

Growing Leaders:

Leadership development done differently

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About the Authors



Corrinne Armour: Waging a war on wasted potential, Corrinne's mission is to empower leaders and teams to get out of their own way and embrace 'fearless leadership'. Known for her innovative approach, results focus and the ability to tell it like it is, she is recognised as a provoker of change and growth.

After living in Asia for a few years, Corrinne cooks a mean curry.

Belinda Cohen: Performance improvement is at the heart of all Belinda's work. With a natural curiosity for what drives behavioural diversity, Belinda brings a non-judgmental, supportive and 'no excuses' approach to her clients. She combines her legal, business and leadership experience with her passion for helping people work smarter. Belinda assists her clients to simplify the complex to bring about fresh perspectives and a new focus.

Always up for adventure, Belinda's ability to plan and book travel of any kind is an enviable skill.

Anneli Blundell: As a professional 'people whisperer', Anneli has been working with leaders and teams to improve their communication and interpersonal intelligence for almost a decade. She brings to her clients a recognised expertise in the field of 'below conscious communication' and motivation and is obsessed with decoding people and performance dynamics for improved results.

Although geographically challenged, Anneli also rates herself as an excellent parallel parker.

All three are accomplished speakers, trainers and mentors. They are co-authors of *Developing Direct Reports: Taking the guesswork out of leading leaders*. Together, they have published two other specialist reference books on shifting human behaviour. They are all passionate about their family, the privilege of doing great work with wonderful clients—and quality, dark chocolate.

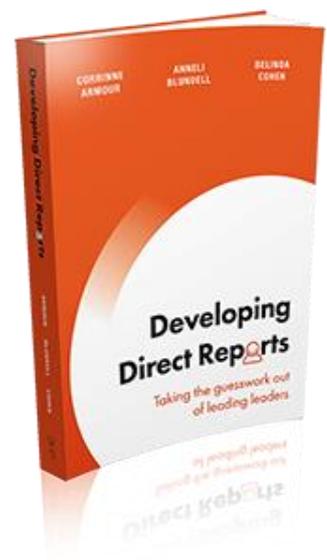


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Growing leaders: Leadership development done differently

Introduction

Effective leadership is critical for an organisation's success. Growing leaders is too important to outsource; the best leaders develop leadership in others, on the job.

Market analysts value effective leadership by awarding a 'leadership premium' of up to 15.7% of company share price for good leadership. Conversely, ineffective leadership will discount company valuation by up to 19.8%.¹

Leadership and leadership development matter. The foundation for effective leadership is a healthy pipeline of leaders at all levels. Developing the right leadership skills requires more than sending your people on a training program or holding the obligatory annual performance conversation. It's more than giving them leadership theory. It's about the practice of leadership, with consistent, real-time feedback, on the job.

Effective, robust and sustainable leadership development is not only about focusing on strengths or trying to make the 'car go faster', it's about handling the derailers that 'slow the car down'. A leader's potential is limited if they lead with one foot on the accelerator and one foot on the brake.

Leaders need to help their people release the brakes and accelerate their performance. They need to develop people from where they are at, warts and all. This means working harder to hone the individual leadership capability that is in front of them instead of continuing to create generic leaders.

This journey looks different for everyone. It calls for a new way to develop targeted leadership performance; a new way to grow leaders and connect people with their potential. It requires leadership development to be done differently. Are today's leaders ready?

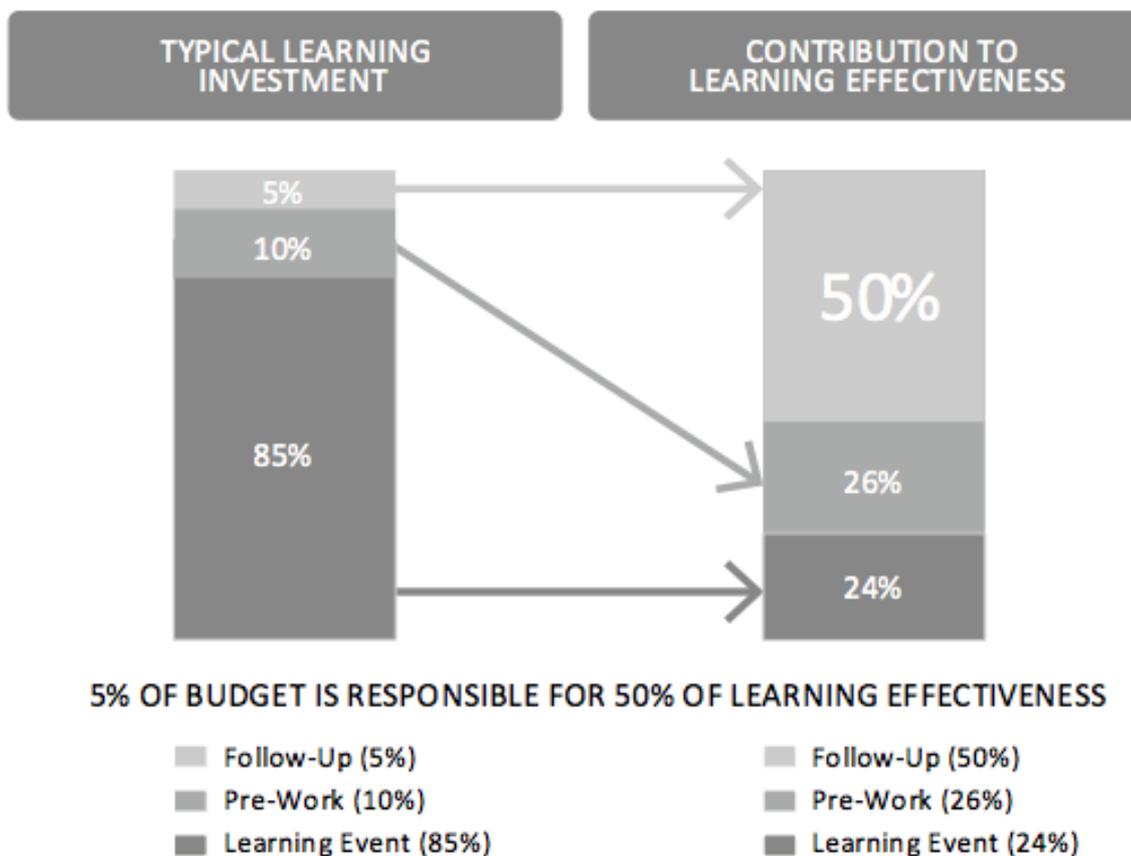


The imperative to change

1. Leadership development is broken

86% of HR and business leaders surveyed by Deloitte, cited leadership as one of their most important challenges.² Yet 50% of HR executives say their leadership development programs are ineffective or don't provide significant lasting benefits.³ Most leadership development fails, not through lack of effort or attention, but through poor execution. **We are doing leadership development; we're just not doing it effectively.**

The typical organisation invests 85% of its resources in training events, yet these events only contribute 24% of learning effectiveness.⁴ Organisations only invest 5% of their time in training follow-up, even though follow up contributes 50% of learning effectiveness.



Leadership development is about what leaders do on a daily basis to develop their leaders, on the job. Leaders need to adapt constantly. This requires a flexible approach to leadership development.

It's not just about the classroom

'Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.'

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Tony worked his way up the organisation, relying on his strong technical skills in environmental science. His CEO was concerned about gaps in Tony's 'softer' skills and proposed a weeklong residential leadership program at an eminent academic institution.

Tony learned some excellent approaches to leadership, which he could explain confidently at a theoretical level. He also left the program feeling quite bruised by the 360 feedback he received. Now, acutely aware of his shortcomings, Tony felt paralysed. He did not know how to apply these new insights and concepts in the workplace.



For Tony, theory was not enough. The CEO hired a coach to help Tony apply what he learned on the program, and to understand and action key insights from the 360 feedback.

2. Performance development needs an upgrade

'Managers who provide regular feedback and opportunities to improve are far more likely to field high-performing teams than those who retain once-a-year rankings.'⁵

—Deloitte

Many large companies remain loyal to annual performance reviews, much to the frustration of those involved. For employees, it can be an administrative formality that 'ticks the box' but doesn't develop or change actual performance; for managers, it's an administrative burden that interrupts 'real work'. Research is beginning to empirically support what we intuitively know: annual performance evaluations don't positively affect performance.

- Feedback interventions, like performance reviews, only **improve performance** 41% of the time and **make matters worse** 38% of the time.⁶
- 58% of executives believe their current performance management approach **drives neither employee engagement nor high performance**.⁷
- 70% of respondents to a Deloitte survey stated they were either 'currently evaluating' or have recently 'reviewed and updated' their performance management systems.⁸

The annual evaluation is a time consuming, non-value adding, and possibly destructive process that does not positively improve performance at work. Many well-known organisations have ditched the traditional annual performance review process. In Australia, the list includes: Accenture, Seek, Ernst & Young, Deloitte, and NAB, among many others.

The future of annual performance reviews, as a management tool, is bleak. So what's the alternative?

People need constant and targeted feedback, in real time. That's how leaders create high performance. Imagine the coach of an elite sporting team giving performance feedback once a year, at the end of the season:

'Ok Ritchie. I really like how you improved your kicking accuracy this season. That second-quarter goal in the third game was amazing. If you could do more of that and pass the ball more often, our results will improve. I'll sign you up for a collaboration workshop and we'll see how next season goes.'

Ridiculous concept, isn't it? Sport is fast. It requires continuous development in skill, teamwork and individual performance. What makes us think the game of business is any different? Leaders need to pay attention and give feedback in the moment—not in a year's time.

3. The knowing-doing gap must be closed

'For most leaders, the greatest challenge is not understanding the practice of leadership. It is practising their understanding of leadership.'

—Marshall Goldsmith, author or editor of 35 business books.

Creating new leadership behaviours typically requires new ways of thinking and behaving. 'Adaptive change' requires new ways of thinking and being, where a 'technical change' only requires new skills.

Often, leadership development programs respond to an adaptive challenge (behaviour change) with a technical solution (gaining more knowledge). *Knowing* more doesn't always translate to *doing* differently because we are not addressing the causes of the original behaviour.



Samantha's marketing team continually miss deadlines. Her people complain she constantly looks over their shoulders. Absenteeism is rising.

As a technical change, Samantha would attend a delegation skills course. If she knows the 'theory' of delegation, but can't apply it, she is facing an adaptive challenge, and a course won't help. Targeted, real-time support, on the job, is needed.

Why aren't leaders developing leaders?

(A note on language and terms: we have used the term 'leader' to mean the senior leader, and 'direct report' to indicate the leader reporting to the senior leader. While this language will not resonate with all readers, these clear terms are useful to assist readability.)

Effective leadership development requires targeted, tailored, real-time conversations, on the job. There are three main reasons leaders typically aren't providing this type of targeted and tailored leadership development to accelerate the growth of their people.

1. It's not my job

This is probably *not* what you think it means. Most experienced leaders do realise they have a responsibility to develop the skills of the people on their team. However, this is typically limited to developing the functional or technical skills of the role, at best, and nothing at all, at worst. If one member of their team needs leadership development, the default response is to outsource this development to HR or a formal learning program.

The most effective leadership development occurs in real time, on the job. So while formal training programs are important (and good training programs are a critical part of the mix), they are only part of the story. Programs can provide the basis for what to work on, and they can provide the cultural leadership traits that support the overall business growth, but they don't necessarily deal with each individual's unique development needs—and this is where the gold lies. Once general leadership competencies are at a certain standard, progress comes from targeted and tailored development that will fine tune each person's performance enabling them to reach their full potential. This calls for direct development.

2. I don't know how

Leaders may struggle to coach their teams toward lasting behaviour change. People are not their behaviours but we treat them as such. When a driver 'cuts us off', we label them stupid, irresponsible, or a bad driver. Yet that one behaviour—or situational response—doesn't define their entire character. It's not necessarily an enduring personality trait; it's just something they did.

If a leader accepts their critical role in the development of their people, their next step is to act on this responsibility. Leaders must look beyond behaviours, and engage in development conversations targeting the intentions that drive the observable behaviours.

Our human tendency to judge someone's character based on the situation or exhibited behaviour is the result of a cognitive bias called the Fundamental Attribution Error.



We are quick to judge others from their outside behaviours, yet when it comes to developing new skills, focusing on behaviours does not motivate people to change those behaviours. Working from their intention will produce better and more sustainable results.

3. I've said it once already

Behaviour change happens gradually. It requires a commitment to ongoing dialogue and focus. Telling a direct report, only once, to stop micromanaging or start delegating doesn't create a new habit. Even if the behaviour changes in the short term, it will likely revert to the old behaviour in the long term.

Knowing is not doing—as anyone who's ever been on a diet or exercise program will tell you. It's not enough to tell people what needs to be different: you must help them change their habits over time.

Luckily, the brain is plastic. It changes with focused attention over time and retains the capacity to rewire and change throughout life. The ability to influence the wiring of our brain creates inspiring possibilities for learning leadership.



Nobel Prize winner and author, Daniel Kahneman said, 'True intuitive expertise is learned from prolonged experience with good feedback on mistakes'.

Our role, as leaders, is to give that feedback.

What is the leadership gap?

Knowing that a fundamental role of the leader is to develop their direct reports and connect them with their potential: how well are your leaders doing?

The Performance Development Ladder



Indifferent

At the bottom of the Performance Development Ladder, the **Indifferent** leader pays little attention to their direct report. (I am confident this isn't you because an indifferent leader would never dedicate time and energy to reading a paper like this.) When leaders don't actively support direct reports to develop, they might find them **Absent**. This absence may be reflected in their attitude, commitment, output and focus, as well as actual absenteeism. Perhaps even worse, for them and the organisation, they might not actually leave. Being absent can have a destructive impact on the direct reports themselves, on the team culture and on the leader.

According to the Dale Carnegie Institute, '... it is the immediate supervisor who is the chief emotional driver in the workplace; reactions to him or her explain 84% of how employees feel about their organization'.⁹

Inconsistent

A leader can be **Inconsistent** in their efforts to develop their direct reports, or struggle to know how to help some of them, leaving them professionally **Ambivalent**. The direct reports are not motivated to leave but don't feel they are developing. This level of ineffectiveness is a lost opportunity for the leader and the organisation.

John was in the inconsistent space. He intended to support and develop his people. Being task oriented, he found himself focusing on outcomes at the expense of others. Aware that this was happening, he would consciously shift his attention to the needs of

his people for a few days, usually prompted by the twice-yearly performance review cycle, and then his attention would return to the tasks at hand. Having a confrontation with the CEO about the high turnover in John's divisional leadership team was the trigger to seek the help of a coach.

Inquisitive

At **Inquisitive** leaders are **Awakening**, learning and creating capable leaders. Yet there is still significant untapped potential.

Adam is an engineer who describes himself as a 'people person'. He is inquisitive about, and supportive of, what drives people, and is concerned for their welfare. Yet despite his natural people focus, he lacks the people development skills to capitalise on their potential.

There is a tipping point here, where leaders can see increasing return on their investment in their direct report.

Insightful

The **Insightful** leader creates **Aware** direct reports who are able to effectively lead themselves and their teams. Here, people are aware of their behaviours and their impact. They are aware of potential disconnects between their inside intention and outside behaviour, and are skilled and empowered to take targeted action.

Amelia leads a large division of a major public hospital. Working with her leaders, she provides regular feedback that creates awareness in her team. Her special gift is providing feedback that both connects to the organisational purpose, and leaves the leader empowered to respond. This hasn't happened by magic: Amelia has worked hard to understand herself and her own drivers, and remain true to her values as a leader despite the significant leadership challenges she has faced.

Inspirational

At the top of the Performance Development Ladder is **Inspirational**. Leaders inspire their direct reports to be more than they see themselves capable of being. Leadership amplifies their capabilities, empowering the direct reports to fully realise their own potential while also leveraging the full potential of their team.

Barry is described by staff, clients and stakeholders as inspirational. He built a social welfare company from \$0 to \$50m over 25 years, and created an inspired and inspiring organisation that significantly influenced the Australian policy landscape. He did this through developing his direct reports and creating a strong executive leadership team that operates autonomously and interdependently. Barry's special skill is to raise everyone's performance to heights greater than they thought possible.

Moving up the Performance Development ladder

There are three essential questions each leader must ask themselves in order to move up the ladder and bring their direct reports with them:

1. Who develops the leadership in my team?

Onsite or outsourced: Should direct reports be developed on the job by their leader or via a formal training program?

The answer is both. However, with the current default overreliance on training programs (particularly one-off events), it's essential to strengthen the focus of on-the-job development. This means that leaders need to expand the definition of their role to include on-the-job leadership development. Supporting direct reports to learn, grow and move past their leadership derailers needs to be part of everyday conversation. Once a leader views the role of developing people as seriously as they do delivering results, the delivery of results becomes easier. It's the **attitude** that makes the **difference**.

Key take-away: leaders have to **want** to develop others – ATTITUDE

2. What unique leadership development does each person need?

Behaviour or intention: What should leaders focus on to get the most effective change?

Obviously, focusing on the cause of the behaviour will provide a better result than focusing on a BAND-AID-fix for the symptom. Yet this is easier said than done. People are complex. The cause is not always obvious and the ability to get to the root of the real issue takes practice. This is where understanding the 12 leadership derails can help. (Refer to call-out box below.)

Determining the intention behind the behaviour is critical. Trying to change behaviours without addressing the underlying motivational drivers is like painting a car red and expecting it to go faster—changing the colour does not change the engine.



Take the derailer, analysis paralysis as an example. The inability to make a quick decision can stem from many reasons. Is it fear of getting it wrong? Is it being overwhelmed by the options? Is it a lack of clarity on the issue? Without knowing what's really driving the behaviour, learning the latest decision-making tool might not make the desired impact on leadership behaviour.

The leader's **ability** to facilitate dialogue, which helps a direct report discover their motivational drivers, will make the real **difference**. Energy can then be redirected into behaviour that better supports the intention—like lifting the bonnet of the car to help them understand how the

engine works.

Key take-away: leaders have to know **how** to develop others – ABILITY

3. How can leadership be developed effectively, on the job?

Consultation or conversation: How do leaders create long-term change on the job?

A *consultation* provides a solution to a problem. A *conversation* invites ongoing discussion to progress an idea forward. A leadership gap is not a problem to be solved like a consultant, but a journey of growth to progress like a coach.

Leadership development occurs from a conversation cadence that maintains on-going focus, explores possibilities and handles barriers as they arise. Elite sporting teams don't get performance feedback once a year, at the end of the season. They get feedback at every game, in every break and sometimes right on the field. Leaders growing leaders need to take the coaching approach. Conversation needs to be consistent. It's the on-going **action** that makes the **difference**.

Key take-away: leaders have to actively **develop** others – ACTION

The Dirty Dozen Leadership Derailers

Leaders exhibit leadership derailers: bull at a gate, inability to innovate, analysis paralysis. Whatever the derailer, it will be undermining the realisation of a direct report's full potential and must be addressed to reach optimal performance.

In our latest book *Developing Direct Reports: Taking the guesswork out of leading leaders*, we have drawn on the latest in leadership theory, and our professional experiences as executive coaches, to determine and address 12 globally recognised leadership derailers.

1. Staller – analysis paralysis

Taking too long to take action: perceived as blockers to progress; missing deadlines or opportunities.

2. Controller – command and control

Highly directive: stifling initiative and innovation.

3. Cyclone – bull at a gate

In a hurry to achieve results: leaving a wake of destruction and disengagement.

4. Doer – can't delegate

Hording work and responsibility to the detriment of themselves and their team.

5. Avoider – conflict averse

Reluctant to face tough conversations and situations: creating challenging team dynamics.

6. Fence-sitter – indecisive leader

Unclear leadership and direction: creating bottle necks in progress and frustration for others.

7. Know-it-all – closed to other ideas

Reluctant to consider new ideas or input from others.

8. Guardian – inability to innovate

Prefers the status quo: reluctant to change, low focus on innovation.

9. Micromanager – management on a leash

Excessive supervision: perceived as stifling and untrusting.

10. Poker face – showing no emotion

Non-expressive communication style: direct verbal communicator; frustrated by inference and reading between the lines.

11. People burner – poor people skills

Prioritisation of task accomplishment over people and relationships.

12. Tactician – poor strategic thinker

Reactive to daily pressures, buried in the day-to-day; unable to hold the broader, strategic view.

What's next?

This brief description of each derailer illustrates the behaviour you might see in your direct report. Your challenge is to support them to understand the impact of this derailer on their leadership career, and the engagement and productivity of their team. Once the impact is understood, supporting your direct report to be clear on the intention that drives the behaviour will open up a development pathway to overcome the derailer and realise leadership potential.

Are your leaders ready to develop their teams differently?

Developing the leadership skills of direct reports is not always an easy ride, but it's a journey well worth taking. The better equipped each leader is to develop the leadership capabilities within their own teams, the greater the ripple effect. After all, a rising tide lifts all boats.

Will the ability of your people to develop leadership in their people be the tide that lifts the organisation's results?

PROGRAM - Growing Leaders: Taking the guesswork out of Developing Direct Reports

If you know that developing these skills in your leaders is fundamental to achieving your business strategy, then consider our Growing Leaders program.

How well do your leaders develop other leaders?

- Do your leaders understand they are responsible for the performance of the organisation?
- How often do your leaders allow poor performance to prevail?
- Are your leaders avoiding the critical performance conversations they need to have?
- Does your organisation have lots of data about the performance culture but no pathway for change or transformation?
- Do you want to improve employee engagement with a targeted approach to developing performance?

In this program, your team will learn to identify and respond to what's really driving the dysfunctional behaviours that derail performance. The payback? Improved performance of your people so they can get the right work, done well.

This program helps leaders develop leaders

Stop wasting your training budget and outsourcing responsibility for leadership development. When leaders effectively develop their direct reports, the brakes on performance are released, potential is achieved, and leaders can make the difference they are meant to make.

This is about growing people to grow the organisation while reducing the costs associated with unintended performance blockages. Bottom line: this is about the survival and growth of your organisation.

This program teaches leaders to deliver targeted behaviour change

Program participants will:

- understand and address the 12 globally recognised, common leadership derailers
- understand the essential mindset needed to successfully develop their leaders
- increase their awareness of unconscious drivers impacting performance
- learn a proven framework for coaching behaviour change that sticks
- develop confidence to have the performance conversations that matter
- build the skills to support their direct reports to create behavioural change
- model a new approach to performance development that delivers profitability and organisational growth.

Are you ready to take the guesswork out of leading leaders?

BOOK: Developing Direct Reports: Taking the guesswork out of leading leaders

Are you in a leadership role where your people are also leaders?

Do you want to:

- understand what's really driving the dysfunctional behaviours you observe?
- become a catalyst for behaviour change that sticks?
- take the guesswork out of developing your direct reports?

Written for leaders who lead leaders, this book addresses the 12 most common, globally recognised leadership derailers:

- Staller – analysis paralysis
- Controller – command and control
- Cyclone – bull at a gate
- Doer – can't delegate
- Avoider – conflict averse
- Fence-sitter – indecisive leader
- Know-it-all – closed to other ideas
- Guardian – inability to innovate
- Micromanager – manage on a leash
- Poker face – showing no emotions
- People burner – poor people skills
- Tactician – poor strategic think.

Packed with examples, insights and recommendations—and supported by a practical framework—this book will show you how to incorporate strategies specific to the personality types you lead. Great leaders can be created, and this book shows you how.

What are other leaders saying about *Developing Direct Reports*?

'Perhaps the most essential skill of a gifted leader is the ability to cultivate leadership competencies in others. No book is more helpful in this area than Developing Direct Reports – outstanding!'

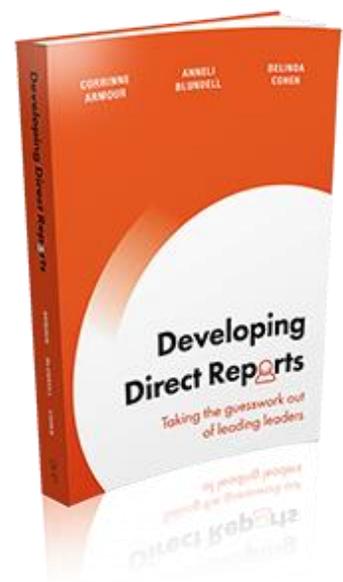
Marshall Goldsmith author or editor of 35 books including the NYT#1 bestselling *Triggers* and global bestsellers *MOJO* and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*.

'I love this book! Deeply insightful and incredibly practical—an essential primer for any leader of leaders looking to develop the leaders of tomorrow.'

Dr Jason Fox, bestselling author of *The Game Changer*

'Developing Direct Reports is a life line for any executive who can clearly see the impact of their direct reports' behaviour, but is unsure what to do. The book provides practical advice on how to diagnose leadership derailers and simple coaching tips to effectively develop people.'

Chris Akayan, Group General Manager - Human Resources, Mirvac



'There's both laughter and solemn recognition to be had in reflecting on the 12 Leadership Derailers, which forms an inspirational platform for a key takeaway: that leadership is a privilege we should never take for granted.'

Sean Hughes, Chief Risk and Legal Officer UniSuper

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Get in touch

Corrinne Armour helps leaders and teams get out of their own way and exceed their objectives. She supports leaders to grow leaders.

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