

Twenty-eight leaders got a shared language for change, and a measure they could act on.

INDUSTRY	ORG SIZE	DURATION	SCOPE	CLIENT
Supply chain & logistics	~11,000 employees globally	One programme year	28 high-potential leaders	Anonymised

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY A global supply chain organisation made AQ® the adapting-to-change module of its accelerated leadership programme, giving 28 high-potential leaders a measured read on their own response to change during a period when the business was absorbing several crises at once.

Situation

The organisation's talent function had run a needs analysis for a new leadership development programme and identified adapting to change as critical. The module was approved before the delivery method was chosen. Meanwhile the business itself was moving: a global pandemic still working through operations, significant IT security disruption, geopolitical conflict reshaping established markets, and an active acquisition programme running alongside all of it. The 28 leaders selected for the high-potential cohort spanned every business unit and sat everywhere from Seattle to Japan. They were not studying change from a distance. They were leading through it as the module ran.

Implication

A leadership programme that names adapting to change and then teaches it as theory produces leaders who can describe change and still default to the pattern that worked last time. For a business whose customers feel disruption within hours, that gap is expensive. The talent function needed three things from the module: a framework and a shared language for adaptability, a measure precise enough for leaders to act on, and practices they could take into their own teams while the pressure was live.

Approach

Assessment Design

AQai® deployed the AQme™ assessment across all 28 participants, producing an individual AQ® profile across Ability, Character and Environment. Each participant received a one-hour individual debrief and coaching session on their report before any group work began, so the sessions opened with people who already knew their own data.

Where AQ® Sat

AQ® was positioned as the third chapter of an existing self-discovery sequence, not a standalone tool. Participants had already worked through Predictive Index® in the foundation module and CliftonStrengths® in the trust and motivation module. AQ® picked those threads up and asked what

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they meant when conditions shift, which is why participants described it as the point where the earlier modules connected. The module that followed covered critical thinking and innovation, and the adaptability material was built to hand forward into it.

In the Room

The cohort was split into four groups of seven, each attending two sessions. Session one covered building resilience and improving personal adaptability, working through grit, mindset and resilience, and opened with a structured reflection on each participant's own assessment data. Session two covered anticipating the future and leading a team through change, working through curiosity, mental flexibility, unlearning and hope. Every exercise was tied to an AQ® dimension and built to be run again by a participant with their own team: an unlearning canvas, an adapted nine-stage change curve, a five-step growth process with coaching questions behind each step, and improv fundamentals to train mental flexibility. A cohort pod session, a ten-day resilience workbook, and a change leadership toolbox carried the work into peer mentoring.

ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

Adaptability was already established as a core tenet of the business. What the organisation lacked was a framework to teach it, a shared language to discuss it, and any way to measure it. AQai® was engaged to give the training a body and a measure. The organisation certified a member of its global talent team as an AQai® Certified Practitioner to develop the content in-house, and brought in an external AQai® Certified Partner to run confidential debriefs and coaching and to facilitate the applied improv work.

KEY METRICS

28 Participants
8 Sessions
4 Cohort Groups
All Business Units

WHAT AQ® REVEALS

AQ® — the Adaptability Quotient — measures the human capacity to navigate change, complexity, and uncertainty. It is the only validated framework built specifically for the conditions modern organisations operate in.

Where engagement surveys capture how people feel at a single moment, and personality assessments describe who someone is, AQ® measures something different: what people can actually do when conditions shift. It assesses adaptability across three dimensions — Ability (the skills people use to respond to change), Character (how they show up under pressure), and Environment (the conditions around them that enable or block adaptation).

Leaders use the resulting data to predict who will thrive through change, target development where it will move the needle, and measure whether the organisation is genuinely getting more adaptable over time.

Results

- **AQ® gave the cohort a common framework for change.** Participants described it as the point where the earlier modules in their self-discovery sequence connected, moving them from three separate profiles to one working picture of how they respond when conditions shift.

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- **The Environment dimension was the differentiator.** All 28 participants identified it as something neither of the instruments they had already completed had shown them, and it took up the largest share of the coaching debriefs.
- **Individual profiles changed how leaders led.** Among participants scoring high on grit and play-to-win motivation, debriefs produced a stated change in how they made decisions with their teams.
- **The dimensions became practice.** Months after the sessions closed, participants were still running the mental flexibility exercises in their own team meetings across multiple countries and asking the facilitators for more material than the programme had supplied.
- **The work extended beyond the cohort.** Eight further leaders were assessed through a second leadership programme, and the organisation's senior HR leadership team was booked for a team assessment.

"the AQme assessment provided very good and personal insights, great reflection on how to use my strengths towards improving my adaptability." — Programme participant

WHAT THE CLIENT SAID

"For us it was obvious: if we as a company want to effectively surf the wave of constant change, we will have to strengthen our employees' adaptability and change leadership. The AQme assessment is an essential part of our ... leaders' self-awareness journey that allows them to improve their adaptability and take concrete actions on their abilities."

— Head of Global Talent Management, global supply chain organisation

PROGRAMME CREDIT

Designed and facilitated internally by a member of the organisation's global talent team, an AQai® Certified Practitioner. Individual debriefs and improv facilitation delivered by an AQai® Certified Partner.

ABOUT AQai

AQai is the world's leading platform for measuring and developing adaptability. Backed by science and built for modern organizations, our assessments help leaders and teams understand, predict, and grow their capacity to adapt, so they can thrive in any environment.

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