

VET Leadership:

Context, Characteristics and Capabilities

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Background

- **Contributors:** ACER, LH Martin Institute, John Mitchell, Peter Noonan, 500+ VET leaders, 20+ RTOs
- **Timing:** 2009 (data collection); 2010 (workshops)
- **Objectives:** to investigate:
 - what leaders do
 - what influences and aspirations shape their role
 - what capabilities and competencies underpin effective performance



Method

- **Delivery:** Online; workshops
- **Structure:** Item response (likert scale) and open response
- **Sample frame:** Roles - positions - # of reports
Definition: “...people in roles classified as senior managers to who other managers report” (Mulcahy, 2003)
- **Roles:** Director, CEO, CFO, GM, program managers/heads/directors, heads of school



Open response questions

1. Briefly, what are the three most challenging aspects of your current role?
2. What aspect of your current role do you find *most* significant?
3. Overall, what analogy best describes what it is like to be in your current leadership role?
4. Overall, what do you believe to be the *most* effective methods for developing the capabilities of leaders in roles like yours?
5. What is one key step you believe *your organisation* could take to improve the selection and development of leaders?



Significant and challenging aspects in current role

- Leading and managing change
- Environment – internal and external
- People - recruit, engage and revitalise
- New “corporate” or “business” skills
- Regulation and compliance
- Partnership building
- Time management



Analogies to describe current leadership role

- **Task-oriented**
 - jugglers, circus performers, entertainers
- **People-oriented**
 - football coaches, stage managers, shepherds, conductors, captains
- **Experience-oriented**
 - roller-coaster rides, car racing, rafting, surfing



Effective methods for developing leaders

- Mixed methods - informal & formal – work-based & PD programs
- Mentoring and shadowing
- Contextualised formal training
- Planning and self-reflection
- Professional development
- Professional and informal networks



Steps to improve the selection and development of leaders

- Acknowledge personal and intellectual capabilities of aspiring and emerging leaders
- Formalise (bring rigor to) the marginalised mentoring and succession training programs
- Review and substantiate selection and succession processes
- Secondment opportunities
- Contextualise with real-world situations



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