When the CEO of a global apparel company wanted to plan for the future, Pivot designed customized experiences for his top leaders, readying them for the changing world ahead.
The CEO of a $20 billion global apparel company came to Pivot asking two questions:

“Who can succeed me? Can we get entrepreneurial leaders in our organization ready for the future right now?”

The CEO had no plans to retire, but changes in the marketplace had brought succession to front of mind. His business was globalizing quickly, but his leaders weren’t: while expansion into emerging markets was projected to help raise enterprise revenue from $20 to $50 billion in the next five years, his leaders were focused primarily on the US market. Further, although the recession of 2008-2009 had tested the organization, many of its leaders had never experienced a downturn.

He asked Pivot a unique question: “If you take my top 25 people as one person, what does he or she look like? Does that person have the right leadership DNA for the future?”
The Analysis

Pivot first assessed the top 25 in the organization, combining 360° interviews with personality tests and career histories to develop an executive summary of the organization’s “composite leader.” This leader focused on results, got things done, maintained a sense of optimism, and lived the brand. However, this leader had also come of age in a period of tremendous growth; he or she was a poor developer of others’ talent, lacked strategic abilities, and was not global. The CEO immediately recognized many of his leaders in the profile.

Working closely with the CEO, Pivot developed learning experiences for these top 25 leaders that closed gaps between what the organization’s leaders had and what they needed for the future. These highly customized experiences combined individual coaching with small group problem solving. Leaders were connected to experts around the world to broaden their outlook.

Some of the leaders were analytical and others were intuitive, but the CEO wanted to know if they could learn to be both. Traditional business education is well suited to helping intuitive leaders develop analytical skills, but helping an analytic mind reach its intuitive side is harder. So, Pivot designed an array of creative experiences, where leaders interacted with world-renowned artists, architects, and research biologists to expand their thinking. Leaders also had time with the CEO to discuss their experiences in the context of the company’s growth, globalization, strengths, and challenges.

The Impact

Through Pivot’s programs, the company reached a common understanding and language regarding how to develop and assess people. Additionally, the board adjusted to a more fact-based appraisal of leader success, and the company was able to identify truly high-potential candidates. With a small pool of potential successors identified and a broader high-potential group equipped to play a strategic, enterprise-wide role, the company was poised for global growth and ready for the future.
ABOUT PIVOT

Pivot Leadership, a Korn Ferry Company, is a global strategic leadership firm that partners with leaders of the world’s most influential companies to help them lead, innovate, and adapt to volatile markets and changing industries. Our mission is to develop the best leaders for business’ front-runners, with the belief that leadership is the source of strategic advantage in today’s world.

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