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## Provocative Proposition

### Development of the Fittest

Who owns the “burden” for talent development and retention within an organization? Is it the executive or senior manager who aspires to greater things who should take the lead, or is it the employee who must own the process?

The fact is, the traditional mindset that underpins most executive development and talent retention, must evolve. The "survival of the fittest" mentality that most organizations have relied upon since the end of WWII to validate who has the "right stuff", must be changed.

The new focus and approach has to centre on the overall "development of the fittest" and that involves a more complicated dual-track approach. Simply put, if your organization fails to adequately provide its high flyers with both applicable work experiences and plentiful training and development opportunities, your top players will most likely leave.

A core premise within the new credo, and a significant philosophical change from even 10 years ago, is that an organization should not aim to treat all of its aspiring executives in the same way. In fact, the progressive organization should pro-actively "discriminate" when it comes to their High Potential Officers. Simply put, Talent Management means that the organization needs to find and create unique development solutions and streams for each and every manager with potential. There is no "one size fits all" approach and generic formulae do not do enough to differentiate between capability, motivation and learning style.

Also of note, while we may praise the "high potentials", there is no question the "soft middle" plays a major role in keeping most organizations afloat. They may not have the same upside, or even the same work ethic, dedication or aspirations, but an organization that hopes to win in the market has to make sure it's "B Players" are better than the competition's "B Players".

In an important way, developing a new, stronger and more robust talent management process has two additional benefits. Aside from rewarding and recognizing your strongest team members - the "high potentials" - you send a strong message that will entice the moderate performers to rise to the occasion. In so doing, you pass ownership of that responsibility to the employees and improve the overall fitness of the organization. Open your mind to new possibilities.