bts
Strategy made personal



A new strategy needs different talent

The challenge

A global utility company with diverse, internationally distributed business units in a variety of functional areas was experiencing a shift in strategy following a major change in leadership. When the board selected a new CEO, she realized the company's existing business model was overly dependent on specific technology, which unnecessarily caused severe environmental damage. In the face of climate change, the organization wanted to become a leader in the transition to renewable energy. The new strategy aimed to shift the company's function from a traditional energy business model to a more digitized, decentralized, service organization with a zero-carbon footprint.

This radical change in direction called for significant adjustment and re-alignment in talent priorities across the globe. To grow the company and execute on the new strategic direction, the organization partnered with BTS to identify the right people who had the potential to develop into the next generation of C-suite leaders. The following challenges were linked to these goals:

- Defining what high-potential looks like at the company
- Differentiating between candidates who were ready to be developed into this new level and those who still required more time and experience
- Developing a virtual assessment experience that is realistic, contextually relevant, future-focused, and provides the same level of complexity and accuracy as an onsite assessment experience – without the burden and limitations of global travel

Assessing for fit

1. Identifying what needs to be measured

BTS conducted interviews with subject matter experts across the organization in order to understand the organizations' current state and desired future state. The goal was to identify critical moments for leaders within that future environment as well as the Great behaviors that they would need to be successful. These interviews helped to ensure that the solution was a fully customized simulation experience, representative of the global population, and aligned to the reality of participants' future roles and critical business challenges they would need to navigate.

2. Evaluating who should be assessed

BTS co-developed a survey with the organization that helped them gather data predictive of potential candidates' suitability for the program. The metrics included leadership potential, aspirations to become a senior leader, leader-readiness for the next career move, and previous successes and experience. This survey was then used to select candidates for the assessment experience.

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3. Designing an assessment that resembles the challenges of the future job

Drawing upon insights collected during interviews, BTS created a five-hour virtual experience to immerse participants in their future roles. While running the business through four simulated years, participants needed to maintain a reasonable balance between income from the existing business as well as establish a foundation for the future. After the first two years of simulated business leadership, participants engaged in three live video interactions. During these video calls, participants were challenged by a demanding boss to explain the execution of their strategy, collaborate with a peer through a difficult interdivisional situation, and then gain buy-in for their vision from the attendees of a town hall presentation.

Outcome

After the simulation, BTS delivered assessment reports to the organization that decisively differentiated between suitable and unsuitable candidates. The analysis also provides details of individual strengths and development areas based on behavioral observations.

The organization verified BTS' fidelity by testing the assessment process with talent who were sufficiently known to them, to see if the results would align. They did.

The company also put "test" participants who received favorable results from BTS' assessment reports on a challenging development fast-track. The first two dozen candidates, who were identified as future leaders, did not disappoint. The selection rate was about two-thirds. Currently, the details of the report and the contextual conversations are used as input for very specific succession planning decisions. For this program, BTS fully embraced a complex assessment challenge, creating a comprehensive solution that met the organization's needs and fulfilled promises to select the right people in service of the new strategy.



Client success

"I really appreciate the interactive aspect of this simulation and assessment. I found it very realistic. The experience, even though it took four and a half hours was not tiring but invigorating and energizing. The very detailed observation of actual leadership behaviours during the simulation are a valid way to predict capability and future performance. I also believe that this experience is a fantastic foundation for developmental feedback that will drive future development."

Deputy Executive Vice President, Human Resources, Global Energy Company

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