/Committed executive sponsor
- Expectations have been communicated to participants and stakeholders
- Graduates understand the career pathways post-graduation
- Active monitoring of metrics towards goals
- Participants are "engaged"
- Program success stories and anecdotes generated – but largely without data proof
- Some connection between program size and business needs
- Participants are being placed in assignments satisfactorily, if not optimally (move to learning and development)

Developing

- Program success narratives supported by at some data
- Metrics being measured and leading to adjustments
- Community has strong awareness of expectations
- Comparisons being made between program graduate performance and non-program ee's
- One or more executive sponsors invested and participating in program. Taking an interest in the program's present and future.
- Community delivering feedback on program that is being considered and acted upon
- Scope to evaluate program and make improvements (as opposed to being consumed with just keeping the program operational)
- "Right sizing" model established for calibrating program size to business needs

Mature

- Structured involvement and expectations of multiple senior leaders
- Program not dependent on the support of a single sponsor; more ingrained in the corporate culture
- Program can survive significant disruptive change
- Performance reliably demonstrated with data
- Multiple pipelines serving workforce development plan (to Talent Profile?)
- Program tied tightly to business strategy and accelerating achievement of goals
- Developmental impact of program extending beyond just participants (assignment managers, mentors, etc.)

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Support & Operations
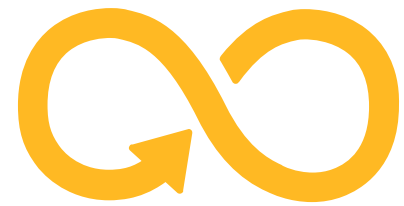
What does the program look like?

How will it work?

What are the inputs?

Staffing
- Sponsors
- Assignment managers
- Program managers
- Other staff support
  - Recruiters
  - Administrators
  - SME's

Program Structure
- Length of program/rotations
- Number of rotations
- Geography

Funding & Decision-making
- Source (central v. business v. hybrid)
- Amounts

Compensation & Rewards
- Strategy (performance in assignment v. program overall)
- Management (elements, fixed v. variable, evaluation, etc.)
- Geographic implications

Operations
- SOP's
- Communication plan
- Tools and tech (e.g. HRIS)

Support & Operations - Maturity Phases

Conceptual

- Resources scoped
- Research conducted on other programs
- Structure of program determined
- Decision made on existence of advisory board and scope of role
- Priority of processes is defined (even though processes not necessarily established)

Foundational

- At least minimum resources allocated
- Someone is clearly responsible for running the program
- Program is operating, but results prioritized over procedure. "Get it done" orientation
- Little is formally documented; sometimes leading to rework.
- Advisory board exists but role informal and not cemented

Developing

- Advisory board members may be filling in administrative/operational gaps to help the program
- Program staff expanding based on needs of program
- Additional specialized staff: SME, administrative support, etc.
- Many standard operating procedures have been established and are demonstrably working well
- Possible expansion of program to other geographies or pipeline needs (e.g. diversity)

Mature

- Fully formed steering committee/advisory board that is advising and supporting the program
- Program staff levels properly calibrated based on desired staffing ratios
- Clearly defined and accepted responsibility, authority and accountability among staff
- Standard operating procedures well-documented an running smoothly
- Process created to accommodate change.
- Repeatable processes established that can scale

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Talent Profile

Who do we need?

How do we get them?

Where do they go afterwards?

Candidate Definition
- Competency definition (from existing high performers? Anticipated business needs? Another outside source?)
- Candidate characteristics (hire with..., strong potential for..., diversity)
- Participant profiles (incoming, in-program, graduate)

Competency Development Planning
- Developmental milestones at phases
- Baselining each candidate
- Tracking progress (acceleration plans, PIP's, removal process)

**Candidate Sourcing & Selection**
- School strategy (selection, marketing, non-school candidates?)
- Interview & Selection Process (format, decision-making, initial rotation matching)
- Recruitment resourcing (staff models, budgeting)

Onboarding & Orientation Process
- Retention from Hire to Start
- Relocation Management
- Onboarding Programming

Post-Program Placement
- Where do graduates go? Definition of destinations
- How do they get there? Definition of career pathways
- How do they find these roles? Placement process

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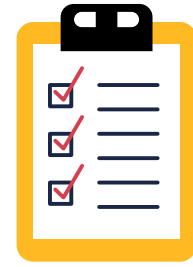
Talent Profile - Maturity Phases

Conceptual

- Talent/skill gaps identified
- Aspirational career paths drafted
- Off-program jobs considered
- Pre-fabricated skill paths existing/bought (e.g. Degreed.org, etc.)
- Talent strategy drafted with executive sponsor
- Examination of market data to generate ideas/benchmark against similar programs
- Candidate profile defined

Foundational

- No formal workforce planning model built
- Minimal or no capacity planning
- Focus on today's talent needs, rather than those that are forecast
- Darwinian placement: "Push v. Pull" of talent into assignments and off-program roles
- Placement based on 1:1 relationships, not process-oriented
- Casting wide net to test talent sources/campuses – some sources based on alumni network of universities
- Definition/experimental phase of talent definition and selection. Some documentation attempted

Developing

- Relying on metrics (such as retention) to make decisions about sourcing
- Able to react and course correct to business changes
- Guided by "guestimates" of leadership more than formulaic plans
- Alumni serving as examples of career paths and destination roles
- Based on basic career trajectories (e.g. competency models)
- Basic talent profile definition and placement processes identified
- Post-program placement trends and patterns identified
- Talent profile getting some validation by high-performing or high-potential alumni post-program
- Alumni serving as assignment leaders/mentors/leaders of future talent

Mature

- Hiring teams pulling talent from program (versus the program pushing it out)
- Based on workforce development plans and pivotal roles for business
- Career pathways plotted
- Well-defined competencies/critical skills for pivotal roles
- Clear, proactive forecasts tied to business strategies and emerging skills for the industry/company
- Placement process formalized, perhaps career fairs and other institutionalized mechanisms to facilitate placement
- Targeted talent reviews
- Talent profile built from high performing alumni proofpoints, targeting attributes unique to those roles

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Talent Profile - Maturity Phases (cont.)

| Conceptual	Foundational	Developing	Mature
--	• Additional benchmarking, perhaps against internal programs • Selection process is broad – recruiting a pool of "good talent" as opposed to for specific roles and needs • Candidate profile defined and being used in sourcing	• Talent pipelines becoming more defined and formalized (but perhaps not yet diverse) • Initial, informal assessment of what is or isn't successful • Candidate profile generally validated as appropriate and working successfully	• Candidate profile evaluated regularly and iterated as needed • Clear destination roles based upon past practice • Program leaders are a trusted partner in talent reviews – thumb on pulse for emerging roles and skills • Alumni are in leader roles & pulling talent • Established and diverse pipelines of talent • Program may serve as benchmark and/or resource – internally and externally • Using data insights to inform future strategy (e.g. attrition, performance data, HiPos, succession planning) • Selection – documented competencies, interview questions when reviewing talent; focus on more definitive roles for business

Learning & Development
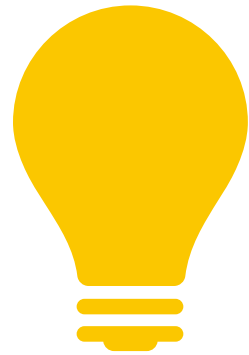
How will the program develop the participants?

What is the experience?

Developmental Objectives Connected to Career Pathways (e.g. skills, competencies)

Proper Mix of Elements (classroom, self-directed, experiential)

Onboarding Content (acculturation, foundational training)

Curriculum
- Content and alignment with objectives
- Content delivery methods
- Participant evaluation

Critical Experiences
- Should you include them?
- Definition and match with competency model
- Sourcing

Assignments/Rotations
- Definition of appropriate assignments (fit for participant, fit for program objectives)
- Assignment identification, selection & matching
- Assignment manager definition, identification, training, evaluation
- Participant performance evaluation (performance standards, PIP, process for change/removal from rotation)
- "Tracks" within the program?

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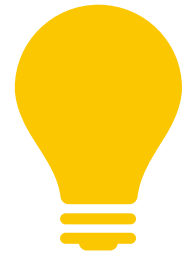
Learning & Development - Maturity Phases

Conceptual

- Competency and skill requirements defined and loosely tied to career pathways and program objectives
- "Out of the box" training objective defined. Perhaps only generally tied to business objectives (e.g. Excel training)
- Internships relied upon as primary on-boarding tool.
- Rotation selection process unstructured – no mechanism to facilitate
- No consistency of experience in training

Foundational

- On-the-job training and experiential learning tied to immediate business need.
- Program managers "selling" the concept of hosting a participant, rather than managers requesting a participant
- Most participants moving into assignments of value to participant and organization – even if not a tight fit for that participant's developmental needs
- Consistency in training experience established
- Proper mix of developmental elements solidifying and being formalized
- Success of developmental programming is largely anecdotal

Developing

- Participants routinely matched in assignment specifically aligned with developmental needs
- Assignment managers routinely pulling participants into rotations
- Some level of selectivity with rotations and assignment managers
- Training exists for assignment managers
- Rotations are being evaluated for fit with program based on metrics– some may be turned down for lack of fit
- There is a defined process for handling under-performance
- Mix of training elements being evaluated with data, and adaptations being made to course correct as needed
- Development is regularly evaluated with metrics and corrective action is taken when appropriate

Mature

- High level of confidence that participant assignment will be a tight match for developmental needs
- Metrics used to prove that developmental objectives are being met
- Process created for generating assignments
- Program has a mechanism for boosting under-performance, and removing underperformers that has been used to effect
- Managers factoring hosting participants into their planning
- Tracks may be added to or removed from the program with minimal disruption
- Development of proprietary or customized LMS or skill development tool
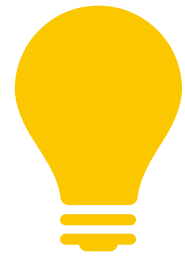
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Learning & Development - Maturity Phases (cont.)

Conceptual	Foundational	Developing	Mature
• Proper mix of developmental elements not yet determined	--	--	• Development tied to longer term emerging business needs • Learning & Development experience integrated with overall talent management plan of the organization • Process in place and can adapt with minimal disruption • Abundance of assignment managers willing to host. Program managers choose instead of beg

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Community

Who will this program serve?

Who will serve the program?

Sense of Community within Program
- Definition of stakeholders
- Ways to make connections between stakeholders

Mentoring
- Defining objectives
- Identification
- Matching process (assigning v. self-selection)
- Accountability and expectations
- Tracking outcomes

Alumni Relations
- Alumni support of program (recruiting, mentoring, hosting rotations, advocacy)
- Program support of alumni (coaching/development, succession planning advocacy)
- Defining limits of accountability in both directions

Leaders/Sponsors Role & Perception of Community

Extra-Curriculars
- Committee work
- Special projects
- Service

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Community - Maturity Phases

Conceptual

- Few, if any alumni, and little concern/resources for supporting an alumni network
- Initial mentoring structure created. Little definition around mentor characteristics.
- Little definition around impact of mentoring on specific elements of competency model
- Little sense of community among program participants and supporting employees
- Leaders/sponsors feeling ownership of program "on-paper" only

Foundational

- No formal alumni network, but informal connections between them that may be feeding value into the program/organization
- Alumni feel like "upper classmen" and may serve in a "utility" capacity to fill operational gaps as needed.
- Mentors are passionate volunteers, selected more for their willingness to serve than for specific characteristics
- Program managers relying on assignment managers to help identify and recruit mentors
- A formal mentor matching process may exist, but often supplemented with ad hoc tactics to keep things together
- Mentoring happening somewhat reliably, but quality not being formally assessed.

Developing

- A mechanism exists for recruiting alumni to serve as assignment leaders/mentors/leaders of future talent
- Significant participation by alumni in these roles
- Alumni feel strong connection to program and there are set ways that alumni can engage (recruiting, selection, mentoring, coaching, etc.). But no formalized and managed alumni network.
- Mentors selected by a defined process, and are trained on expectations, accountability and topics
- Mentoring ingrained into culture of program and quality being evaluated. May still be a sense of "hit or miss" with mentoring

Mature

- Formalized alumni network exists specifying alumni involvement in the operation of the program. Alumni may lead specific initiatives
- Alumni are in leader roles & pulling talent
- Assignment leaders and other managers hiring repeatedly from the program
- Mentors are program alumni.
- Mentoring is matched to specific needs of a participant. Outcomes are evaluated with data.
- Nearly all participants identify mentoring as critically valuable part of program
- Leader/Sponsor of program may have gone through the program him/herself. May feel an emotional connection to the program

Community - Maturity Phases (cont.)

Conceptual	Foundational	Developing	Mature
--	• Leader/Sponsor providing direct support of program as guest speaker, hosting meetings, etc.	• Leader/sponsor feeling strong sense of ownership of program leading to more than just sporadic "guest speaking" commitments • Participants serve on committees providing support to the program • Participants being tapped by leaders to tackle extra-curricular projects of special importance to the organization	• Leaders/Sponsors/Program managers may take an active role in promoting program graduates in succession planning conversations. • Sponsor considering program contributions in strategic workforce planning • Committee work assignments calibrated to specific development needs of participant.

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Brand & Reputation

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What does the program stand for?

How is that communicated?

Crafting a Brand
- What does the program stand for? (near-term, aspirational)
- Internal impact (stakeholders, non-stakeholder employees)
- External impact (recruits, career services, diversity pipelines)

Measurement of Impact
- Metrics for assessing reputation
- Brand perceived as desired?

Communication
- Identifying spokespeople
- Uniting around a vision
- Recruitment (selling points, alignment with candidate goals)
- Social media presence

Managing Perceptions
- Leveraging successes
- Mitigating image and communication failures
- Capturing feedback and iterating
- Defining level of transparency

Perceived Alignment Between Brand and Program Mission

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Brand & Reputation - Maturity Phases

Conceptual

- Vision of program present and desired future articulated
- Vison not yet communicated coherently to internal stakeholder or candidate pipelines
- Beginning to consider how to track and measure reputation
- Nascent planning on creating a distinct message about recruiting for the program – as distinct from direct campus recruits

Foundational

- Little focus on developing campus brand and relationships. Focus on tactics.
- Awareness of program may be limited to only those stakeholder directly participating
- Beginning to collect data – mostly anecdotal – on initial measures identified to track reputation/brand identity
- Social media is used, but more an advertisement than a clearly defined experience for reader.
- Serious threats to reputation may be fatal to program

Developing

- Reliable data is captured and used in examining how the program is performing in relation to the general population
- Program alumni being leveraged as campus brand ambassadors.
- Brand actively managed through communication campaigns, even if informal
- Strong relationships on campuses or other sources of talent. Sources understand what the program stands for
- Reliable applicant flow on campus
- Reliable flow of assignment managers and mentors
- Strong social media presence, but perhaps not to all stakeholders (i.e. specific to recruits, or participants, etc.)

Mature

- Formal documentation used to communicate to stakeholders who you are and what the programs stand for
- Historical data routinely captured and used to validate program reputation and successes.
- Threats to reputation are addressed. Setbacks can be corrected
- Large percentage of the general population are aware of the program and can speak about it favorably
- Program has high ranking business partners as brand ambassadors.
- Career services pulling program, instead of needing to be sold.

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Brand & Reputation - Maturity Phases (cont.)

Conceptual	Foundational	Developing	Mature
--	--	• Stakeholders agree on what the program stands for • Program awareness extends beyond just those directly involved	• High flow of internal stakeholders wanting to get involved. Program can be selective • Strong/Impactful social media presence – tied to program experience and speaking to multiple types of stakeholders • High applicant flow and strong alignment between needs and type of candidate interest. Verifiable with data

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