

Talent and Leadership Brief: The 8 critical moves for Talent Leaders to deliver value in 2023



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As 2023 kicks off in a flurry of economic uncertainty, political turmoil, and lingering pandemic impacts, Chief Talent and Learning Officers and their peers are doubling down on preparing their leaders and teams to survive, and more importantly thrive, in the new year.









We are seeing eight high impact critical moves in leadership, talent, and learning emerge as priorities for CLOs and CTOs in 2023. Furthermore, we have also identified the critical points where high performing leaders are making the most impact to transform their organizations.

Leading edge companies will be doubling down on:

1. Making bold investments in core leadership skills tailored to equip the enterprise to navigate economic uncertainty, deliver growth, and ensure business continuity.
2. Accelerating the talent system to deliver enterprise outcomes in times when there are fewer chips to play.
3. Scaling the learning culture to help people adapt to the constantly changing market environment.

To move the needle in your own organization, tap into the following eight moves.

The critical moves at—glance

Priorities	Moves
Make bold investments in core leadership skills tailored to equip the enterprise to navigate economic uncertainty, deliver growth, and ensure business continuity.	 <p>1. Unlock front-line leader capability to close the gaps that Covid left and deliver value at scale</p>
	 <p>2. Create change-ready mid-level leaders to steer the business through economic conditions, manage profitability and prepare for the next stage of growth</p>
	 <p>3. Secure business continuity through the economic storm with proactive, systematic CEO and C-Level succession planning and onboarding</p>
Accelerate the talent system to deliver enterprise outcomes, in times where there are fewer chips to play.	 <p>4. Embed an employee-focused leadership framework and language that sets the bar on expected leadership performance during 2023's market challenges</p>
	 <p>5. Implement a high potential selection and development approach that reflects the speed and agility needed in the market</p>
	 <p>6. Scale an effective external candidate acquisition process to triumph in the war for talent</p>
Scale the learning culture to help people adapt to the constantly changing market environment.	 <p>7. Ramp up your culture through meaningful development for people around capability, values, and behaviors at scale. Embed for persistent impact, demonstrating true return on people investment</p>
	 <p>8. Create a learning ecosystem for your teams to adapt quickly to changing circumstances by democratizing and personalizing learning at scale</p>

The 8 critical moves:

Make bold investments in core leadership skills tailored to equip the enterprise to navigate economic uncertainty, deliver growth, and ensure business continuity.



1. Unlock front-line leader capability to close the gaps that Covid left and deliver value at scale

What's not working today

Expectations of front-line leaders – which make up the majority of an organization's leaders – have significantly expanded. Covid left massive deficits in these leaders' capabilities, and they continue to remain the most under-served when it comes to professional development. The quick hit "learning events" used during the pandemic have left gaping holes in capability and a near empty bench.

What great looks like

Front-line leaders across the enterprise who have the capability to transform the business from within, have successively built capability, and accumulated a body of knowledge over the years.



2. Create change-ready mid-level leaders to steer the business through economic conditions, manage profitability and prepare for the next stage of growth

What's not working today

Leaders of leaders are positioned at the core of organizations, with the most potential to impact culture and business results. They wear multiple hats and feel pressure from executives to achieve challenging enterprise and functional objectives, while getting pushback from their teams. Yet they have little support for how to be successful in this complex role, putting this high-value leader population at high risk for burnout and departure..

What great looks like

Mid-level leaders who are progress-makers with a systems perspective. They navigate uncertainty with grace. They build deep connections across and outside the company, shape the culture and drive the business towards customer success into the future.



3. Secure business continuity through the economic storm with proactive, systematic CEO and C-Level succession planning and onboarding

What's not working today

The road to CEO and C-Suite success is rocky, yet many Boards and leaders leave the process of succession at the top of the house to chance and have poorly designed processes and approaches. They compound the problem with insufficient onboarding to ensure success in these high-risk roles. With Baby Boomers retiring, the odds of success are increasingly uncertain.

What great looks like

Clear, planned C-level transitions that reduce risk and create value for Boards, shareholders, customers, and employees. Continuity that builds confidence and creates calm in economic uncertainty.

Accelerate the talent system to deliver enterprise outcomes, in times where there are fewer chips to play.



4. Embed an employee-focused leadership framework and language that sets the bar on expected leadership performance during 2023's market challenges

What's not working today

Well-intentioned HR teams or external consultants use generic frameworks and integrate them into HR systems and processes without any significant input or awareness from the people who they impact the most – the employees. The focus is on what the framework says, not on how it will enable leaders to act differently, particularly in times of challenge.

What great looks like

An embedded leadership framework owned by individuals that enables the organization to build a vibrant talent pipeline and provides an inspiring guiding light in a time of uncertainty.





5. Implement a high potential selection and development approach that reflects the speed and agility needed in the market

What's not working today

While the importance of identifying and developing high-potential talent has increased, the data show inconsistent success in talent identification and succession, with failure at each step of the process. Organizations are often unable to fulfill long-term requirements through effective high-potential talent management. Talent pools are poor quality, and critical role coverage and succession is lagging, especially with the state of the talent market.

What great looks like

A talent strategy that equips the next generation of leaders with transparent identification criteria, leadership capability, and high levels of accuracy in suitability and readiness. Development experiences that are thoughtful and aligned to strategy, which include coaching to generate meaningful growth even during turmoil.



6. Scale an effective external candidate acquisition process to triumph in the war for talent

What's not working today

Organizations spend time and resources implementing generic talent acquisition assessments that produce mediocre results. At the same time, they optimize their talent acquisition tools and processes for the needs of the business, as they should, but to the exclusion of considering the candidate experience. This sends the message of "good enough is good enough" to organizational leaders and candidates alike, and results in the less-than-optimal hiring results.

What great looks like

A co-created assessment experience that teaches candidates about the realities of the role and provides insights into candidates' capabilities aligned to the role. A digital experience that enables scale and "employer brand intimacy" all at once.

Scale the learning culture to help people adapt to the constantly changing market environment.



7. Ramp up your culture through meaningful development for people around capability, values, and behaviors at scale. Embed for persistent impact, demonstrating true return on people investment

What's not working today

Few organizations align their approach to embedding culture such as values, purpose, and leadership expectations, in a systemic way. Instead, there are pockets of culture activity. Disconnected activities don't lead to lasting change. Talking about values doesn't enable people to live them in everyday decision making. Change doesn't occur when we "sell and tell."

What great looks like

Learning experiences that fundamentally unlock people's mindsets and capabilities by "teaming, coaching, collaborating" to drive unprecedented personal change at scale.



8. Create a learning ecosystem for your teams to adapt quickly to changing circumstances by democratizing and personalizing learning at scale

What's not working today

Current learning solutions have too often proven ineffective, as the formats, methods, and content fail to engage and deliver on their promise. Yet learning needs remain more critical than ever, with high demand for a holistic, effective learning experience for leaders that scales, engages, and is unconstrained by corporate resources and availability.

What great looks like

A fully adaptive and agile approach to learning when and where it's needed most.

Take action now

As we head into the uncertainty of 2023, now is not the time to switch to survival mode. As a strategic talent leader, this is your opportunity to make sure your company emerges from the downturn more resilient than ever with a clear, value-rich, high-impact people strategy. Use these eight critical moves to guide your priorities and optimize your investments—you'll find you're ahead of the curve when you look back on the year.

Contact BTS to learn more about what leading companies are doing now.