Leadership Certification: An Innovative Approach to Self-Directed Development

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Overview

- Case for Change
- New Approach to Leadership Development
- Overview of Leadership Certification
- Deep Dive: Leadership Assessments
- Critical Considerations

About PDRI

- Established 1975
- Subsidiary of SHL
- Industrial/Organizational Psychologists
  - **Core mission**:
    - Develop innovative, high-quality customized human resource solutions for a variety of public and private sector organizations
- Locations
  - DC (Arlington and Chantilly)
  - Tampa, FL
  - Minneapolis, MN

The Case for Change: Today's Challenges

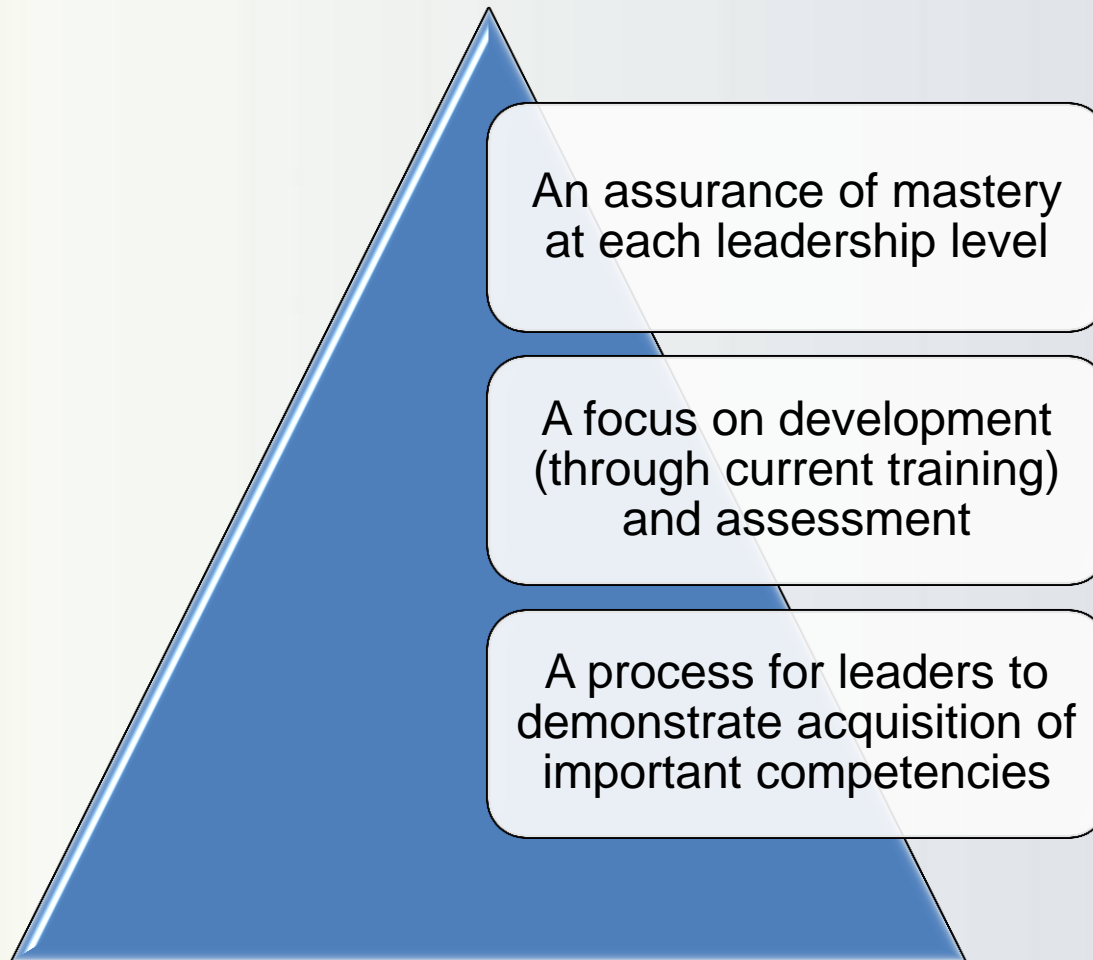**At a time when good leaders are in great demand, they are in short supply**

- Many agencies are facing increases in volume and complexity of service demands
- No consistent approach to ensuring development activities produce intended results
- Leadership pipeline is inadequate
- Formal leadership development programs reach only a limited audience
- Other leadership development efforts are fragmented

The Case for Change: Desired State

- Improve leadership preparedness and diversity
- Use a standard (e.g., competency model) to set expectations, provide feedback, measure progress, and build pipeline
- Easy identification of qualified leaders
- Early career identification of employees with high probability to succeed as leaders

Leadership Certification Concept Overview

What is Leadership Certification?

An assurance of mastery at each leadership level

A focus on development (through current training) and assessment

A process for leaders to demonstrate acquisition of important competencies

Certification v. Certificate: What's the Difference?

Term	Definition*
Certification	A process, often voluntary, by which individuals who have demonstrated the level of knowledge and skill required in the profession, occupation, role, or skill are identified to the public and other stakeholders.
Certificate	A training program on a topic for which participants receive a certificate after attendance and/or completion of the coursework.

The emphasis in certification is on assessment and not on preparatory training

*Source: Institute for Credentialing Excellence

Why Leadership Certification?

- Hold **leaders accountable** for demonstrating mastery of leadership competencies

- Provide a comprehensive framework for leader development that **reinforces learning via multiple methods**

- Demonstrate a **commitment to developing people** – critical to recruitment and retention

- Reinforces **importance of continuous learning**

Balance Flexibility & Consistency

Competency-Based

Alignment of Activities and Outcomes

Challenging and Rewarding

Voluntary but Strongly Encouraged
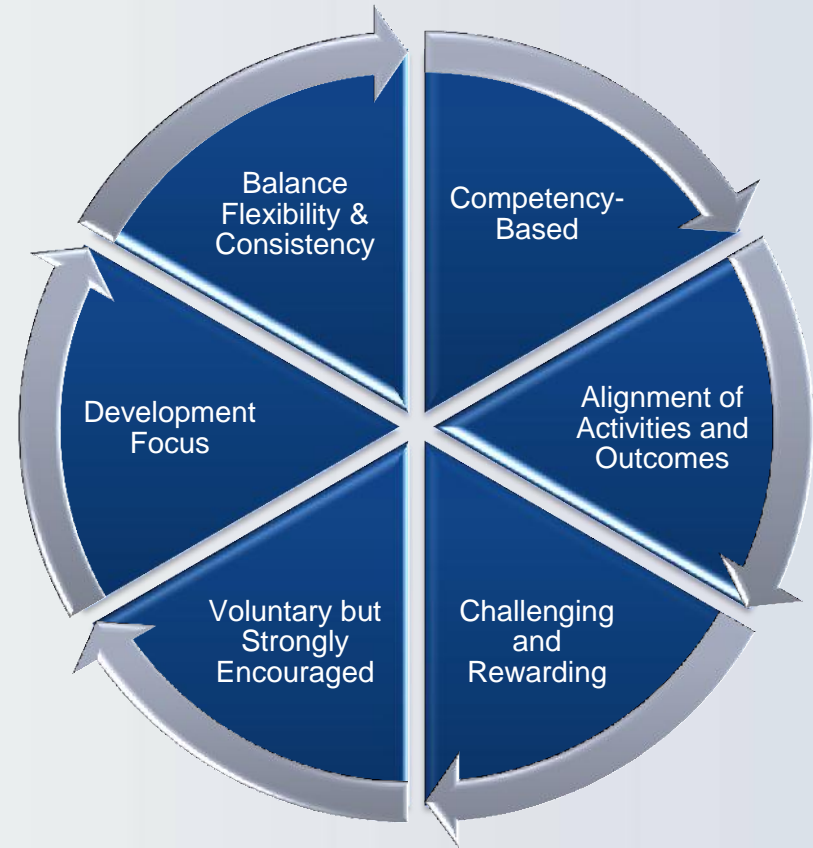
Development Focus

Certification at Multiple Levels

SES Recertification

Senior Leader

Intermediate (manager)

First-line (supervisor)

Aspiring
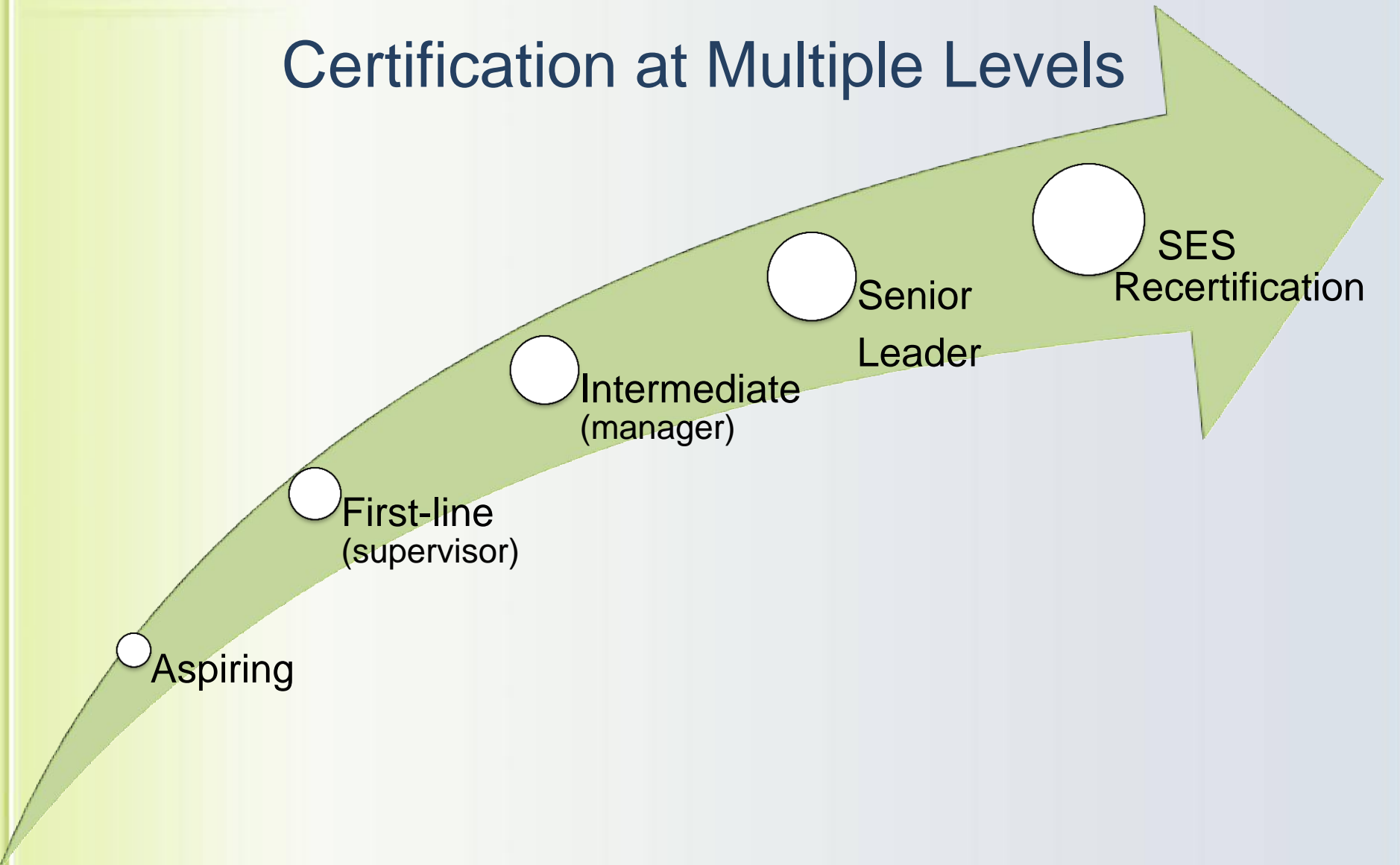
Leadership Certification at a Glance

Competency Gap Analysis	Tailored IDP	Development Activities and Portfolio	Competency-based Assessment	Certification Granted
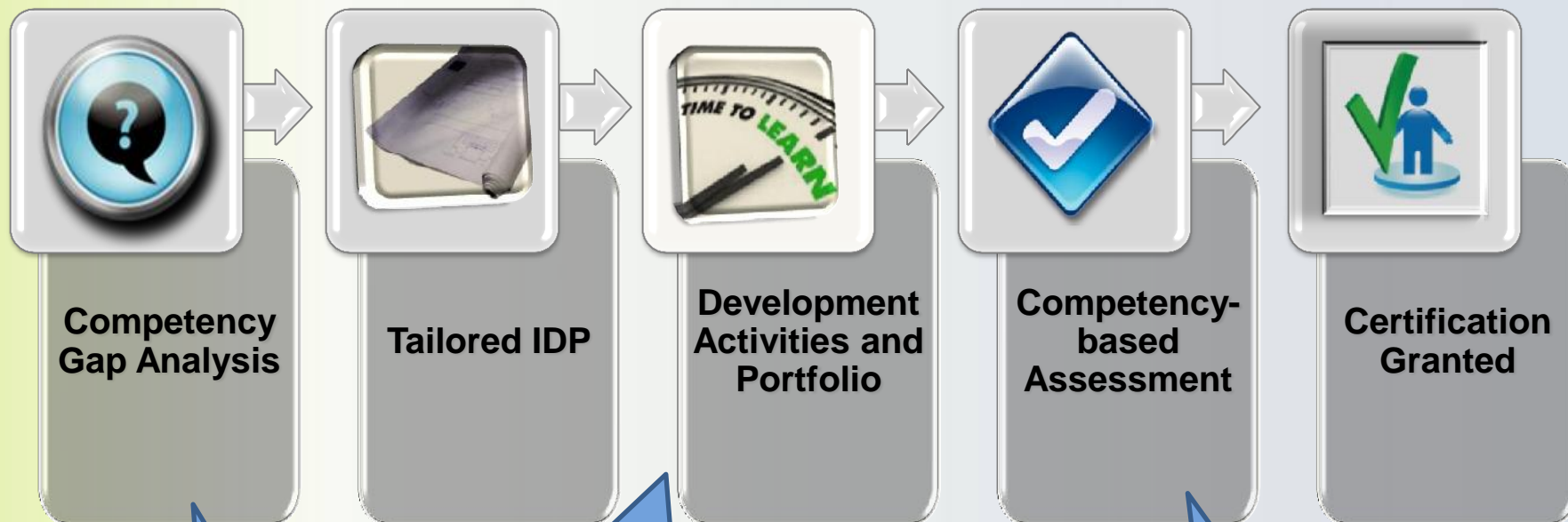
Where am I now?

**Where do I need to be?
How am I going to get there?
How's it going?**

Am I there yet?

Baseline Assessment:

Where am I now?

Best Practices for Developmental Assessments

✓ **Focus on competencies that can be developed rather than stable traits**

✓ **Assess level of proficiency and compare to that required for success**

✓ **Results from separate instruments integrated for clear feedback**

✓ **Feedback reports are clear, comprehensive, and easy to interpret**

✓ **Specific competency-based development recommendations linked to results**

PDRI is recognized thought leader in developing leadership competencies, assessments, and development programs, recently at OPM (HR professionals), CIA, GAO, FBI, NASA, and Army; Currently developing VA's Leadership Certification and Assessment Program

Competency Proficiency: Multi-Source Feedback Assessment

360-degree development tool

Self and other (supervisor, peers, subordinates) proficiency ratings collected for each competency
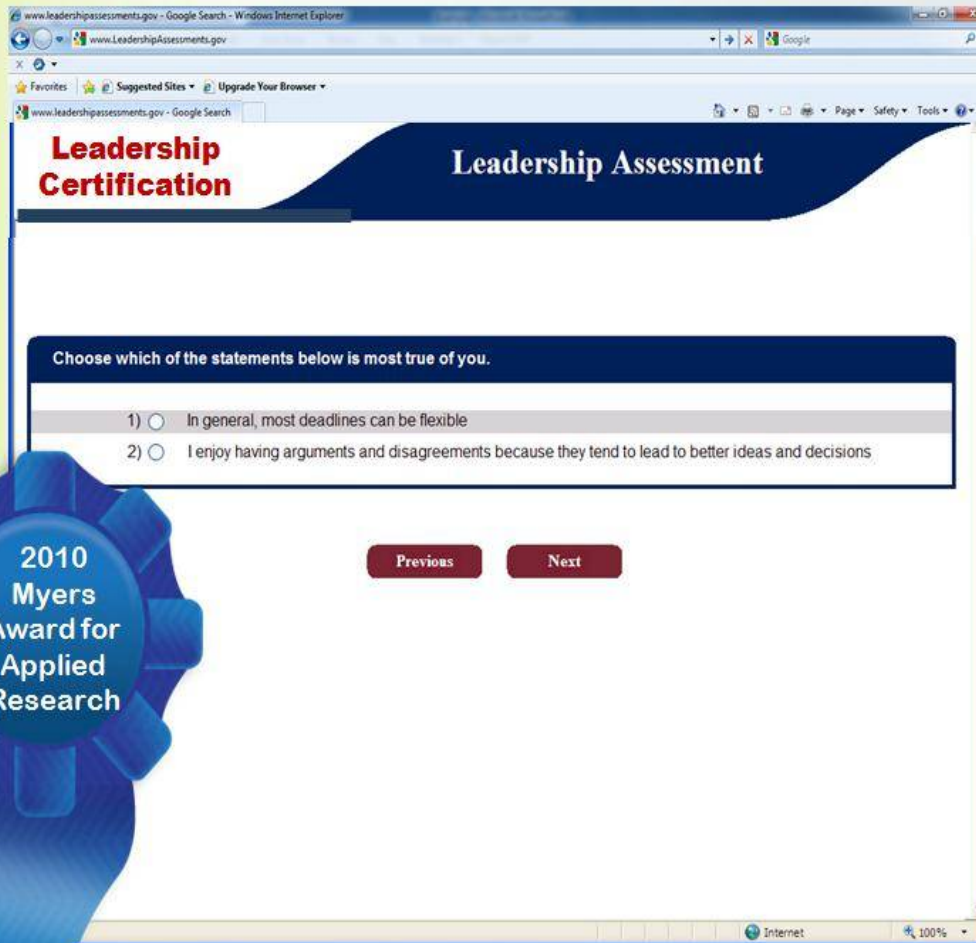
Where gaps exist, short drill-down checklist used to provide more specific feedback

Gaps against target proficiency levels immediately calculated

Assesses current proficiency compared to desired proficiency for current and future roles

CAT Leader Work Styles Assessment*

Assess and leadership competency with personality and biodata items

More difficult to distort than static assessments, thus mitigates faking and positive self-promotion

Proven effectiveness in Navy and Fortune 500 Companies

Creates a unique assessment experience for every participant

*Can also be administered as static assessment

Example Development Report and Gap Analysis
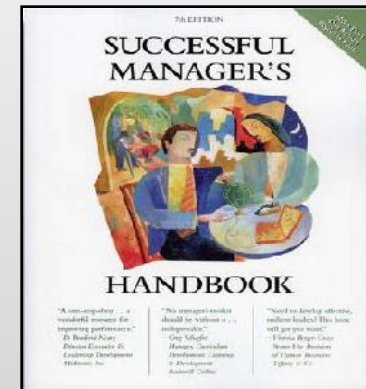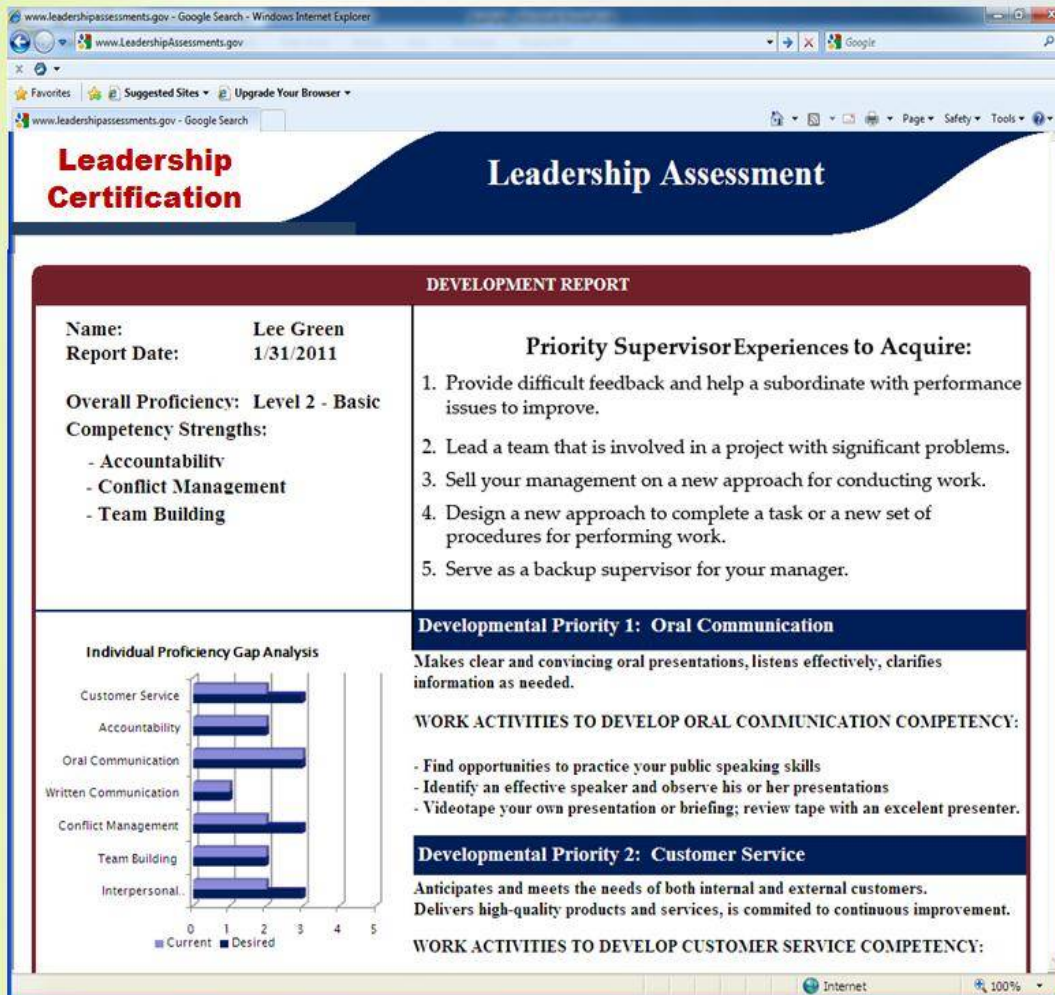
Assessment results, proficiency gap analysis, suggested development activities and resources from *PDRI Leader Development Library,* and Agency training catalog

IDP and Portfolio:

Tailoring development to identified needs

Development Requirements

- 200 total points required
  - 1 point roughly equals 1 hour of activity

- Each activity tied to at least one leadership competency

- At least one activity from each of the following areas:
  - Formal training
  - On-the-job leadership activities (emphasis here)
  - Self-development activities (e.g., multi-rater feedback tools)
  - **Mentoring/Coaching (receive, provide, or both depending on certification level)**
  - **Higher level leaders required to be a mentor**

- Log of reflections, accomplishments, and future goals in portfolio

Notional Development Plan

Example Development Activities by Certification Level

Front-line Leader

- Courses in basic supervision and leadership
- Portfolio and reflection
- Receive mentoring
- Experiential activities (on-the-job)
- Self-development activities
- Job-specific leadership experiences (e.g., conferences, etc.)

Intermediate Leader

- Courses in finance, project management, leading change
- Portfolio and reflection
- Receive mentoring/ mentor others
- Action learning projects and stretch assignments
- 360-degree feedback
- Self-development activities
- Job-specific leadership experiences (e.g., conferences, etc.)

Senior Leader

- OPM Lead Program
- Portfolio and reflection
- Receive mentoring/ mentor others
- Outside experiences (industry, War College, etc)
- Executive coaching
- 360-degree feedback
- Self-development activities
- Job-specific leadership experiences (e.g., conferences, etc.)

All activities are linked to critical leadership competencies

Development Portfolio

- Serves as the basis for holistic leader development
  - Standardized, yet flexible requirements
  - Activities must be linked to leadership competencies
  - Leverages existing courses; emphasis on a blend of activities
  - Credit for activities completed within the last year

- Benefits of the portfolio process
  - Tracks developmental milestones and showcases accomplishments
  - Challenges candidate to reflect on lessons learned and application
  - Facilitates setting concrete plans for further development

- Portfolio must be reviewed by supervisor, mentor, or other designated official

Competency Simulation Assessments:

An assurance of mastery

Leadership Simulation Assessments
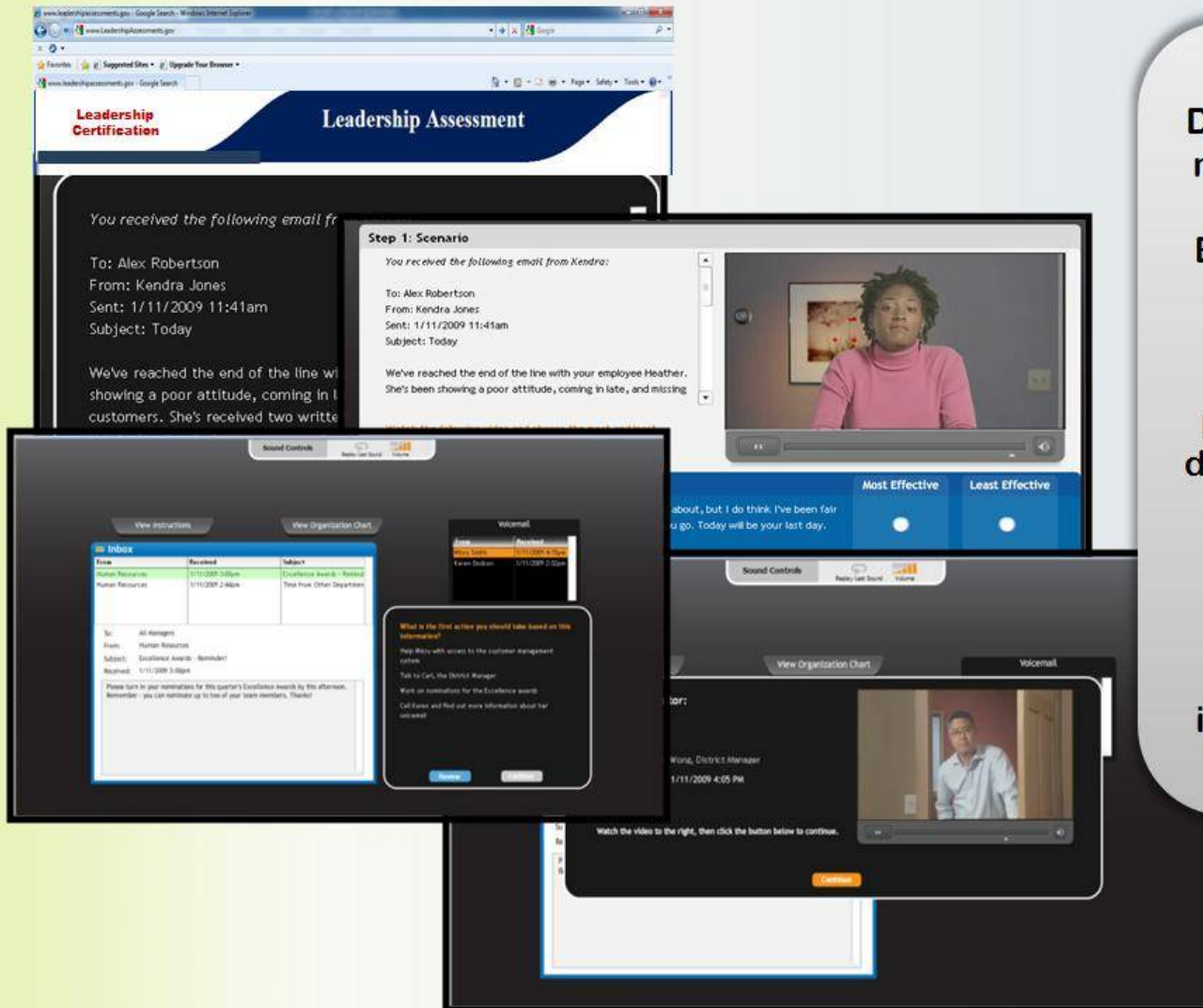
Pioneered by PDRI at DEA, commercial version named 2009 HR Product of the Year by HR Executive Mgr Magazine

Uniformly positive reactions and perceptions of fairness due to high job-relevance

Provides realistic job preview

Can administer same items with lower fidelity, less interactive tools

21st Century Inbox

Business Case Assessment

Branching Role-Play

What would you do?

- Actively Listen
- Provide Feedback
- Speak to the Person
- Disagree

Can assess many competencies, especially interpersonal

Branching yields a more interactive and realistic simulation

Immediate feedback on the effectiveness of the supervisor's decisions facilitates development

Automated Written and Oral Assessments

Assessment Results

- Feedback report after every assessment
  - Can be an integrated report if taken as a battery

- Must pass all assessments to be certified

- Can retake assessments if failed (after waiting period)
  - Specific feedback provided to develop areas still needing improvement

Key Considerations

Engagement

- Shape the key messages and communication tactics around engaging, educating, and empowering stakeholders

- WIFM (What's in it for me?)
  - What Leadership Certification mean to leaders
  - How leaders use Leadership Certification to support career development (e.g., promotion)
  - What are the rewards tied to Leadership Certification

- How Leadership Certification support's organizational goals

Supporting Infrastructure

Oversight

Accreditation

Agency Senior Leadership

Governance

Agency Learning Office

Advisory Committee

Regional Boards

Administration

Applicant and Candidate Processing

Communication and Education

Automation Platform (TMS)

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