Google's Project Oxygen

Google is one of the most successful companies today. It is also one of the most analytical and data-driven organizations. They rely on hard data rather than opinions. As leadership development is both science and an art, how does Google handle leadership assessment and development? How does Google identify if someone has the potential to be a great manager or leader? read further about google's project oxygen.

In 2008, an internal team of researchers started "Project Oxygen" to determine what makes a great manager at Google. https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/the-evolution-of-project-oxygen/ Through manager feedback surveys over a period of time, Project Oxygen identified eight behaviors that were predictive of managerial success as measured by turnover, satisfaction, and performance. Later they added two more behaviors to the list for a total of 10 "oxygen" behaviors and aligned their leadership training programs to develop these behaviors. Although these 10 behaviors were correlated with managerial success, in statistics correlation doesn't prove causation! Google confirmed that these 10 behaviors were indeed the cause for better managerial outcomes in two ways -

1. They confirmed that these 10 managerial behaviors preceded employee outcomes and not vice-versa

2. They confirmed through shifting of employees and managers that when an employee is working under a manager exhibiting these behaviors, her performance improves.

What are these 10 behaviors and how do we know if a leader has these qualities? As it turns out, asking just the 13 questions to the manager's direct reports does the trick! Twice a year employees rate their managers on a Likert scale in an anonymous survey . The leaders that rate high on these 13 questions have a statistically significant correlation to future performance as measured by turnover, satisfaction, and performance.

And the feedback takes about five minutes of each employee's time! Jeff Haden, the contributing editor at Inc.com wrote an article titled - Here is how Google knows in less than 5 minutes if Someone is a Great Leader" you may read it here https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/heres-how-google-knows-in-less-than-5-minutes-if-someone-is-a-great-leader.html This simple leadership assessment is very effective in determining the quality of anyone's leadership.

Here are Google's leadership evaluation questions as part of Project Oxygen.

1. My manager gives me actionable feedback that helps me improve my performance.
2. My manager does not "micromanage" (get involved in details that should be handled at other levels).
3. My manager shows consideration for me as a person.
4. The actions of my manager show that he/she values the perspective I bring to the team, even if it is different from his/her own.
5. My manager keeps the team focused on our priority results/deliverable.
6. My manager regularly shares relevant information from his/her manager and senior leaders.
7. My manager has had a meaningful discussion with me about career development in the past six months.

8. My manager communicates clear goals for our team.

9. My manager has the technical expertise (e.g., coding in Tech, selling in Global Business, accounting in Finance) required to effectively manage me.

10. I would recommend my manager to other Googlers.

11. I am satisfied with my manager's overall performance as a manager.

Then Google's employees are asked to complete two other questions.

12. What would you recommend your manager keep doing?

13. What would you have your manager change?

Although Google hires only the most technically sound employees, note that only one question (question number 9) is about the technical skills of the manager. All other questions are about the soft-skills or the behavior of the manager or leader! Even for a company like Google, that hires only the most technically sound Engineers and programmers, what matters in their managerial and leadership effectiveness is behavioral skills or emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman's research has proven that emotional intelligence quotient or EQ is much more accurate in predicting future success as compared to intelligence quotient or IQ. IQ and technical skills are like the entry ticket to a career - technical skills are needed to get in the job. However, how far a person will progress once in a job, will depend on her behavioral skills and emotional intelligence.

The equation is simple: Leadership behaviors create culture, which in turn affects employee engagement, which in turn drives business results. Link to article Leadership behavior (which creates organizational culture) is the single biggest factor impacting organizational performance.

Jack Welch (former CEO of GE) labeled organizational culture as a lasting sustainable competitive advantage. Link to quotes

Leadership development is critical for an organization to survive and thrive in ever changing business environment of today's world. Would you like to assess and develop your leaders?

- Identify and develop your high potentials?

- Develop bench strength for succession planning?

- Help leaders transition up or across through leadership development?

- Deal with "derailers" (unproductive behaviors of otherwise successful leaders that causes team conflicts and holds them back from further success)?

Every month we offer a limited number of complimentary Global Leadership Assessment (GLA360) to selective clients. The GLA360 is rooted in groundbreaking research conducted by Marshall Goldsmith (#1 Leadership Thinker and Executive Coach), involving CEOs of Fortune 100 companies, global thought leaders, and international business executives of organizations on 6 continents. The GLA360 articulates and measures the top 15 most pressing competencies for today's global leader. It shows leaders the areas they need to develop in order to succeed in a competitive business environment.

You may also download and use Google's manager feedback questionnaire which is also used in google's project oxygen- which can be used as a leadership feedback and assessment tool in your organization - from here.[re_Work] Manager Feedback Survey