

THE
GREENHOUSE
PROJECT

Building the flow that
turns potential into ready
leaders





Talent activity is not the same as leadership flow

Most organisations do not have a shortage of talent activity.

They have talent reviews, succession plans, development programmes, leadership models, career frameworks and performance data.

But despite all this activity, they often still struggle to move the right people into the right roles at the right time, particularly for the most senior and consequential roles

The problem is not always the quality of the people.

It is the flow within the system

- Talent gets identified but not moved.
- Potential gets discussed but not converted into readiness.
- Succession plans are created but not used when appointments are made.
- Development activity happens but does not build the evidence decision-makers need.
- Critical roles appear faster than the organisation can prepare people for them.

“Do we consistently have people we can confidently appoint?”

The shift we help you make

From static talent pools to visible movement, stronger readiness and better appointment decisions

Talent Flow connects potential, evidence, experiences and appointments into one visible system. It shows where people are moving, where they are stuck, and what needs to change so the organisation can build leaders it is confident to appoint.

This helps the organisation to have better candidate options for key leadership roles and it helps the talent in the organisation to make better decisions to get the career they want.



Readiness is built in the work

Talent systems identify people. Fewer drive the movement that creates possibility and growth.

Many organisations are good at naming talent. They can identify high potentials, build succession lists, create development plans and populate talent grids.

But identification is not the same as growth.

Describing potential is not the same as building readiness.

If being high potential does not affect which roles you get, which opportunities that are open to you or how your progression path develops, it means little.

The real test of a talent system is whether it creates a healthy flow of people through the experiences, conversations and decisions that prepare them for bigger, more complex work.

“Readiness is built through experience, not declared in a review”

When talent flow is weak, organisations see familiar symptoms. The same names appearing in every review, successor lists that do not change, critical roles filled externally due to lack of choice, development plans disconnected from future roles, and leaders unsure who is genuinely ready.

What makes senior roles different?

Complexity requires evidence, not just confidence.

At senior levels, that evidence becomes increasingly important because leadership learning is not theoretical. It is enacted, lived and tested in context.

Potential is a view of what someone might become. Readiness is evidenced by what someone has already successfully navigated.

Senior leadership judgement is built through success in ambiguity across multiple roles and contexts.

This involves complex stakeholders, competing priorities, incomplete information, political trade-offs, commercial tension, enterprise-level consequences and situations where there is no clean answer.

This cannot be learned in a classroom. You have to create the conditions in which future leaders experience it, act within it, learn from it and demonstrate that they can succeed.

This type of judgement is built under pressure and reveals itself through results.



The hidden lever is the work

Organisations need leaders who are ready for real complexity, not just rated as high potential.

Leadership demands are becoming more complex, more ambiguous and more interdependent.

Organisations need leaders who can operate across boundaries, manage competing priorities, build trust, make judgement calls and deliver through others.

Talent Flow helps organisations build a clearer route from potential to readiness.

It makes the system more deliberate about the experiences people need, the evidence that matters, and the decisions that turn leadership supply into leadership appointment.

It treats the development roles that build leadership readiness, the work, as the rare and valuable assets they are.

A healthy leadership flow system does 5 things well

Focuses on critical roles

Which roles drive the business by making the key decisions

Defines readiness

What is the observable evidence for readiness, not vague confidence

Identifies proof

What works builds the experiences that build judgement in ambiguity.

Manages roles as assets

How to manage critical development roles as enterprise assets

Turns gaps into decisions

Turns succession gaps into decisions, moves and action

Succession risk occurs before the vacancy

Senior succession is built deeper in the pipeline

Leadership readiness is not something people suddenly acquire when they become senior.

Readiness is built over time through the work people do, the authority they hold, the risks they carry and the complexity they learn to navigate.

By the time a senior vacancy opens, many of the real choices have already been made. They were made in earlier role moves, when people were, or were not, trusted with work that builds readiness.

So the real succession decisions sit earlier in peoples careers. These choices need to be managed deliberately at all levels of the pipeline, to build leaders ready for the future.



What you get from a Talent Flow project

1. A leadership flow map

The critical destination roles, development roles and movement points that matter most.

2. A readiness evidence framework

A practical definition of what people need to demonstrate before bigger or more complex roles.

3. A pipeline and blockage diagnostic

A clear view of where people are moving, stuck, overlooked or not building the evidence they need.

4. A role-as-asset view

Guidance on which roles should be managed deliberately because they build future leaders.

5. A 90-day decision agenda

The priority moves, role decisions and process changes needed to improve flow quickly.

6. A flow playbook

Practical tools, rules and routines to make better succession, development and appointment decisions.

“A practical view of who is moving, who is stuck, and what to do next.”

Outcomes for key stakeholders

What changes for the talent in the business

■ Clearer view of what is valued

Talent understand what the business wants, and how to evidence it.

■ Better access to stretching work and roles

Key Talent get access to the work that builds capability at the right point in their career paths.

■ Greater confidence in the next move

Talent understand what they are ready for, what they need to build, and the choices they can make.

What changes for leaders and the business

■ Clearer evidence of readiness

Decision-makers know what they are looking for and why it matters.

■ Improved visibility of total system health

The organisation can see where talent is stuck, overlooked or under-developed.

■ Stronger appointment confidence

Leaders can plan bolder moves, at lower risk because the evidence is stronger.



Creating leadership flow

This work moves the conversation away from labels and towards evidence.

Instead of asking whether someone is “high potential”, we ask

- Potential for what?
- Ready for which destination role?
- What ambiguity has this person successfully navigated?
- What scale, complexity and stakeholder tension have they experienced?
- What evidence is missing?
- Which move, exposure or sponsorship would change their readiness?
- Which roles should be managed differently because they build future leaders?

The five questions that reveal leadership flow

Which roles create the greatest succession and appointment risk?

Identifies the specific roles that drive your leadership pipeline and where they fit on a leadership map. There are typically a handful of roles which make 90% of the consequential decisions and which have deep pipelines.

What evidence would prove readiness for those roles?

Determines quantifiable ‘good enough’ readiness standards for the key leadership roles. These are grounded in the evidence that has actually led to appointment decisions, and tested against future demands of the role.

Which experiences and roles actually build that evidence?

The specific roles in the organisation that need to be managed as enterprise assets, to create the pipeline with credible track records. These roles will sit at multiple levels in the organisation.

Where is the current system blocking or delaying flow?

What is the succession cover based on the new readiness, by strategic role and level. What that means for talent by level. Where is potential being destroyed. Where is it blocked.

What specific decisions to make in the next 90 days

The prioritised opportunities to address now in terms of key roles, moves and changes to guidance around how specific roles are managed.

“Talent systems create value when potential becomes readiness, and readiness becomes appointment.”



Where is your leadership flow getting stuck?

If these questions are hard to answer, the problem may sit in the flow system, not in the quality of your people

Yes

No

1. Does our definition of readiness predict who gets the key roles?

Are we clear on what people need to demonstrate before they progress, or are we relying on potential, reputation and confidence?

☐☐

2. Are the right people getting the right experiences?

Do we deliberately move people into valuable leadership roles, or do we rely on vacancies and visibility?

☐☐

3. Can we see how healthy our different pipelines are?

For each key strategic role, do we know the depth, quality and risk in the pipeline?

☐☐

4. Can we see the flow?

Do we know who is progressing, who is overlooked, and where movement is blocked?

☐☐

5. Do our talent know what we expect of them?

Do the people we are backing understand what success requires and what it will take?

☐☐

“If the same names keep appearing and the same gaps remain, the issue may be flow, not talent.”



How a Talent Flow project works

Two linked stages. First reveal the flow, then build the mechanisms to improve it

See the flow Diagnostic & evidence

A 4 week sprint to clarify what readiness currently means for priority roles.

Define readiness criteria and work through the implications in terms of pipeline roles, pipeline depth and development roles.

This involves extensive data analysis to reveal the needs and to model the demand by level.

Leadership flow diagnostic deck

Review and agree with leadership

Build the mechanisms System design

Include the senior leadership input to the new readiness criteria. Model out the implications and agree the number and location of the development roles.

Put in place the mechanisms, guidance and rules to manage these roles and to align the succession process.

Create new reporting tools to measure the flow.

Talent flow playbook

Implement in the business

Tools that make the flow visible

- Talent maps - Where the leadership work gets done across role types
- Career tracks - The lateral, vertical and context moves that have built readiness for today's leaders
- Readiness profiles - Must have readiness evidence + relevant indicators of potential
- Pipeline modelling - Multi-level supply models against future leadership demand
- Career decision point analysis - The key points that careers diverge path

How we work

- As partners and advisors
- Sprint based, typically in 4 weeks
- On a function, division or the whole enterprise
- Total time is based on the scale and complexity of the organisation

A diagnostic deck for decisions.
A playbook for action.

You have the talent.
We help build the
readiness that turns
that potential into ready
leaders.

To explore where your leadership flow is working, stuck or under-developed, we can start with a diagnostic

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