

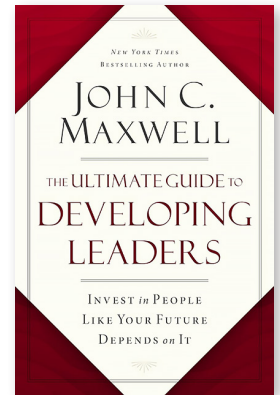


Executive Book Summaries[®]

The Ultimate Guide to Developing Leaders

Invest in People Like Your Future Depends on It

by **John C. Maxwell**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Strong products, smart strategies, and clear goals matter, but none determine organizational success as decisively as leadership. Whether a company is launching a new initiative, expanding into a new market, or trying to improve its existing operations, the presence or absence of capable leaders shapes the outcome.

Yet many executives hesitate to develop new leaders, fearing they may be training their own replacements. In *The Ultimate Guide to Developing Leaders: Invest in People Like Your Future Depends on It*, author John C. Maxwell argues the opposite: developing leaders is the surest way to secure an organization's long-term health, resilience and competitive edge.

Drawing on decades of global leadership work, Maxwell explains why leaders who multiply other leaders expand organizational capacity, strengthen momentum, and ensure continuity. He also shows why avoiding leadership development leads to stagnation and future vulnerability. For Maxwell, the goal is not to protect a position; it is to build a leadership pipeline that never runs dry.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Find out how to identify people with leadership potential and develop them with confidence
- Understand how you can empower emerging leaders to take ownership, drive momentum and share the leadership load
- Get useful advice on how to coach new and existing leaders toward sustained growth and higher performance
- Understand why developing leaders today secures the future of your entire organization long-term

CHAPTER 1

Understand That Developing Leaders Is the Answer

When conducting leadership conferences, I am asked a lot of questions about how to solve problems and overcome challenges. Most often, people want to know how to improve and grow an organization. My answer is straightforward: Develop leaders. If you grow a leader, you can grow the organization. If you don't, you can't. A company cannot grow throughout until its leaders grow within.

The strength of any organization is a direct result of the strength of its leaders. Weak leaders equal weak organizations. Strong leaders equal strong organizations. Leadership makes the determination.

The Unbelievable Return of Developing Leaders

For any team, small business, large corporation, nonprofit organization, or government entity, the key to accomplishing today's goals and achieving tomorrow's dreams is leadership. And the surefire way to improve the leadership of your organization or team is to develop leaders yourself.

There are innumerable benefits that come from having developed leaders working with you. Here are seven of the most significant:

1. Organizations with developed leaders outperform the competition

The better the leaders in an organization, the more successful it can become. A recent report published by human resources consulting firm Development Dimensions International stated: Organizations with the highest quality leaders were 13 times more likely to outperform their competition in key bottom-line metrics such as financial performance, quality of products and services, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction.

2. Developed leaders multiply your resources

When people become successful, they always eventually hit a wall where they realize that their resources are more limited than their vision. The solution to this dilemma is developing leaders. Good leaders increase resources in a way that nothing else does.

3. Developed leaders help you carry your leadership load

Leadership can be difficult. Most leaders carry heavy loads and feel that there are too few hours in a day. If you're a lone leader, you carry all that weight; but when you have other

leaders working with you, that weight can be shared. You simply need to be willing to give some of it to them.

4. Developed leaders help you create momentum

Momentum is a leader's best friend because it makes large problems small, average people excellent, and positive change possible. The best way to create momentum is to harness the positive power of good leadership. Leaders are all about forward movement. They love progress more than anything else.

5. Developed leaders expand your influence

Years ago, when I first started receiving invitations to speak to groups, I made a decision. If I had a choice, I would always choose to speak to leaders. Why? Because I knew that when I spoke to a group of leaders, I could help not only them, but all the people they help. That's why I'd rather teach a hundred leaders instead of a thousand followers. When I influence leaders, I influence all the people they influence.

6. Developed leaders keep you on your toes

Nothing keeps a leader on his or her toes better than leading a group of leaders who are being developed. When the team you lead is growing, you have to keep growing to keep leading them well.

7. Developed leaders ensure a better future for your entire organization

My organizations are filled with developed leaders who do particular tasks better than I do. I know that the future of my organization is secure because of the leaders who will carry on after I am no longer able to lead. If you have developed strong and capable leaders, and you have trained them to develop more, the future will be bright.

You Can Develop Leaders

It's taken me decades to learn what I know about developing leaders. I've had my failures, as well as my successes. As you take this leadership journey, there are three things you need to prepare yourself for:

1. Developing leaders is difficult

Leadership is hard work. There are no two consecutive easy days in the life of leaders. If today is easy, you know tomorrow probably won't be. But everything worthwhile is uphill. If the purpose of life was ease and comfort, no sensible person would ever take on the demands of leadership.

2. Developing leaders takes time

If developing ourselves as leaders is a long, ongoing process, then we should also expect the development of others in

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leadership to be the same. You must give up looking to cross a finish line and instead find your own internal fulfillment line. That’s something you can cross every day when you embrace the process of developing leaders.

3. Developing leaders put your dreams within reach

People too often overvalue their dream and undervalue their team. They think, “If I believe it, I can achieve it.” But that’s simply not true. Belief alone is not enough to achieve anything. It takes more than that. Your team will determine the reality of your dream. A big dream with a bad team is a nightmare.

CHAPTER 2

Commit to Becoming a Developer of People

We cannot reach our potential without the help of others. While self-evaluation is valuable, the perspective and assistance of people who are ahead of us in life and career are essential to our success. As a leader on your team or in your organization, you can help others go farther, move faster, and be more successful than they could ever be traveling on their own. You can do that by developing them.

Developing people means adding value to them in any way you can. It means giving people time, attention, advice, and encouragement when they need it. It means making an investment in them without expecting anything specific from them in return. It means giving them a leg up to make them more successful.

Leaders know intuitively that they should be developing people. We know it’s a great way to add value to others, improve their lives, and make our organizations more successful. However, too many leaders neglect the process. Here are five common reasons why:

- lack of awareness
- lack of time
- inability to find someone to develop
- lack of belief in others
- reluctance due to past failures

Credibility as a Developer of People

Your ability to develop others is dependent on what you know and what you are able to do. But it’s equally dependent on who you are. Development is caught as much as it is taught. The catching part is totally dependent upon your credibility. To gauge where you currently stand, ask yourself these three questions:

- What is my level of credibility?
- Will my strengths contribute to theirs?
- What experiences outside my strengths can I give them?

Becoming a developer of people is really about looking for ways to add value to others every day and committing to follow through. Developers don’t just lead a team and strive for organizational success. They invest in people to help them improve their lives. And when it comes time to train, coach, and mentor those people who have benefited from their investment, they are more open to following them and learning even more.

If you desire to develop leaders in your organization or on your team, the way to start is to commit to becoming a developer of people. That’s the strong foundation upon which to build.

CHAPTER 3

Get to Know Your Team Members

Listening is one of the most important skills any leader can possess, yet most of us put greater emphasis on talking. How many times have you heard people complain that their bosses don’t listen? How many times have you heard children say their parents don’t listen? People in authority usually prefer to talk. However, there is perhaps no better way to get to know others and connect with them than to become a better listener.

Once you become a better listener, you can increase your understanding of people by asking questions. Asking questions has the opposite effect of giving direction. When you give direction to your team, you often confine them. When you ask questions, you create room for discovery—for artic-

ulation, communication, innovation, and problem-solving. Questions show that you know you don't have all the answers and value the input of others.

Good leadership requires a perspective shift from it's all about me to it's all about others. That means we need to try to see things from others' points of view.

If you want to develop the members of your team as people and then be able to develop them as leaders, you need to get to know them. You need to learn how to see the world from their perspectives. You can do this in three key ways:

- **Learn perspective thinking** – learn how others think and lead them from where they are, not from where you are.
- **Practice perspective seeking** – when developing someone, get their perspective and then give them yours.
- **Engage in perspective coordinating** – point out and try to tie together different perspectives.

If you are going to develop people, you need to learn who they are and do everything you can to understand them. And you need to be open enough to allow them to understand and learn from you. And while you do that, be sure to encourage them. While people's hopes and dreams may be unique, they all need to be encouraged and lifted up.

CHAPTER 4

Equip Team Members to Excel at Their Jobs

There are three main reasons people fail in a job. They may lack the ability or the desire to do the job. Or they are not properly trained to do the job. Or they do not understand what they are supposed to do to complete the job. The good news is that equipping addresses two out of three of those problems. If team members who possess ability and desire fail, you may be at fault because you neglected to train them properly.

As a leader, it's one thing to ask people to be on your team and take a journey with you. It's another to equip them with a roadmap for the trip. Good leaders provide a means for people on the team to get where they need to go. They equip and empower them.

This process starts with the leader who intends to equip others. First, that leader needs to be successful. As soon as you know what you're doing, invite team members to join you

and let them watch you. In the third step, the focus moves away from the leader: it goes from I to you.

At that point, others are doing the task, and the leader coaches, encourages, and corrects the people doing the work. After that is the handoff. The task is delegated to the equipped team member. But importantly, there is a fifth step. The person who has been trained selects another team member to train. This is where the effectiveness transforms—it goes from addition to multiplication. If every team member trains someone else, the multiplication factor never stops.

To be successful in this process, focus on five essential practices:

1. Be an example others want to follow
2. Spend time with your team members
3. Set equipping goals with them
4. Encourage team members to learn by doing
5. Remove barriers to growth

CHAPTER 5

Identify Your Potential Leaders

Some leaders are tempted to recruit leaders from outside their organization and work with them. I recommend that you start where you are with who you have. Observe the members of your team, whom you should now know pretty well, since you've taken time to get to know them and equip them. Looking for potential leaders to develop in your own organization makes sense for three reasons:

1. They are a known quantity

Unlike when you interview people from outside, you don't have to imagine how insiders will perform. You can look at their actual performance to see what they can do. You can observe their strengths. You can personally talk to everyone who works with them to find out about them.

2. They already fit the culture

When people have already been working in the organization for any length of time, you know if they fit because they have already been a part of the community.

3. They have already established influence

Good leaders, even those with little training or experience, influence other people. When you're trying to identify potential leaders to develop, look for influence. It's a qualification that must be present in someone you wish to develop as a leader, because leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less.

A big dream with a bad team is a nightmare.

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One way to measure their influence is by using the Five Levels of Leadership, which move from the lowest to the highest levels of influence.

1. **Position.** People follow because of title.
2. **Permission.** People follow because of relationships.
3. **Production.** People follow because of results.
4. **People development.** People follow because of personal life change.
5. **Pinnacle.** People follow because of respect from earned reputation.

A Picture of Potential Leadership

As you look for potential leaders, remember that they will have the same characteristics as good leaders with whom you have already been working, except that they won't have developed these characteristics yet.

When I look for people with leadership potential, I start by examining five areas:

- the attitude of potential leaders: willing
- the character of potential leaders: solid
- the ability of potential leaders: high
- the track record of potential leaders: proven
- the mindset of potential leaders: improvement

CHAPTER 6

Invite People with Potential to the Leadership Table

Having a leadership table means creating a place in your organization or on your team where people can learn, practice leadership with its successes and failures, and receive opportunities to shine.

People with leadership potential want to spend time with other leaders. They want to observe good leadership. They want to talk about it. They want to experience it. It fires them up. A true leadership table is a place where anyone with potential, the desire to lead, and the willingness to learn can sit and become part of your leadership team.

To begin developing your potential leaders and to make your team or organization attractive to other potential leaders, you need to make sure a few things happen at your leadership table:

- expose them to the culture of a leadership environment
- encourage them to participate in the dynamics of the table
- allow them to benefit from the power of proximity
- let them practice leadership

CHAPTER 7

Know the Goal of Developing Your Leaders

Once you've invited people with potential to the leadership table and begin working with them, what do you want them to become?

Obviously, every organization is unique, and so are the goals and work that must be done. And different kinds of leaders need different skills to be successful in their areas. But are there key areas where all leaders can develop?

The answer is yes. When I develop leaders, I want to be certain they are developed in three core areas, which I think of as the three Gs:

1. Grounded – possessing core values that make them solid

Like begets like. That's a universal law. Look for leaders who have a solid foundation, who are grounded. The characteristics I seek in a grounded leader are:

- integrity
- authenticity
- humility
- teachability
- maturity

2. Gifted – using their strengths to lead well

There is no substitute for a lack of giftedness. Ability determines potential. The giftedness of leaders is the first step making it possible for them to grow and succeed.

3. Growing – possessing a hunger and capacity to keep learning and developing

Because we're discussing developing leaders, a pattern of growth is essential. Ideally, the leaders you are developing will already be growing and understand the growth process. If not, you will need to help them get there.

CHAPTER 8

Empower New Leaders to Lead

Where does the ability to empower others come from? It is based primarily on earning respect, building relationships, and providing an environment of empowerment.

The greatest leaders aren't necessarily the ones who do the greatest things. They are the ones who empower others to do great things.

To do that, leaders need to be willing to give up center stage. They must give up the need to be needed by others. Instead, they must cheer on the people they empower when they succeed, not feel threatened by their success. They must point to the victories of others and celebrate their successes. That's what secure, relational leaders do.

Take a look at the six characteristics of an empowering environment, make note of how many of them describe your organization or team, and think about ways you could promote them where you lead. Empowering environments:

- embrace everyone's potential
- give team members freedom
- encourage collaboration
- promote accountability
- give leaders ownership
- reward production

CHAPTER 9

Harness Your Leaders' Natural Motivation

In every leader's organization or team, you can find people who seem to lack motivation. It can be difficult to get some people moving. Ideally, the leaders you have chosen and begun developing will not be reluctant to dive into challenges and take action. But even people with high potential can use a boost. All of us can benefit from a bit of motivation from time to time.

Here are the seven motivations of leaders:

- **Purpose** – leaders want to do what they were created to do
- **Autonomy** – leaders want the freedom to control their lives
- **Relationships** – leaders want to do things with other people
- **Progress** – leaders want to experience personal and professional growth
- **Mastery** – leaders want to excel at their work
- **Recognition** – leaders want others to appreciate their accomplishments
- **Money** – leaders want to be financially secure

As you develop leaders, learn which of these seven factors motivate them and tap into them. By learning what motivates your leaders and harnessing that motivation, you will energize them to keep growing and developing. Focus first on what motivates them the most, but also inspire them in every area you can.

The best leaders and highest achievers are always self-motivated. They work because they want to. They lead others because it's rewarding. They take joy in their work. One of the greatest gifts you can give as a developer of leaders is to help the people you lead to harness their own internal motivation so that they can lead and inspire others every day.

CHAPTER 10

Challenge Your Leaders to Work as a Team

What's more powerful than a motivated, equipped, and empowered leader? A group of motivated, equipped, and empowered leaders. What's more powerful than that? That same group of motivated, equipped, and empowered leaders working as a team! When good leaders are united, empowered, and focused on a shared vision, they become almost unstoppable, accomplishing nearly anything.

If you want to achieve big things and develop your leaders at the same time, then you need to challenge them to work together as a team. To do that, you need to:

1. Make sure your leaders are in alignment with the vision
2. Help your leaders bond and care for one another

People won't commit to you when they understand you; they commit when they feel understood.

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3. Ensure that your leaders are growing together
4. Position your leaders to complement and complete one another
5. Communicate to your leaders how they are making a difference

- tangible results in their leadership
- hunger for growth

Whenever you invite leaders to be mentored, make it clear they haven't reached a destination. They're being given an invitation: to work just as hard, if not harder, but to make a greater impact doing it. By being mentored, they will gain greater influence and grow to make a larger contribution.

CHAPTER 11

Choose Who to Develop Further

One of the greatest leadership discoveries I made in my life was that the Pareto principle (20% of any group is responsible for 80% of its success in any given category) could be applied to people. This was revolutionary to me. I had been trained and encouraged to love and value everyone, which is something I still strive to do every day. But that doesn't mean you're supposed to develop everyone! Compounding benefits will result from developing the top 20%.

This development of the top 20% is the ultimate step in the development of leaders. This is what separates great teams from good ones. It separates teams that last from teams that flash in the pan. It enables teams and organizations to create successful succession plans. When you mentor your best leaders, it takes everything to another level.

As you prepare to choose who to develop further from your team of leaders, you need to be highly strategic, consistent, and intentional.

What to Look for in Leaders to Mentor

When you identified potential leaders and invited them to the leadership table, you had ideas about who might be a good leader. After developing them, empowering them to lead, and training them to work as a team, you now know what they can do. After all, you've seen them in action.

As you reflect on your experience with your leaders, look for these six characteristics:

- a track record of demonstrated leadership
- understanding of their place and purpose on the team
- recognition of the place and purpose of others
- willingness to give up personal agendas for the vision

Work Yourself Out of a Job

As you choose the best leaders to develop, I believe your ultimate goal should be to work yourself out of a job. Equip and develop leaders who replace you. It's what I've tried to do most of my life. I'm always looking around, asking, "Who can do what I am now doing?" For everything you do, there is almost always someone who can step into your shoes and take over.

Working yourself out of a job is the ultimate development win. Try to pass the baton in as many professional areas as you can. To accomplish that, focus on three things:

1. Place a high priority on working yourself out of a job

Begin by asking yourself, "What am I doing right now that could be done by someone else?" Once you've answered that, ask, "Who should I begin to develop to do this?"

2. Place a higher priority on developing people than protecting your position

Most leaders are focused on holding the position they have or gaining the position they want. The focus is on themselves. Ironically, hoarding power is often what leads to someone losing power. The position doesn't make the leader; the leader makes the position. The way you expand your potential is to help others develop theirs. Raising up and equipping leaders makes you a better leader—and better able to do bigger and better things.

3. Place a higher priority on succession than on security

Too many people in leadership positions are looking for security. But good leadership is never about holding fast. It's about moving forward. I believe that as a leader, if you work yourself out of a job, you'll always have another job. Success doesn't come from protecting what you have. It comes from developing others to replace you so that you can move on to bigger and better things.

CHAPTER 12

Mentor Your Best Leaders One-on-One

Perhaps the greatest compliment you can give leaders is to offer to mentor them. But mentoring takes more than just skill. It takes finesse. It takes empathy. You need to be able to find common ground with those you mentor because your relationship must be able to go to another level of openness and authenticity. You must be open about your past failings and mistakes. And you must make the leader you're working with feel safe enough to be open and honest about where they're falling short and need to grow.

Soft skills, such as asking questions and listening, having empathy for people's journeys, and understanding their perspectives, are crucial in today's leadership environment. People won't automatically commit to you and your mentoring when they understand you. They'll commit to and follow you when they feel understood. That will happen for you as a mentoring leader when you:

- value them
- let them know you need them
- include them in your journey
- adopt a teachable spirit
- ask questions
- listen well and often
- seek to know their perspective
- give credit to them when they help you
- express gratitude for those who helped you
- replace *me* with *we*

CHAPTER 13

Teach Your Leaders to Develop Other Leaders

If you have used the guidelines outlined so far to train, develop, and mentor leaders, you have already put yourself in rare company. The majority of leaders content themselves with gathering and leading followers; few put in the effort to develop people to become effective leaders.

Know that there is still one step higher you can climb as a leader. You can teach your leaders to follow in your footsteps and become developers of leaders in their own right. And that's a worthy goal, because every organization needs more and better leaders.

The best purpose of leadership achievement is to use everything you've learned to give a hand up to others, helping them become leaders, and then teaching them to do the same for others with potential. There are seven different growth levels that you must achieve to become a reproducing leader:

1. Growth that makes you capable of doing your job well
2. Growth that enables you to grow others in your job
3. Growth that allows you to effectively reproduce yourself in your job
4. Growth that provides meaningful opportunities for higher-level leadership
5. Growth that prepares you to develop others to higher levels of leadership
6. Growth that stretches you enough to have a mentoring relationship with growing leaders
7. Growth that gives you the ability to develop leaders who reproduce leaders

If you want to reach your full leadership potential, then you need to develop leaders who carry the same vision for developed people into leaders to reach their potential. If you do that and they do that, the leadership pipeline you create will never run dry.

Developing a Reproducing Environment

If you want to move up those growth levels and encourage other leaders on your team or within your organization to do the same, you need to create an environment that promotes leadership reproduction. To accomplish this, you need to have five expectations in place:

- The leader of the team models leadership development
- Everyone is expected to develop someone
- Leaders focus on developing leaders, not recruiting more followers
- People are continually growing themselves out of their jobs
- Leaders become more than mentors—they become sponsors

Conclusion

Teaching your leaders to create other leaders is the last step in a long journey of developing leaders. But the journey shouldn't end there. In a positive, healthy, successful, growing organization, the process of developing leaders never

stops. The best leaders continue to invest in people like their future depends on it—because it does.

Developing leaders is the most organizationally valuable action you can take. While other organizations are still trying to figure out what's next, your leaders will be out conquering new territory. While others are scrambling to find someone to champion their next initiative, you'll be taking your pick of leaders from your deep bench. When developing leaders becomes a lifestyle for everyone in your organization, you can't help but be successful.

If you want a better team, a better organization, and a better future personally and professionally, dedicate yourself to developing leaders. It will be one of the most impacting and rewarding things you ever do.



John C. Maxwell is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling author, speaker, coach, and leadership expert who has sold more than 34 million books worldwide. His work has been translated into dozens of languages and used to train millions of leaders across industries and nations. He is the founder of Maxwell Leadership, a global organization dedicated to developing leaders who create positive change. Maxwell also founded the nonprofit organizations EQUIP and the Maxwell Leadership Foundation. His teachings emphasize values-based, people-centered leadership. He has been recognized as the world's most influential leadership expert by *Business Insider* and *Inc.* magazine and is a recipient of the Horatio Alger Award and the Mother Teresa Prize.

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