



# 5 CRITICAL ROLES

of Great Function Leaders

Benchmark Your Function Leaders Against the Best

Your **FUNCTION LEADERS**—those who have management authority over an organizational unit, geographic region, product group or customer segment with titles such as vice president or director of operations, marketing, manufacturing, sales, finance or human resources—**have arguably the greatest impact on overall company performance.**

## Why are function leaders so **IMPORTANT** to the success of your organization?

Although the strategic managers determine the company's mission and direction, functional managers control the expenses, manage resources, make decisions about the specific projects that will be undertaken and drive the success or failure of each initiative. With significant spans of responsibility, function leaders are critical for accelerating organizational performance.

– Tia Benjamin, management consultant

Another critical factor is the increasing importance of the

## NETWORKED ORGANIZATION.

Function leaders are at the nexus of that network, with the clearest operational lines of sight to the company's web of suppliers and partners. Their actions, for good and ill, can seriously affect overall organizational performance. Today's function leader must possess deep specialized knowledge and work effectively across boundaries with the skills, attributes and business acumen of the traditional general manager.

How do your organization's  
function leaders compare with

**GREAT**

function leaders?

Based on an in-depth study of more than 400  
function leader assessments, MDA has determined  
the **5 critical roles of great function leaders.**

# The 5 **CRITICAL ROLES** of great function leaders:

- 1 **Strategist**
- 2 **Results Orchestrator**
- 3 **Talent Developer**
- 4 **Change Leader**
- 5 **Internal Influencer**

Take this brief quiz to determine how well your function leaders perform these roles.

# INSTRUCTIONS:

Think of a specific function leader in your organization. As you progress through the slides, rate this particular leader based on each attribute of great function leaders.

## **Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
and 0 points for each “no” reply.  
Keep track of your score for final review.

# 1 Strategist

## **Aligns functional strategy with corporate strategy**

– Does your leader ensure that function strategy is aligned with corporate strategy?

### **Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.



# 1 Strategist

**Navigates obstacles for self and others** – Does your leader obtain resources and/or remove barriers to help ensure success for himself/herself and others?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 1 Strategist

**Understands internal and external forces that create competitive advantages** – Does your leader understand the factors that can provide their function (and your organization) with a competitive advantage?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

2

# Results Orchestrator

## **Identifies new growth opportunities**

– Does your leader identify and capitalize on new growth opportunities for their function and/or your organization?

### **Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

2

## Results Orchestrator

**Accelerates decision-making** – Does your leader make decisions and/or encourage function unit employees to make decisions quickly enough to appropriately respond to needs and opportunities?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

2

## Results Orchestrator

**Creates accountability** – Does your leader consistently hold himself/herself and others in the function accountable for work output and behaviors?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

2

# Results Orchestrator

## **Establishes and oversees metrics and goals**

– Does your leader set metrics and goals for performance across the entire function, and check in on them regularly?

### **Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 3 Talent Developer

**Selects top talent** – Does your leader identify, hire and promote top talent to achieve your organization’s objectives?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 3 Talent Developer

**Develops others** – Does your leader provide relevant stretch assignments to develop others' skills?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.



# 3 Talent Developer

**Elevates organizational leadership** – Does your leader provide feedback to strengthen leadership skills in others?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 3 Talent Developer

**Conducts strategic talent reviews** – Does your leader regularly conduct strategic talent reviews of high performers and high potentials?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 4 Change Leader

**Develops courage to take risks** – Does your leader exhibit a willingness to judiciously take risks to improve the function and/or organization?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 4 Change Leader

**Creates a sense of urgency for change** – Does your leader motivate the team to change when necessary?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 4 Change Leader

## **Leads and implements change initiatives**

– Does your leader champion and execute change initiatives in the function?

### **Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

5

# Internal Influencer

**Builds disciplined collaboration and commitment**

– Does your leader encourage function employees to collaborate with others and keep commitments?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

# 5 Internal Influencer

**Proactively seeks partnerships across the enterprise** – Does your leader seek out partnership opportunities across the organization?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.

5

# Internal Influencer

**Influences and persuades through high-impact conversations** – Does your leader influence and persuade others with their strong communication skills?

**Scoring:**

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply,  
3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply,  
0 points for each “no” reply.



# SCORING:

Give 5 points for each “yes” reply, 3 points for each “maybe” or “sometimes” reply, and 0 points for each “no” reply. Tally up your points to determine how your function leader compares with great function leaders. Repeat the quiz for each function leader you wish to assess.

- 75-85 points: Shows the attributes of a great function leader
- 45-74 points: Would benefit from targeted function leader development
- 26-44 points: Would greatly benefit from targeted function leader development
- 0-25 points: Would benefit from foundational leader development

# TARGETED

## function leader development consists of:

1. Qualitative and quantitative assessments
2. Strong, experientially-based leadership role learning opportunities
3. Cross-functional action learning projects
4. Supervised mentoring

# In **SUMMARY**, the 5 critical roles of great function leaders:

- 1 Strategist
- 2 Results Orchestrator
- 3 Talent Developer
- 4 Change Leader
- 5 Internal Influencer

How do your function leaders compare with great function leaders? Is it time to boost their performance to improve business performance?



# ACCELERATE

To accelerate the performance of your function leaders, MDA offers the Function Leader Development Experience (FLDE) on a regular basis. To learn more, contact MDA at 612-332-8182 or [www.mdaleadership.com/events](http://www.mdaleadership.com/events).