

CASESTUDY

# DMGT

## How do you identify and develop consistently outstanding leadership in a diverse, global business - with little or no group mandate?

With 50 companies globally, Daily Mail and General Trust partnered with talent management experts, Xancam, to develop a pipeline of leadership talent from a diverse pool of individuals. Find out how....

**DMGT (Daily Mail and General Trust plc) is one of the most successful global media groups, with over 15,000 employees and 50 companies worldwide.**

Rapid growth via the acquisition of a diverse range of entrepreneurial media businesses, all market leaders in their industry, has set DMGT a unique challenge when it comes to developing their future leaders.

The organisation faced four key talent challenges:

1. A clear need to develop the leadership pipeline across the globe and leverage talent across diverse businesses.
2. Develop a group of outstanding individual contributors into great leaders.
3. Retention of good people in the face of a fierce talent marketplace for entrepreneurial leaders.
4. Keep ahead of the curve in a shifting marketplace shaped by new entrants and technology moving in and rapidly changing the landscape.

### Developing a clear end-to-end talent strategy

DMGT mapped business-critical roles and a pipeline of individuals who could potentially move into these roles (from those ready right now, to those who would potentially be ready in 2 years' time). Around 100 people were identified as having the capability to move into a major functional head/CEO role over time.

- Who they were
- What kind of role they might move into
- Their readiness to move
- Their strengths and areas for development

### An Accelerated Leadership Programme

The accelerated assessment and leadership programme – why it's different:

- Very much reflects DMGT's specific business context, culture and challenges
- Uses assessment and development in tandem which is very powerful learning - takes participants on a complete journey
- Accelerates progression – the programme is all about getting there quickly. This gives real commercial advantage and speeds up programme payback dramatically

Together DMGT and Xancam created a powerful Accelerated Leadership Programme for those with the potential to take on a major role within two years.

Dee Fitzgerald, director at Xancam, and programme designer, explains: "The DMGT Accelerated Leadership Programme comprises incredibly deep assessment and insight, coupled with intense, tailored development. The combination of these two is very powerful and unusual in senior development experiences."

### DMGT clearly identified:

This co-created programme spans geographical and functional boundaries and has become the cornerstone of DMGT's talent strategy, designed to ensure a seamless pipeline of talent at senior level. Participation is not considered mandatory which means Board sponsorship has been absolutely critical to gaining buy-in at this very senior level across the globe.

#### In detail

The first step was for each participant to seek challenging feedback from their direct reports, providing a rounded picture of their leadership. Participants also underwent a challenging self-assessment to establish their personal starting point for the programme.

There then followed an intense, face to face, 4 day leadership programme which began by encouraging participants to consider their current leadership approach (Where am I?) and to examine the feedback from their teams (What are my people telling me?).

The next step included in-depth individual assessment centred on a highly realistic 'Day in the Life' business simulation reflecting a variety of strategic and tactical challenges faced by DMGT leadership.

Acting as the incoming CEO in a newly acquired business, participants made their own strategic recommendations before working in teams to present their case to the DMGT board on the future strategic direction of the business and received immediate feedback.

The final stage of the programme provided participants with fully integrated feedback from the assessment, their leadership feedback and psychometric tests. As well as working on a development plan, participants created their own personal story to communicate the key messages from the programme to their businesses.

To effectively 'pass the baton' back to DMGT,



"The Accelerated Leadership Programme has had an immediate impact on my leadership skills. Meeting my peers from around the world was absolutely invaluable and inspiring."

#### Sean Ryan

General Manager, DMGT Radio  
Australia

Xancam facilitated a 3-way meeting including their local HR Director, their Line Manager and the participant themselves; the key objective being to sign off the development plan. Follow up checks were agreed within 90 days.

#### Creating a must-have programme people will not want to miss

The Accelerated Leadership Programme directly supports DMGT's aim to leverage synergies across the Group. How did Xancam and DMGT get businesses on board with this cross-business programme in a culture where freedom and autonomy is a prized attribute?

Dee Fitzgerald, Xancam, explains: "It was vital that the diverse businesses supported the programme. Extra effort was invested to win their engagement including:

- Securing board sponsorship and active involvement in the programme itself
- Spending time with individual business CEOs understanding their talent requirements

- Direct involvement of HR in the individual businesses to ensure maximum impact and return
- Ensuring a very tailored approach to meet DMGT's unique requirements
- Being tenacious!

"Getting the buy in at every stage was essential but worth it. The programme has been very well-received and created a real energy and focus on development. We've had great feedback and the programme is oversubscribed – a true measure of its success"

#### A major step change in leadership at DMGT

DMGT's objective was to build a strong leadership pipeline, fast! The Accelerated Leadership Programme has been the driving force in making this happen and in understanding so much more about DMGT's DNA. The results have been extraordinary.

Joe McCollum, DMGT's Group HR Director says, "The program perfectly suits our autonomous culture: it focuses specifically on the individuals, yet provides DMGT with an informed view of who the players are several levels down the organisation. It gives us a real head start and the confidence to really drive development - ensuring our existing talent will be ready to tackle future challenges in a rapidly changing environment."

#### The outcomes

- **DMGT now has robust information on people in the pipeline.** It understands the specific levers for each top performer to realise their future potential and enable a smooth transition to board level leadership. DMGT now know who their 'stars' are, have formally validated their potential and are focused on their development.

- **The programme tackles development head-on.** It shines a light on areas which were previously ignored or shied away from.



"I found the Accelerated Leadership Programme incredibly rewarding and a chance to truly reflect on my strengths and areas of development. In addition to the self assessment we had presentations from business leaders in DMGT that were inspirational and provided a real backbone to the four days."

**Jeremy Cooper** - Managing Director of IMS (Integrated Marketing Solutions), Hobsons

This means new insights and personal breakthroughs for individuals and therefore the business.

- **Engagement at this crucial, very senior level.** Signalling a real investment in development for the group's top performers.

- **Fantastic feedback.** DMGT have received incredibly positive responses from programme participants, the majority highlighting a new understanding and clarity as a personal outcome.

- **Senior leaders from diverse businesses have had the chance to network.** Looking outside their own businesses and practices has given them invaluable insight into each other's challenges and perspective.

- **Benchmarking DMGT's Leaders.** The programme provides individuals with an invaluable opportunity to understand where they sit in relation to both their peers and against Xancam's Leadership Benchmark.