Leadership Development Quick Audit with Practical Insights

Change Partners OÜ

BASED ON:
The Leadership Pipeline Institute transition framework

Your leadership development snapshot

With this quick audit you can review where your current leadership development activities and practices are in leadership maturity, based on Leadership Pipeline Institute's framework and thinking. Answer the following 6 questions and note down your response.

Question 1: Who is accountable for employee development in your organization?

A) Human recourses
B) Managers
C) Employees
D) Other

Question 2: Does your organization measure leadership performance?

A) Yes, every year
B) Yes, every second year
C) No

Question 3: Does your organization have clearly defined and distinctive leadership expectations each management level (frontline, middle, top management)?

A) Yes
B) For some managers
C) No

Question 4: Frontline managers often struggle to delegate and continue doing tasks themselves instead of leading. Have you observed these challenges in your frontline managers?
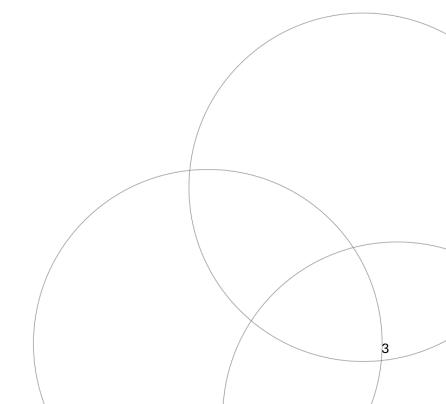
A) Yes
B) No
C) I don't know

Question 5: Middle managers often have difficulty with strategic thinking, building leadership teams, or driving change. Have you observed these challenges in your middle managers?

A) Yes
B) No
C) I don't know

Question 6: Which of the following is currently the biggest challenge in leadership development in your organization?

A) Lack of clear role expectations at each leadership level
B) Limited time or resources for development programs
C) Managers promoted without the skills to lead people
D) No consistent process for measuring leadership impact

Thank you for taking this quick audit. Read below to get an overview that reflects upon your responses and includes personalized insights and practical next steps based on the *Leadership Pipeline Institute's* (LPI) globally recognized framework for building leaders at every level.

01   Question

Who is accountable for employee development in your organization?

You answered A: Human Resources

LPI Insight

This is a common setup, but not the most effective one. When Human Resources is the primary driver of development, leadership growth often becomes disconnected from day-to-day business and accountability weakens. According to research by the Leadership Pipeline Institute, organizations that place managerial ownership at the center of development efforts report significantly stronger succession pipelines and internal promotion rates.

True leadership development must be leader-led. HR's role is to enable and support system with tools, training, and consistency.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Make people development part of your leadership performance evaluation
- Train managers in coaching, structured employee development, performance assessment
- Move from delivering development to facilitating leader-led growth

You answered B: Managers

LPI Insight

That's a positive sign — leadership development works best when managers take ownership. This aligns directly with the Leadership Pipeline framework, which emphasizes that development is a core part of a leader's job at any level, not a separate HR function.

Managers who consistently develop their people create more agile, resilient teams — and build future leaders from within. Still, many managers need structure and Leadership Job expectations to do this well.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Ensure your managers have the tools and clarity to lead development at their level
- Incorporate development metrics into performance reviews
- Support managers with feedback tools, 1:1 coaching structure, and mentoring pathways

You answered C: Employees

LPI Insight

This is a sign of a development gap. While self-driven learning is valuable, it's not a substitute for structured development tied to organizational roles and transitions. If employees are the primary drivers, leadership development may be happening unevenly or unintentionally.

Development should not be left to chance. Leaders at every level must take accountability of growing others. When development becomes self-managed only, you risk losing high-potential talent who lack support.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Clarify development responsibilities across all levels

- Make it clear that leaders are responsible for developing others, not just themselves

- Create a framework where employee initiative is supported by manager coaching

You answered D: Other

LPI Insight

If accountability lies elsewhere — such as senior leadership, external coaches, or L&D units — it may indicate unclear ownership. This can cause confusion and inconsistent leadership development results.

The most effective systems are those where accountability is shared strategically: managers own development, HR enables it, and senior leadership sets the tone and expectations.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Define a clear development accountability matrix

- Clarify who is responsible for what — and ensure all stakeholders are aligned

- Map your current state to a Leadership Pipeline framework to identify accountability gaps

02   Question

Does your organization measure leadership performance?

You answered A: Yes, every year

LPI Insight

You're on the right track. Annual leadership measurement is better than none, but once a year may not be enough to capture meaningful behavioral change — especially in times of transformation or transition. According to Leadership Pipeline principles, performance must be tied to role clarity and development readiness, not just results.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Use leadership 360° assessments and transition-focused measurement tools

- Complement yearly reviews with ongoing observation or post-program feedback loops
- Make sure measurements reflect role-specific expectations (frontline vs middle vs top)

You answered B: Yes, every 2 years

LPI Insight

Measurement every two years is often too infrequent to identify and correct leadership misalignment. Leadership is dynamic — especially during transitions between levels. Without regular data, it's hard to support development in real time.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Introduce light-touch, more frequent check-ins (e.g., pulse surveys, manager feedback)
- Link performance measurement with development planning — not just results review
- Increase visibility of what good looks like at each leadership level

You answered C: No

LPI Insight

Without measurement, leadership development is like navigating without a compass. You may have activity, but you can't be sure it's driving the right behaviors. Measuring leadership performance is a cornerstone of the Leadership Pipeline Institute methodology — especially post-program impact through surveys and tools like the Leadership Pipeline Index.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Define what successful leadership looks like at each level — based on role-specific expectations, time application, and value contribution.
- Start with foundational tools — such as self-assessments, peer feedback, or the Leadership Pipeline Index (LP Index): a 360-degree, multi-rater feedback tool designed to evaluate how well a leader performs against the specific requirements of their role, using input from managers, peers, and direct reports.
- Use measurement results to identify performance gaps, surface development opportunities, and assess alignment between leadership behavior and strategic goals.

Leadership measurement is critical for achieving measurable business outcomes. Clearly defined and differentiated performance expectations at each managerial level help ensure that leaders understand their roles, leading to more effective management and smoother transitions.

03   Question

Does your organization have clearly defined and distinctive leadership expectations each management level (frontline, middle, top management)?

You answered A: Yes

LPI Insight

Excellent. Clear and differentiated expectations are a core pillar of the Leadership Pipeline framework. When leaders understand what's expected of them at their level, they can focus, perform, and grow more effectively. Just ensure these expectations are reviewed regularly and aligned with organizational goals.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Use leadership expectations to design transition-focused development programs
- Validate understanding through coaching, feedback, or leader self-assessments
- Encourage leaders to communicate these expectations to their teams

You answered B: For some of the managers

LPI Insight

Partial clarity creates inconsistency and confusion. Leaders may default to old behaviors from previous roles (e.g., frontline leaders doing the work instead of delegating). Leadership transitions require explicit clarity — what to keep doing, stop doing, and start doing at each level.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Roll out clearly written success profiles by leadership level
- Create structured onboarding or transition plans when leaders move up
- Train HRBPs and senior leaders to coach leaders into their next-level roles

You answered C: No

LPI Insight

This is a significant red flag. When expectations aren't defined by level, leaders may underperform, duplicate efforts, or stay stuck in their old roles. According to LPI, this is one of the most common causes of failed leadership transitions.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Define expectations for each leadership level. Leadership Pipeline framework role logic (Leading Self → Leading Others → Leading Leaders → etc.)
- Use these expectations to align recruitment, promotion, and development
- Communicate expectations clearly during performance and development conversations

Clearly defined and differentiated performance expectations at each managerial level help ensure that leaders understand their roles, leading to more effective management and smoother transitions.

04   Question

Frontline managers often struggle to delegate and continue doing tasks themselves instead of leading. Have you observed these challenges in your frontline managers?

You answered A: Yes

LPI Insight

This is one of the most common signs of a failed transition from *Individual Contributor* to *Leader of Others*. In the Leadership Pipeline framework, frontline leaders must shift from doing the work themselves to leading the work — by delegating effectively, coaching team members, and building overall team capability.

When this transition doesn't occur, leaders often continue performing individual tasks, which leads to burnout, confusion, and underperformance. Most importantly, they are unable to support their teams in delivering results — because they haven't fully stepped into the leadership role.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Clearly define the expectations for frontline leaders, especially around delegation, coaching, and time application
- Introduce development programs specifically focused on the transition from individual contributor to leader — including role clarity, mindset shifts, and communication habits
- Assess time allocation regularly to ensure frontline leaders are spending time leading people, not spending the most part of the day on operational tasks themselves
- Include delegation and coaching as part of performance evaluation
- Provide practical tools and support

You answered B: No

LPI Insight

That's a positive sign. If frontline leaders are confidently delegating and developing their teams, it suggests they have successfully transitioned from doing to leading. Just ensure these practices are systematically reinforced, and not dependent on individual personality.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Keep reinforcing these behaviors through coaching and manager forums
- Celebrate role-models of great delegation and people development
- Use these leaders to mentor others who are new to their roles

You answered C: I don't know

LPI Insight

Uncertainty around frontline leadership behavior often signals a lack of visibility, feedback, or clarity in expectations. Without ways to observe how frontline leaders are leading their teams, it becomes difficult for HR and senior leaders to support them effectively.

In the Leadership Pipeline framework, frontline leaders play a critical role in delivering results, fulfilling strategy, and building strong, connected teams. When their development goes unchecked, gaps in team engagement, accountability, and execution often follow.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Establish informal feedback loops, such as check-in conversations to gain insight into daily leadership behaviors.
- Encourage open feedback from team members about how well they are being supported and developed.
- Equip frontline leaders with role clarity and tools to reflect on their own behavior

05   Question

Middle managers often have difficulty with strategic thinking, building leadership teams, or driving change. Have you observed these challenges in your middle managers?

You answered A: Yes

LPI Insight

Difficulties in strategic thinking, building leadership teams, or driving cross-functional results often reflect a poor transition from first-level management to the "Leading Leaders" role, as defined in the Leadership Pipeline framework.

Their primary responsibility should focus on:

- Building leadership capacity in their direct reports
- Translating strategic goals into operational execution plans
- Driving performance through clear expectations and leadership accountability

Without targeted development, many middle managers remain too involved in operational tasks, which limits their ability to build future leaders and align their teams with broader business strategy.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Equip middle managers to lead leaders, not just manage work
- Provide transition-focused programs, such as the *Leadership Pipeline Institute "Leading Leaders"* transition program
- Clarify what's expected at this level — especially around time application, people development, and cross-functional leadership
- Equip them with tools like leadership accountability frameworks, and decision-making protocols

Without the right development, leaders at this level often stay too operational, managing tasks instead of growing people. This leads to misalignment, underdeveloped successors, and stagnation in execution speed and innovation.

You answered B: No

LPI Insight

That's a positive sign. Your middle managers may already be working at the right leadership level — focusing on developing others and translating strategy into execution. Ensure their efforts are visible, aligned, and consistently reinforced.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Strengthen strategic alignment through regular dialogue with senior leaders
- Recognize and reinforce their leadership behaviors
- Invite them to mentor leaders who are newer in their transition journey

You answered C: I don't know

LPI Insight

Lack of visibility into how middle managers lead can reflect a gap in feedback mechanisms, role clarity, or performance monitoring. In the Leadership Pipeline model, middle managers play a pivotal role in building leadership bench strength and executing strategy. Not knowing how they're performing introduces risk.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Use structured tools like the Leadership Pipeline Index (LP Index) or other leadership 360° assessments to assess alignment
- Engage senior leaders to coach and assess how middle managers develop their teams Clarify what strategic thinking and "leading leaders" looks like in your context
- Clarify and communicate what "Leading Leaders" looks like in your organizational context

Middle managers are the "linchpin" of strategy execution, says Harvard Business Review — but they're often under-developed in their job.

06   Question

Which of the following is currently the biggest challenge in leadership development in your organization?

You answered A: Lack of clear role expectations at each leadership level

LPI Insight

This is one of the most common — and most damaging — gaps. Without role-specific expectations, leaders often continue to behave as they did in their previous roles. This leads to inefficiency, duplication, and poor development of others.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Define and communicate expectations for each leadership level
- Use success profiles or job architectures aligned with the Leadership Pipeline
- Design development programs that are transition-based, not skill-based

You answered B: Limited time or resources for development programs

LPI Insight

Development doesn't have to be over the budget — but it must be intentional and role-specific, building systematically year after year on the leadership clarity and performance. When development is low-priority, leaders aren't ready for their next step, and the organization relies too much on external hiring and not developing internal potential.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Make people development part of a manager's job — not an optional extra
- Prioritize scalable programs (e.g., internal mentoring, guided self-assessments)
- Focus on high-leverage areas like first-line leader transitions

You answered C: Managers promoted without the skills to lead people

LPI Insight

This highlights a classic problem: promotions based on past performance, not future potential. It leads to poor engagement, underperformance, and increased turnover.

Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Introduce transition-focused development before or at the point of promotion
- Provide coaching and clarity on the new leadership role
- Avoid promoting without preparation — it's better to wait than to backtrack

You answered D: No consistent process for measuring leadership impact

LPI Insight

If it's not measured, it won't improve. Without consistent measurement, it's impossible to see if your development efforts are working. Impact tracking — through post-program surveys or 360s — is essential.
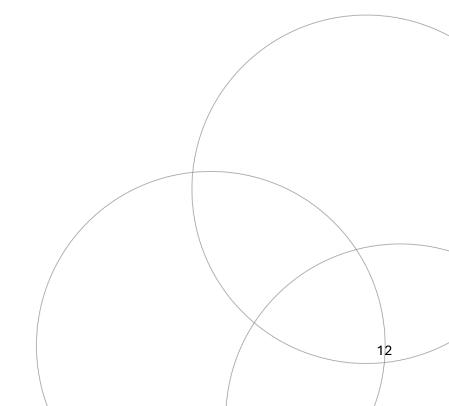
Where could your organization start to drive meaningful change?

- Build a measurement process tied to role expectations and organizational impact
- Use tools like the LP Index or internal performance indicators
- Create regular review cycles where learning is connected to business outcomes

Identifying and addressing the primary challenges in leadership development is essential for cultivating effective leaders and ensuring organizational success.

LPI insights show the importance of supporting leaders during transitions. According LPI, if leaders are not supported within the first 18 months after promotion, they often revert to previous ways of achieving success, which can hinder their effectiveness in new roles.

Gartner reports that just 29% of HR leaders believe their rising leaders can meet the organization's future needs. And 62% of HR leaders acknowledge that their leadership development approach does not effectively build critical skills and organizational capabilities.

"Since the business environment is so uncertain, businesses need more internal certainty. Every business must be certain of what it can deliver."

Stephen J. Drotter,
Chairman and co-founder of the Leadership Pipeline Institute

About Leadership Pipeline

The Leadership Pipeline is a globally proven framework that **builds strong, sustainable leadership at every leve**l. It defines clear expectations for each role and supports leaders through critical transitions in work values, skills, and time application. With tailored development and a structured approach, it **boosts performance, strengthens succession, and helps organizations grow from within**.

Change Partners is the official partner of the Leadership Pipeline Institute in the Baltic countries and Finland. The Leadership Pipeline model is based on a framework developed by Walter R. Mahler, which was later further developed by Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel. Their work laid the foundation for a model that organizations can use to build and strengthen their internal leadership culture.

The Leadership Pipeline Institute and its partners are the world's leading implementers of this framework. Our expertise covers everything from defining, assessing, selecting, and developing leadership and expert roles to building a sustainable leadership architecture.

LPI
LEADERSHIP PIPELINE INSTITUTE®

Want to explore your organization's leadership potential in more depth?

We will be happy to share how we've helped similar companies build stronger, more confident leaders at every level.

Change Partners

"We strive to make organizations more productive and more humane at the same time. By helping organizations lead better and manage the people side of change we support them in implementing their strategy, realizing the ROI and improving their employee experience."

Change Partners's mission is to improve leadership and change capability across organizations in our region. We support organizations in building leadership and change capabilities through training, coaching and advisory.

Maarika Lember
Head of LPI I Consultant
+372 5647 9925
maarika@changepartners.ee

Mati Sööt
Senior Consultant I Partner
+372 5034 800
mati@changepartners.ee