

# Identifying & Nurturing Talent in Kent Probation Trust



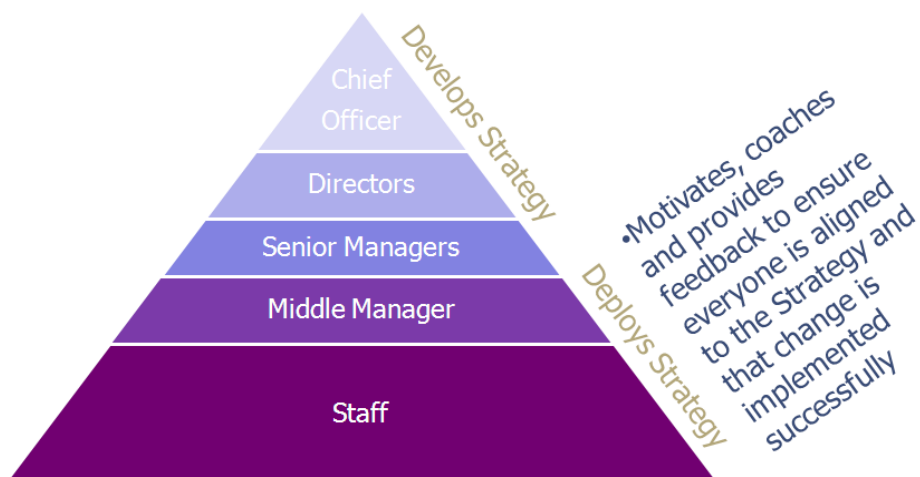
## From Possibility...

During 2008, having already demonstrated itself to be an excellent organisation, Kent Probation formulated a clear vision for the future. Protecting the public and reducing re-offending remained as their two fundamental aims underpinned by a clear strategic plan and aligned set of organisation core values.

Building upon existing strengths while also recognising those aspects which would need to be developed to take them to the next level of performance during a time when demands continue to increase but forecasting significant reductions in resource.

The Strategic Plan recognised the importance of leadership capability in ensuring achievement of the vision, 'changing lives, reducing crime' a reality. In particular, a requirement to deliver 'excellent people management' by developing leaders who will visibly role model the values and work proactively with their teams to make the Area's strategy both real and meaningful.

In response to this a more proactive approach to talent management was identified which would identify aspiring middle managers who, with some additional development, would be better able to support the planned changes and future demands.



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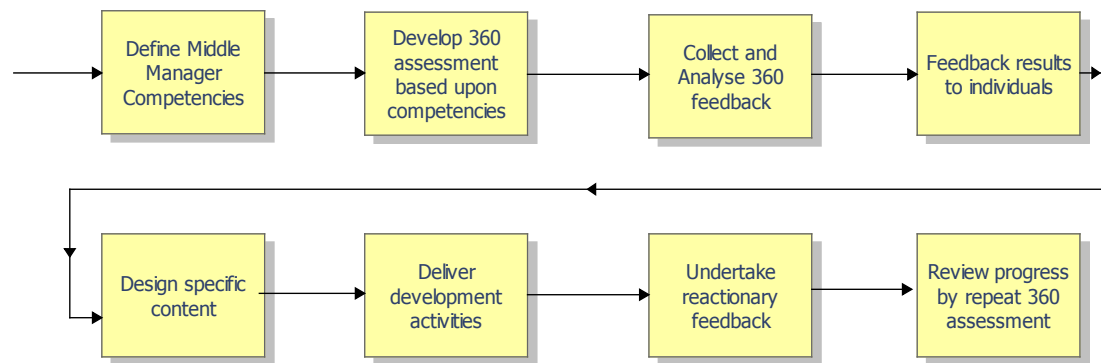
## OUR APPROACH

Building upon a previous successful development programme delivered by Ad Esse to existing Middle Managers we were asked to support a group of aspiring middle managers identified as part the Talent Management Programme.

Ad Esse being a specialist performance improvement consultancy and part of that being to help organisations in developing their leadership capabilities. All of our consultants having led successful change themselves and have worked with leaders in numerous settings to bring about business improvement. Although we are not a training company, we are all expert in helping individuals, teams and organisations in learning and development, and most of us are experiences coaches, trainers and facilitators.

Our approach to developing leaders therefore draws on sound learning principles, yet combines those with business expertise, pragmatism and an in-depth understanding of the Probation Service and its culture.

The approach taken to define the talent management programmes was as follows;



The focus was to develop a programme that would stretch and challenge delegates ensuring maximum benefit from the investment and predominantly prepare the individuals for future Middle Management roles within Kent Probation.

## To Actuality...

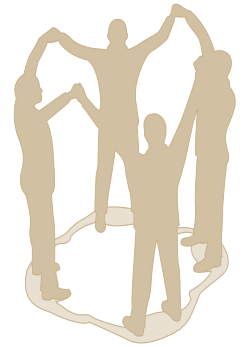
### MAKING IT REAL

MIDDLE MANAGERS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK						
Kent Probation Values	Knowledge of the Strategy	External Environment	Aptitude for Leadership	Performance Improvement	Prioritisation Skills	Aptitude for Management

Based upon these competencies we designed a specific 360 degree feedback assessment suitable for use by both aspiring and substantive Middle Managers. We asked the Talent Management delegates to select a mixture of peers and managers to provide feedback on their current performance by completing the online 360 assessment questionnaire. This provided responses to set questions but also gave responders an opportunity to enter additional supporting evidence as free text providing specific examples of when the skill or behaviour had been observed. The delegates themselves were also asked to evaluate themselves against the model to highlight any potential differences in theirs and peers perception to be highlighted.

### SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERS WITHIN KENT

The development of leaders within Kent Probation is seen as a continuous process as individuals gain experience, assume greater levels of responsibility, and face a growing complexity of organisational problem solving demands. The 360 degree feedback process assists in this development through two fundamental objectives.



The first is on an individual level

- For the individual, the process provides unique data perspectives of their abilities as viewed by their peers, subordinates, those in supervisory roles, and self-examination. The best use of these data for individuals is to design a personal development plan to address areas of concern surfaced through the assessment.

The second is to improve overall organisational performance

- As Kent's leaders develop their abilities to work, manage, and lead, the performance and attitudes of corresponding teams and team members will improve. Therefore, the entire organisation stands to benefit as each individual improves.

To assist the delegates in this process, their personalised 360 Feedback Reports contained the following elements:

- Introduction to the 360 process
- Interpretation of the 360 Data
- Overall 360 Profile
- Role Comparison Scores and Item Score Breakdown
- Open Ended Question Listing
- Appendix B - Personal Development Planning

### Kent Probation Values

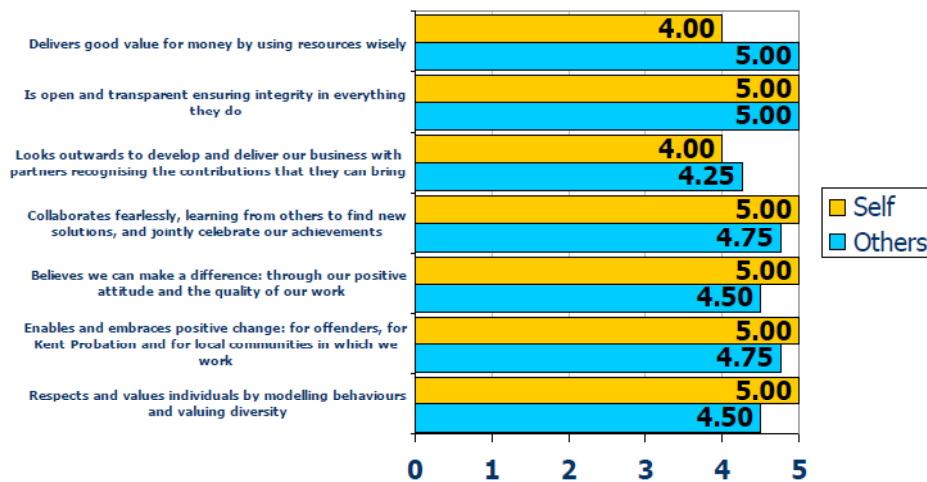
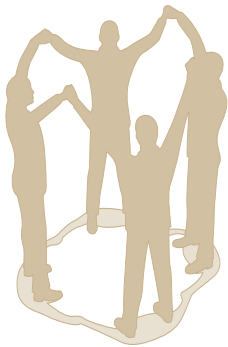


Table showing question set for 'Kent Probation Values' and example summary of responses from both the individual and their peer group.

The competencies were broken down into bite size pieces and represented as a series of specific questions within the 360 assessment. Each competency was defined and the data analysis on items provided a targeted approach to 360 Personal Development Planning (360 PDP). After their reviews the data facilitated them in crafting 360 objectives specific to their individual expectations and concerns. These were then used to design the development programme to support the specific areas identified for the group.



The overall topics for the programme to date have included;

- Developing and Managing Partnerships
- Understanding and communicating the Strategic Plan
- Aptitude for Management
  - o Role of KP Middle Managers
  - o Key to Performance Management
  - o Managing Successful Change
  - o Managers Role in Coaching and Feedback

Each session is structured to provide both current theories on the chosen subject along with the opportunity for the group to discuss and understand how it relates to them and Kent Probation specifically.

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## BENEFITS

The current programme commenced last June and has provided a well thought through mixture of development opportunities for the selected Talent Management delegates. Opportunities have also been provided outside of the classroom environment to support them as they gain a deeper understanding of the role of Middle Manager within Kent Probation.

The current programme is due to run for 12-18mths during which the delegates are expected to apply the learning they have received. The programme will be evaluated by a follow-up 360 review and delegates are also asked to provide immediate feedback to the usefulness of the programme following classroom based training. Current feedback suggests the programme is offering the right balance of tutor and self directed learning;

*“I feel a much greater level of understanding around Partnership and Commissioning”*

*“ Very interesting – I have learnt a lot from the Ad Esse consultant and my peers”*

*“A structured course with lots to digest and take forward”*

*“Informative training and useful discussion”*

Although the qualitative feedback suggests the delegates are finding the programme useful, we look forward to the quantitative data from a repeated 360 assessment to support these very positive early results.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

To receive regular case studies and articles like this one, you can subscribe to our newsletter 'Actualty'. Contact us at Ad Esse Consulting Ltd.

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