

With 118,900 employees and a turnover of €42.2 billion (2014), Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the Life Science fields of health care and agriculture. As an innovation company, it sets trends in research-intensive areas. Its products and services are designed to benefit people and improve the quality of life. At the same time, the Group aims to create value through innovation, growth, and high earning power. Bayer is committed to the principles of sustainable development and acts as a socially and ethically responsible corporate citizen.



## New strategic leadership vision.

When Bayer reassessed its leadership development processes in 2010, it became apparent that the organization needed a concrete, results-driven approach to identify future executive leaders and accelerate their readiness to support the company's ambitious growth and strategic goals. This meant implementing a new leadership framework, assessing talent against current and future leadership requirements, and enhancing the development of executive levels. A sustainable leadership development set-up was fundamental to achieving this. "Our priority was to identify those individuals who displayed the right competencies needed for senior leadership roles, and then ensure that they receive the necessary development to prepare them for that next career step," says Horst-Uwe Groh, Head of Corporate Human Resources and Organization at Bayer.

## Mission: Identify executive potentials.

Although renowned for the depth of its scientific and engineering experts—technical and functional high professionals—Bayer, however, did not have a strong enough bench of "ready now" Executive potentials to meet its need for broad leadership roles.

### At a glance:

#### Defining the leadership needed.

- ▶ Leadership Competency framework based on the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect.

#### Assessing talent.

- ▶ Senior Executive Assessments: optimizing talent deployment decisions at the top.
- ▶ Executive Assessment Centers: unleashing potential across all levels.

#### Integrating development and succession management.

- ▶ Executive Leader Institute: accelerating readiness and supporting transition for top 100 roles.
- ▶ Impact coaching.

#### Strengthening talent management capabilities.

- ▶ Executive Assessment Qualification Program for HR.
- ▶ Business relevant grounding in the art and science of talent assessment and talent management.

A change of approach was required with people to be deployed based on leadership and potential. Bayer was therefore able to embark on a journey that would see the organization move away from primarily performance and loyalty-based practices.

“Korn Ferry’s methodology has been an enabler in executing our strategy. It helped us understand, assess, and develop the core leadership competencies and traits that our high potentials need to possess,” adds Groh.

### **Leaving a deep, “lasting legacy.”**

Leadership assessments have laid the groundwork for a lasting legacy of standards, along with data and development plans to identify talent much earlier in their career and lower down the pipeline—and to provide targeted development to help faster transition into senior leadership roles.

“By resetting leadership expectations, we’ve been able to focus on developing people with more inspiring, visionary, and customer-centric skills—agile people who can drive innovation and respond to market changes and dynamics,” says Gabriele Oehlschlaeger, Member of the Global HR Committee and Global Head of Talent Management at Bayer.

The data gleaned from the assessments has also allowed executives “to have a far greater self-awareness of their own leadership potential, how they are perceived by others and what they need to do to become more effective leaders.”

### **A common language for talent:**

- ▶ Maximizing knowledge transfer to its talent leaders, Bayer has been able to establish a common language for talent development and management—creating alignment and consistency.
- ▶ Business leaders derive value from being actively involved in the assessment process, which increases their awareness of how leadership competencies drive strategy execution.
- ▶ Talent literacy has improved throughout the organization and leaders have been educated to better identify and develop Executive potential talent.
- ▶ Workshops have been run to help managers understand the competencies that matter and how best to coach individuals.

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Member of the Global HR Committee  
and Global Head of Talent  
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Bayer AG*

## **A shift in leadership mindset.**

This systemic, holistic approach to talent management spans across many different organizational layers, and the people intelligence gathered has resulted in more informed deployment decisions, increasing the likelihood of success in new roles.

It has categorically changed the way in which leadership is perceived at Bayer. “The real impact has been in how our leaders enter into talent discussions and make people decisions. Executives are now talking about self-awareness and emotional intelligence during interviews. That’s a real change in mindset,” stresses Oehlschlaeger.

“This has not only helped us identify high potentials, but it’s had such a positive effect on our people, elevating and reinforcing our employer brand.”

## **Boosting employee engagement.**

One of the most significant strides made by Bayer is with global employee engagement. Not only has this made an impact at the top leadership levels, but throughout the entire organization.

“The results from our surveys show that our people feel that they now have more opportunities for personal development and growth and that we’re doing a good job of promoting the most competent people,” adds Oehlschlaeger.

The bar at Bayer has been raised in terms of the quality and transparency of its succession and talent planning processes. “Our strong focus on targeted development has helped us to identify gaps and better prepare our leaders for future challenges. This has enabled us to mitigate the risk of our talent decisions,” says Groh.

Decisions are now based on broader leadership potential qualities rather than functional expertise alone.

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