

# 10 best tips from a top leadership development program

Deloitte's two-year "NextGen" executive leadership development experience is one of the most robust programs in corporate America. Each year, Deloitte's senior leadership team selects roughly 60 of our highest performing partners to experience intense and specialized experiential training to prepare them to take on Deloitte's most important client service and firm management roles. By the end of the two years, upwards of 80 percent of the participants report taking on more challenging and visible roles.

We've compiled the 10 most important program takeaways that any executive or talent development program can use.

**1. Create a clear, common definition of leadership integrated with business strategy and processes.**

We seek participants who have a sustained high-performance track record, a desire to take on top leadership roles, a strong commitment to developing themselves and others, and indicators of potential in intellectual capacity, talent focus, ability to cultivate and build followership, and capacity to deal with change.

**2. All leaders, including the CEO, must be invested in cultivating and selecting future leaders.** This cannot be handed off to talent or head of operations to champion. C-suite leaders must continue to commit to leadership development, especially when budgets get tight.

**3. The first action new leaders should take is identifying and reflecting on personal and professional strengths and weaknesses.** Our leaders create a "personal development plan" that identifies specific new roles and experiences they want to pursue, to help them play to their strengths and backfill areas for development.

These leaders also receive a psychometric assessment, an interview with a business psychologist and external executive coaching (a small investment for high value). They share plans with each other, senior executives, peers, friends, their family, mentors and their coach.

**4. We collaborate with external leadership development organizations like the Center for Creative Leadership to help our executives better understand what roles they want (and don't want), and how to ask for those roles.** CCL hosts a sophisticated multi-day management simulation that focuses on working with diverse teams and making tough decisions that affect future business growth and development.

**5. Our leaders focus on the art and the science of productivity as they learn how to manage their time appropriately.** It's important to determine what you can own and what you can delegate. Determine how to lead with your strengths, and spend time on the tasks that give you the most energy.

**6. Wellness and mindfulness are critical to balancing career with family and social relationships, personal development and health.** We work with the Human Performance Institute to focus on healthy eating and making time for exercise. We go so far as to counsel our people to block time on their calendar for mindfulness and meditation.

**7. After the first year, our participants assess their professional networks.** They also receive online and in-person 360-degree feedback on how they are applying their new strengths.

**8. NextGens participate in multi-day sessions at the Army War College in Gettysburg and the Thayer Leader Development Group at West Point,** where they hear senior military leaders discuss making strategic decisions in high-pressure situations.

**9. We also ensure participants seek new opportunities** to implement their learnings, focusing especially on taking on challenging assignments and collaborative projects—even if those opportunities are in different parts of the firm or different countries.

**10. Finally, we don't lose sight of our NextGens.** We monitor their progress, follow up on a regular basis, and give them “booster shots” of new experiences and learnings that align with the world's constantly evolving technology and economy.

These types of programs form the core of Deloitte's philosophy around leadership development. By committing to the patience required to see the long-term benefit of these investments, we (and our clients) are rewarded many times over. We produce more well-rounded leaders who often punch well above their weight class when it comes to client service, preparedness for taking on much larger and more challenging roles, and of course, leading our people and the organization.

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