Case: Leadership Development

Growing From a Functional Role
Into an Organisational Leader

Our client, a leading world authority in microelectronics development and research, appointed a senior research fellow to head its entire research and development division. Could the company's top scientist and academic researcher, who had never managed a staff of more than twenty, make the transition to effectively manage hundreds of people in his division?

The Challenge

The executive soon realised that the new job's difficulty exceeded his expectations. New administrative tasks and issues among staff members consumed huge amounts of time. Little time or energy remained for the pure research he had enjoyed for so much of his career. He began to question the organisation's decision to place so much of the company's future in his hands. At that point, the company asked COE to help the executive become acclimated to his new role.

COE's Response

COE's consultants asked the executive to articulate his career goals and division objectives. Then, using a combination of a 360-degree feedback survey and structured interviews with his colleagues, COE identified the executive's key strengths and suggested areas for improvement. While none of the findings surprised the executive, they did provide focus for the development strategy he defined with COE's help. That strategy called for him to:

❑ Delegate several major tasks to senior managers both to advance the projects and to provide developmental opportunities

❑ Network with managers from other divisions to better understand how his own division fits into the larger corporate strategy

❑ Use a town meeting format, including question and answer sessions, to regularly communicate within the division

The Results

The executive's discomfort with the new position dissipated once he aligned his activities to suit his new responsibilities. The executive found the job less stressful and more rewarding, while the company reaped the benefits of having a more effective organisational leader.