



HOW TO CHOOSE A **LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT STRATEGY**

A Guide to Identifying
and Implementing the
Best Approach for
Your Organization



THE CURRENT ENTERPRISE LANDSCAPE

Enterprise business has entered a period of accelerating change, faced with diverse and interconnected challenges. These novel trials include the rapid rise of AI, ESG challenges, supply chain disruptions, and a global health crisis. It's not just that there are more disruptions, it's that they are cropping up more rapidly and are more widespread than ever before.

The old saying about change being the only constant still holds true, perhaps even more than ever. Continuous transformation is the new normal as we all strive to

adapt to technological innovations, market shifts, and changing customer preferences. In this dynamic landscape, the ability to adapt has emerged as a critical competency for organizations. Recent analysis from Korn Ferry highlights that high-performing companies during market disruptions are those that quickly adapt to changing conditions. Adaptability is a key differentiator in the competitive landscape—one that you can nurture with succession planning.



CHANGE IS CONSTANT

Organizational change has become the norm, with the pace of change accelerating dramatically.



AVERAGE MAJOR CHANGES UNDERGONE BY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS*

PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS AFFECTED BY ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**



PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT EXPECT THE NUMBER OF CHANGE INITIATIVES THEY UNDERTAKE TO INCREASE OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS*



*Gartner

**American Psychological Association



THRIVING THROUGH CHANGE

So, what's the impact of accelerating change? The modern leadership challenge is not to achieve just a one-time transformation, but to be able to continually adapt to change. It's no longer sufficient for organizations to prepare only for specific, targeted change initiatives. It is now imperative for organizations to cultivate the capacity to thrive in an environment of ongoing changes. Continuous transformation is possible with a positive environment and a supportive workforce—in other words, a change-ready organization.

Organizational change-readiness needs to be supported by a process for identifying, assessing, and acting on leadership potential. This is a practice of people development, at the executive level and throughout the organization. This

fosters a sense of purpose and belonging among employees. It also helps ensure a predictable leadership pipeline. Leadership assessment is part of a larger framework that helps you drive success by continuously building your people and your organization.

By committing to the leadership assessment process, you're building a fundamental component of successful succession planning. Identifying and developing leaders who can flourish in the modern environment doesn't happen by mistake. You can access the change-ready leaders of tomorrow—it just takes diligence.

WHAT IS A CHANGE-READY LEADER?

The leaders of tomorrow who will be the most successful are those with the future-oriented and change-ready skill sets that enable them to respond to fluctuating market demands with dynamism and insight. This portfolio of skills is encompassed in Korn Ferry's ADAPT model:



ANTICIPATE

Demonstrate contextual intelligence to make quick judgments and create opportunities, providing a direction to unify collective efforts.



DRIVE

Energize people by fostering a sense of purpose while managing the mental and physical energy of themselves and others.



ACCELERATE

Use agile processes and quick prototyping to manage the flow of knowledge to rapidly implement and commercialize ideas.



PARTNER

Form partnerships across permeable organizational boundaries, combining complementary capabilities to enable high performance.



TRUST

Center mutual growth of individual and organization, integrating diverse perspectives and values to facilitate maximum contribution.



WHAT MAKES A GOOD ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

There are many assessment solutions available. How do you identify and implement the one that will meet your goals? The first step, before looking at specific offerings, is to understand the *types* of solutions that are available. Learning what each approach offers can help you make the right decision to drive success.

Ultimately, you want an assessment solution that will help you meaningfully evaluate people for:

- Performance
- Potential
- Readiness
- Fit

Many assessment solutions will generate a fixed set of possible outputs (think personality tests like Meyers-Briggs). These results are a great start, but on their own do not provide significant context. Without this context, assessment results will be markedly less actionable. Which means you need to start by establishing what success metrics you will be measuring.

For example, what specific results will indicate that an individual is above a certain threshold of “readiness” for a given position? What combination of, say, international experience and negotiation background tells you someone is the right “fit” for your organization?

FEATURES OF A GOOD STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

At its core, any worthwhile assessment strategy will comprise the following pillars:

| BENCHMARK FOR SUCCESS

You need to see what success looks like before you can develop your leaders to achieve it.

| ASSESS YOUR PERSONNEL

You need to know the capability gaps in your current personnel that will inhibit success.

| DEVELOP THE GAPS

You need to develop your leaders strategically to bridge capability gaps.

Keep in mind that the answers to these questions will be different for each specific situation—and can change over time. That is, a change-ready leader's "fit" for your organization won't necessarily align with another organization or role. For instance, you might assess the "potential" of a given candidate for a role today but assess their "readiness" for a new role in the future. Successful strategies will have a clear idea of "what good looks like" for your organization, situation, and roles baked in.

Once you've established success metrics, you can then identify the specific assessment solution(s) that align with your particular goals, which we'll detail in this guide.



LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

Now that we know what makes a good assessment strategy, it's important to understand what options are available. There are many approaches out there, but broadly, they fall into two categories. These will fall along a spectrum of customization, ranging from what we call “high tech” to “high touch.”

HIGH TECH SOLUTIONS

High tech solutions typically have these characteristics:

- They are completely virtualized, offering pre-built pressure tests and other challenges.
- Reporting is “snapshot” style; output is procedurally generated from inputs.
- They offer assessment at scale.

High tech solutions give you a rapid snapshot of your organization. They can help you in gap analysis, driving definition of new roles and opportunities. Relatedly, these solutions are ideal for matching job seekers to roles.

This approach is also a great option for identifying trends within your organization, helping to drill down into meaningful areas for growth, because you get a high-level view with assessment at scale. Not only can these tools be used to surface gaps and strengths, but they can also help highlight specific team members that might be good candidates for further development.

For instance, let's say you want to figure out how to reinvigorate a culture of high performance and accountability in the wake of an evolving market. A large-scale deployment of a high tech solution could help you identify key gaps and opportunities within your organization's capabilities. It would also help you uncover mindset trends that might be constraining innovation. With assessment data in hand, you could develop change-management and communications programs for leadership. And you could even deploy a second wave of high tech assessments to gauge the ongoing success of your program.

Choose a high tech approach when you need to:

- Evaluate at scale
- Perform a gap analysis of talent and potential
- Assess job-seekers
- Build a database of baseline leadership assessment



THE KORN FERRY APPROACH

Korn Ferry's high impact technology-enabled platform, **Korn Ferry Assess**, evaluates the current state of a client's leadership capabilities to identify existing gaps—a process integral to both leadership development and mapping out effective succession planning.

Combined with our Success Profiles, the Korn Ferry Assessment provides a clear pathway: it reveals where leadership stands today and what is needed to shape the leaders of tomorrow.

HIGH TOUCH SOLUTIONS

The other end of the spectrum is what we call “high touch” solutions. Characteristics can include:

- Simulations with custom scenario elements built in for increased realism.
- Targeted stakeholder and subject-matter expert interviews.
- Deep interpretation and implementation support.

High touch solutions give you the opportunity to solve specific business challenges, working directly with a team to design the impactful assessment strategy that gets you the kinds of results you need. High touch assessment solution providers often specialize in certain assessment tools and can provide a highly customized experience for specific business situations.

High touch assessments are a great way to find hidden leaders within your organization. Identifying and developing talented individuals into your next C-Suite leaders is a long-term investment that some organizations find difficult to fulfill.

With the right assessment provider, high touch solutions can be an integral component of succession planning, empowering you to identify the potential in your organization right now and create detailed development plans to help them grow into tomorrow’s leaders.

For example, you might be planning for a near-term CXO succession. A high touch solution could involve a dedicated expert to help you create a profile of the ideal candidate, zeroing in on the specific qualities that person should have to be successful in the role. Finalists can then be assessed against that profile using multiple methods, including simulations.

Choose a high touch approach when you need to:

- Develop an impactful succession plan
- Drill down into senior leadership roles
- Go in-depth with specific individuals
- Work with expert advisors to interpret and implement data





THE KORN FERRY APPROACH

Korn Ferry's high touch approach rests on our industry-leading simulations. Think of them like a flight simulator for your business. We put participants in the target role and provide them with the opportunity to apply their skills and experience to a set of carefully calibrated challenges.

Our simulations reflect real business challenges faced by leaders, enabling you to see how they perform over the “year in a day”—the pivotal challenges they are likely to experience in the role.



THE KORN FERRY DIFFERENCE

Many people assume they need to choose one approach or the other, pursuing either high tech and scalable or high touch and impactful. This is true in the case of many providers. However, with Korn Ferry, you can get a custom approach, giving you a more nuanced and realistic understanding of leadership.

We offer the advantage of working closely with our advisors to develop a fully custom engagement. Our experts can work with you to understand your needs, challenges, and goals. We have many options available to help with your assessment and succession planning. But don't worry about knowing which is best for your use case—we'll help you determine and deploy the combination of methods, strategies, and frameworks that will achieve your goals.

This integrated approach offers immense flexibility and future proofing. For example, you could be planning to broaden your portfolio. As part of this expansion, you need business unit leaders to take greater ownership of matrixed staff. Your first need could be rapid assessment of a large number of management personnel to benchmark current skill sets. Following this, you might work with Korn Ferry to develop custom Success Profiles to support the expansion, followed by executive assessment simulations for a smaller subset to more fully understand their potential and fit for the new leadership expectations. A framework for ongoing assessment and development helps fill the pipeline for this new leadership class.

HOW KORN FERRY MEETS YOUR GOALS WITH A **PERSONALIZED STRATEGY**

Korn Ferry offers a custom, curated approach that combines the best assessment methods for your business goals. By identifying and implementing the right combination of high tech AND high touch assessments for your needs, you can:

- Identify key leadership potential at all levels
- See core competency gaps in your organization
- Compile data at scale
- Get actionable insight into assessment results
- Design detailed succession plans

WHAT ONLY **KORN FERRY** CAN BRING

With decades of talent analysis expertise, billions of data points, and 2,000 assessors, coaches, and facilitators across the globe, Korn Ferry delivers an end-to-end assessment and development strategy you won't find anywhere else.

BENCHMARK WITH SUCCESS PROFILES

Know what success looks like, based on the world's largest assessment database.

ASSESS WITH BEST-IN-CLASS METHODOLOGIES

Our research-based process links to actionable development and minimizes assessment bias.

DEVELOP LEADERS AT EVERY LEVEL

Drive transformation by developing leadership, from executives to first-line leaders.

CUSTOMIZE BASED ON YOUR NEEDS

Tailor assessment and development to your organization's unique objectives and culture.

SCALE SOLUTIONS WITH OUR TALENT PLATFORM

Our proprietary technology makes it easy to assess and develop talent at scale.



PEOPLE WHO ARE
A CLOSE FIT WITH
OUR SUCCESS
PROFILES ARE 7.5X
MORE LIKELY TO
BE ENGAGED IN
THEIR ROLE*

CONSISTENT
USE OF OUR
ASSESSMENTS
CAN IMPROVE
OVERALL TALENT
PERFORMANCE
BY 25%*



WE DEVELOP
100,000 LEADERS
PER MONTH ACROSS
VARIED SECTORS
AND INDUSTRIES



* Korn Ferry Institute

A woman with long dark hair, wearing glasses, a blue shawl, a white top, and blue wide-leg trousers, is walking and looking at her smartphone. Her hair is blowing in the wind. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

TAKE THE NEXT
STEP TOWARDS
FINDING THE
ASSESSMENT
STRATEGY THAT'S
RIGHT FOR YOU



Five Essential Ingredients of an End-to-End Leadership Development Strategy

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)



Shape the Leadership of Tomorrow with Insightful Assessments

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Talk to an expert about your organization's assessment and development strategy

[GET IN TOUCH](#)



Korn Ferry is a global organizational consulting firm. We work with our clients to design optimal organization structures, roles, and responsibilities. We help them hire the right people and advise them on how to reward and motivate their workforce while developing professionals as they navigate and advance their careers.

Business advisors.

Career makers.