

Client Success Story

Campari Builds Successful Leaders with CEB

CEB Talent Assessment

Leadership Identification and Development: CEB's development centers and workshops reduce the risk of bad appointments, build better current and future leaders, and help Campari retain the entrepreneurial spirit that drives growth.



- Sixth-largest player worldwide in the premium spirits industry
- Brands include Grand Marnier, Campari, Wild Turkey, Aperol
- Trades in over 190 nations

“For their professionalism, customer focus, empathy, and flexibility, CEB’s people tick all the boxes.”

*Vijay Kashyap
Senior Director, Global
Human Resources and
Product Supply Chain
Gruppo Campari*

Client Challenge

Grow Entrepreneurial Leaders

Campari has grown rapidly over the past decade, driven equally by many strategically important acquisitions and burgeoning organic growth.

One reason for the group’s success is its emphasis on local accountability and decision making. But ensuring its leaders can make those decisions is an ongoing challenge, says Vijay Kashyap, Senior Director, Global Human Resources and Product Supply Chain at Campari. “You have to ensure you hire and develop people who you know have an entrepreneurial streak, and that’s not easy.”

Not all Campari’s senior-level appointments had proved successful. “There were a few failures in managing director roles, and these were proving very expensive,” says Kashyap. “It was clear we were making too many talent decisions on a subjective basis, on ‘gut feel.’ We knew that had to change.”

Kashyap sought a partner to help introduce—quickly and cost-effectively—a more objective approach to succession planning that was tailored to Campari’s needs.

“We needed a partner that would allow us to learn from the experience of others but bring in solutions that were hinged around our values. We also wanted a strong ‘glocal’ company—with a global perspective but with strong local deployment capability. We chose CEB.”

Solution

Global Leadership Development Program

Campari worked with us to define its nine key desired competencies and map them to a single, common language, the Universal Competency Framework (UCF). This enabled Campari to institutionalize its measurement across the organization, identifying any gaps and tracking development progress.

This work surfaced the qualities most likely to lead to success in a leadership role, says Kashyap. “CEB helped us understand that being a successful leader was about much more than technical competency. It was about being equally strong in strategic thinking and execution, together with the ability to manage ambiguity.”

With our help, Campari introduced “Lead to Succeed” development centers for its existing and emerging leaders. These focused on identifying those with the potential to become general managers of key business units over the next two years.

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Challenge

- Retain entrepreneurial spirit.
- Reduce risk of failure in new appointments.
- Embed fact-based leadership appointment and development decisions.

Results

- Improved appointment decisions with zero failures
- Approach fully accepted and embedded in Campari culture after just three years
- 60% of all appointments now filled internally, exceeding target of 50%

Objective talent data from the development centers, including assessment results, are fed into an annual Campari talent board to inform succession and promotion decisions. Campari has also introduced a range of coaching initiatives, including workshops and one-on-one executive coaching as follow-up for the development centers, says Kashyap.

“Our development centers and talent board discussions showed that we needed to improve the coaching abilities of senior leaders. CEB’s coaching culture workshops now train and certify our top 100 managers. They in turn coach another 100 people so we cascade the learning throughout the company.”

Kashyap adds that the success of the development centers has also led Campari to adapt the approach for external hiring. “We use a leadership report, tailored to our needs, as a discussion tool with our extended leadership and for all senior external hiring globally.” The tool recently supported the launch of Campari’s first ever International Graduate program.

Results

Better, Fact-Based, Succession Decisions

Campari’s leadership development initiatives have been widely accepted across the organization and have given it a stronger pipeline of successful potential leaders.

“In three years we’ve moved from succession planning based on gut feel and personal likes to a fully fledged HR architecture and system that helps us make better decisions and enables targeted development,” says Kashyap.

“Today, no one can be promoted into a managing director role at Campari without being assessed and mapped against our leadership competencies at a development center. And we’ve extended the concept beyond commercial roles, so now all senior leadership positions, such as CFO appointments, also go through the process.”

Campari managers regularly use the assessment and development center vocabulary in performance and potential reviews. And there is already evidence that the new approach is helping the company make the right talent decisions—in promotions and in moving people between assignments.

“In all the appointments we’ve made since launching the development centers, we’ve had none of the former problems of people not being right for the role. All of them have been successful.”

Importantly, Kashyap adds that the approach is also helping Campari increase the proportion of appointments it makes internally, a key metric for the group. “We aim to fill at least half of our positions from our internal talent. And as we’re already at 60%, we’ve far exceeded that.”

Kashyap says the partnership with CEB is helping him deliver the mandate he was given by his CEO. “We’re making our current leaders better—our employee survey quality of leadership score has improved. Our leaders all know how to get better in their current roles, or how to prepare for the next ones. And we’re improving organizational capability by introducing functional competency mapping for all key roles, not just managers. So while there is still plenty left to do, I’m pretty happy with that score card!”

Kashyap sees CEB as an extension of the Campari team. “It’s a best-in-class partnership experience. For their professionalism, customer focus, empathy, and flexibility, CEB’s people tick all the boxes. It’s astonishing how everyone is cut from the same high-quality cloth.”

He believes the value of the relationship is not just to his organization, but to him personally, both at Campari and in previous roles. “Over the years, the assessments and CEB’s insights have proved an absolute gold mine.”

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