

December 2022: HR Directors Boardroom Summary

Our latest HR Director Boardroom event took place on Wednesday 14th December, featuring guest speaker [Nicola Forbes-Taylor](#) and Executive Coach of [NFT Consulting](#). The topic up for discussion was ‘Where are your future leaders? (#spoileralert they’re in your business!). [Sally Isaacs](#), an Employment Lawyer at [Eversheds Sutherland \(International\) LLP](#), chaired the session.

Nicola started by introducing her experience as an executive HR leader before running through the agenda for the session, which included creating a focus, how business leaders can take action and valuable points senior people could put into practice.

How do you map your talent?


The session held discussions around career pathways, with Nicola asking leaders to identify whether they are having career conversations with their employees and clear paths for development. This evoked opinions among the group, with most leaders suggesting they have discussed this without having a concrete or documented plan for their employees to develop.

Following this, Nicola shared with the group an image demonstrating various pathways employees could take to reach the top of their respective professions before drawing on some of her experiences as a consultant. She suggested that many of her clients are keen to discuss their employees’ career development and how they can map this out.

Interestingly in a poll that Nicola ran during the session, we discovered that “around a third of leaders still needed to map out career paths for their employees.”

Nicola explained how current managers are one of the best resources to utilise and to heavily involve them when helping map out career paths for your people. Managers can help individuals envisage how their careers can progress, where they want to go and how to achieve their goals, which is a very effective tool used to retain people across a business.

Developing internal talent



The screenshot shows a presentation slide from nft consulting. The slide is titled 'Step 3: Take action' and features a blue circle with the text 'DEVELOP internal talent'. To the right of the circle is a list of actions:

- Lunch & Learns
- Mentoring
- Conferences & Seminars
- Budget for reading/ apps
- Bite size learning sessions
- Open External Programmes
- Internal Programme

The slide also includes a video conference grid on the right side, showing several participants in a meeting.

The session then explored developing internal talent and how businesses can implement this. Nicola suggested that people spanning the whole of a company will have immense knowledge about the sector,

process, best practices and more. Hence, leaders need to encourage sharing that between colleagues; this could be done through ‘lunch & learn’ sessions or setting up mentoring programmes.

An example she gave was over a lunchtime, a senior employee was discussing setting up for retirement with younger business members and was able to share insightful information they could apply through their respective careers.

Nicola also prompted leaders to try and encourage their people to attend seminars, awards and conferences, but come back following these and present findings to their colleagues. A great way to share knowledge across the business while keeping costs to a minimum.

After this, respondents discussed other methods they found helpful in developing talent internally, with one leader claiming to have seen successes through investing in coaching programmes. They found it to have delivered the most effective results compared to other tried methods but stated to bear in mind the costs associated with high-quality coaches.

Barriers to development

Leaders then went into breakout rooms to discuss barriers to development within their respective organisations. One wall identified was a lack of awareness on how to develop due to a lack of experience or existing practice where this had been a focus before leaders took up their relatively new roles in senior HR positions. In response, Nicola suggested testing the waters to identify if resources and budget were there to support development as a starting point.

Another respondent identified a significant barrier in their business as “a lack of succession planning.”

They explained how a long-serving employee left a key role after 20+ years with only 1-month notice, causing a real problem for the company. Nicola encouraged leaders to implement succession planning alongside talent review process to identify those with skills to replace employees and avoid this situation.

One HR leader identified the primary reason for the lack of opportunity to progress was the size of their business and needing more levels to their hierarchy. Despite this, they actively encourage the development of their people in preparation for new opportunities. Even if that means an employee is ready to progress by leaving the business for a more senior position because this is not available internally, they are still supported to do so and reach their desired levels.

Where can businesses start?

According to Nicola, starting somewhere is better than not starting at all, even if a complete programme has yet to be developed. Launching bite-sized workshops, lunchtime sessions and mentoring can have a real impact while you work on securing budget and developing content for a programme.

When discussing the problem of not having support from senior members of the business, Nicola identified how to solve this; start with those individuals first. So, coach them and/or connect them

with a powerful coach who can actively gain their support through their experience of seeing value. This can benefit other leaders as they interact, while also helping secure funding agreement.

What are the benefits of internal development?

The final part of Nicola's session identified some key benefits of investing in an internal development programme. One significant advantage is that it



nft consulting Benefits of Internal Development

Benefits:

1. Embeds the desired leadership style
2. Re-enforces your values
3. Creates a common language, peer support and consistency
4. Less expensive than recruiting new managers and training them to your approach
5. Sustainable as you own the IP, materials and messaging

gives leadership teams the ability to curate the culture of leadership and values they want instead of bringing in external leaders and encouraging them to adapt their approaches.

She described how it creates a common language for colleagues to discuss and support each other, in areas such as feedback, impact and self-awareness. Investing in your employees and developing them can allow business leaders to reap these rewards if implemented appropriately. Choosing to develop internally is far less expensive than bringing in new management in a highly competitive market where 27% of top talent receive multiple offers, and it can inflate offers by more than a third according to data Nicola shared.