

## 5 QUESTIONS

# To Ask A Leadership Consultant Before Hiring Them

### QUESTION #1:

#### Does the program embrace principles of adult learning theory?

There are many leader development programs to choose from and hard to know what you get. How do you know the program will even make a difference?

By asking a few savvy questions, you can make an informed, thoughtful choice. First, adult learners have different priorities and ways of processing information from children.

With a long history of providing leadership consultation for managers, I've been responsible for creating meaningful learning experiences that stick.

I've walked alongside leaders in diverse organizations – from tech giants to city and county governments, to construction and more, guiding them towards effective leadership.

I, myself, have hired consultants to deliver learning and experienced “buyer beware” first-hand. I know that disappointment. Open Gate provides thoughtful learning experiences based on current research with hands-on practical application. Beyond filling someone's mind with knowledge, we aim to change thoughts and actions

Malcolm Knowles, identified five characteristics of adult learners:

1. Prefer to be **self-directed**
2. Able to draw on **life experiences** to assist with learning
3. **Willingness** to learn when transitioning to a **new role**
4. Want to **apply** new knowledge to **real-life problems**
5. Tend to be **self-motivated**

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### QUESTION #2:

**Are leadership competencies used as a foundation for learning goals?**

Coaching is a discipline where it can be hard to gauge effectiveness. We are vigilant about providing benchmarks to measure progress. To see evidence of change, it's critical to start with clear definitions.

Here is a short list of leadership competencies used throughout the process:

- Approachability
- Command Skills
- Conflict Management
- Delegation

- Developing Direct Reports
- Interpersonal Savvy
- Managerial Courage
- Managing and Measuring Work

- Motivating Others
- Self-Knowledge
- Understanding Others
- Written Communications

Targeting the learning experience to a specific competency creates clear definitions that translate better to SMART goals and action steps. At Open Gate, that's how we take an inherently squishy concept to bring precision and clarity in our coaching and our signature development opportunity [Leader Workout Group®](#).

Any goal can be achieved if you break it down into enough small parts.

- **Brian Tracy**

Many programs miss that critical step. They focus solely on dispensing knowledge – not translating that knowledge to action. Our curriculum is built on leadership competencies that our participants can take away and apply immediately in their role, and that we reinforce throughout the learning experience.

Would you like to learn more? [Leader Workout Group®](#) brings adult learning and behavior change principles for a fresh approach to leader development.

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### QUESTION #3:

#### Are the learning materials up to date?

Have you recently endured a presentation where the visuals include any of these?

- Clip art from the early 2000's
- Long paragraphs of text to read
- Slide after slide after slide (death by PowerPoint)
- References that are out of date

It takes a lot of effort to create a curriculum. (Professional curriculum developers on average spend 40 hours to develop one single hour of curriculum.) The tendency is to “set it and forget it,” meaning the material is never reviewed again with a critical eye.

At Open Gate, we have a continuous improvement mindset. [Leader Workout Group](#)<sup>®</sup> was developed with current approaches to learning and development such as micro-learning, direct application, and reflection. We pay attention to and plan for diverse learning styles – auditory, visual, and kinesthetic (learn by doing).

“Leader Workout Group provides an honest and safe space of people that want to keep growing. I feel comfortable having a safe space where we can be as honest and supportive as we can, while having a clear and organized use of our time. I have gained insights and practical tips to add to my toolbox which I can apply as a manager.”

- Pamela Maciel Cabañas  
Sanctuary Co-Manager

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### QUESTION #4:

**Do the facilitators have the skills, knowledge, and experience to be effective?**

When you're in a class where the learning experience is interesting and keeps you engaged, that's the work of a highly skilled facilitator. You may not be able to put a finger on why, but you know the experience is good.

Facilitation is a skill sharpened through training, knowledge, and experience sprinkled in with really good instincts. That's a tough combination to find in a person.

When evaluating a leader development program, these questions are a good start:

- **What is the educational background of your educators?**  
*(Watch for specific training and/or experience in learning and development?)*
- **Do your instructors have a teaching or facilitating approach?**  
*(A teaching approach focuses on sharing knowledge. Facilitating means engaging participants to discover and apply the knowledge. Participants will have a better experience with a facilitating approach.)*
- **What kind of feedback do your facilitators receive?**  
*(Ask for proof such as testimonials or a reference with a satisfied customer?)*

Being a careful consumer when choosing a learning experience (development opportunity) for your team is good business.

The potential costs are not limited to a financial waste. You also risk damage to your team from guidance that is inaccurate, unsound, and at worst harmful.

What are your challenges with developing your leaders? Let's brainstorm solutions together. Enjoy a [complimentary consultation](#) to refine your unique plans.

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### QUESTION #5:

#### How are behavior and thinking changes measured?

Leadership competencies, while difficult to measure, can be quantified. The solution lies in breaking down those competencies into specific behaviors that contribute to success.

Once you effectively define a behavior, then it becomes possible to measure evidence of change. Some means of measurement include pre and post questionnaire, observational feedback with surveys, and progress logs.

Leader Workout Group<sup>®</sup> curriculum is developed to reinforce skills, behaviors, and actions that form essential leadership competencies.

Real world application, along with focused reinforcement, builds habits that endure and creates the conditions for lasting change. Pre/Post questionnaires, quizzes, and opportunities to reflect provide many touch points to measure progress and change. Our participants see the value.

“Leader Workout Group offers a real opportunity for managers to gain valuable skills supporting emotionally intelligent, effective leadership, while at the same time having the chance to connect with other management professionals to learn and gain insight from their experiences.”

- Shawna Beamish  
Manager