



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Client	National Audit Office
Project	The Direct Programme
Audience	Audit Managers
Location	UK

THE ORGANISATION

Our client has existed in its present form since 1983, auditing the accounts of government departments and agencies (as well as other public bodies) and reporting to Parliament on these bodies' efficient and effective use of public money.

THE PROJECT CONTEXT

The project's strategic aim was to enable staff to develop and apply their knowledge more effectively, increasing their influence so that clients would take action on raised issues. This would require significant development and a more consultative approach, and greater movement in and out of senior posts to pave the way for new behaviours.

THE REQUIREMENT

While a development programme for qualified auditors (Audit Principals) had been in existence since 2005, the organisation wanted to launch a development programme for Audit Managers with the potential to progress to Director in its Financial Audit and Value for Money specialisms. The programme's aims were to:

- identify a higher quality pool of candidates for promotion to Director
- capture better data on their skills and competencies
- equip them to meet the changing requirements of the Director role
- present clear messages to candidates unlikely to progress, helping to 'refresh' the succession pool
- enhance succession arrangements, clarifying critical roles and required skills, knowledge and experience

OUR SOLUTION

We designed and delivered a suite of leadership programmes for new leaders, leaders of teams and leaders of leaders, aimed at raising awareness and

increasing skills in the management and leadership of people and performance.

THE RESULTS

We partnered with the Talent and Leadership Development team to design and deliver a comprehensive assessment and development programme that included the following key elements:

- **Attracting the right people** – an application process to ensure all potential candidates could showcase their abilities, including a bespoke emotional intelligence 360 degree feedback questionnaire, written exercise and submission of a CV
- **Assessing applicants' potential** – shortlisted applicants were assessed through an interview-based 360 degree feedback process and an assessment centre, including psychometrics, filmed group activity and a presentation. Each candidate received feedback, coaching and interview with an Occupational Psychologist
- **Select the right people** – candidates were ranked according to performance and the most successful were accepted onto the Direct Programme
- **The Direct Programme** – designed to meet both individual and collective development needs, each candidate identified specific areas of strength and development (through coaching, action learning sets and on-the-job experience), with common areas supported by masterclasses
- **Promotion** – participants' ongoing performance was reviewed to determine suitability for promotion into available posts.

EVALUATION

All participants are highly focused on the skills and behaviours necessary to change the culture, with unsuccessful managers seeking additional coaching support. We have also been selected to provide the Future Leaders programme for Junior Managers.

**CASE
STUDY**