

# case study

## ESAB implements a new talent management programme



### The challenge

Founded in 1904, ESAB is a global world leader in welding and cutting consumables and equipment. ESAB has very ambitious plans for future growth. When Steve Kelsey, Global Head of Learning and Development, joined the organisation in January 2009 it was soon apparent that the organisation needed to introduce a more formal approach to talent management to support its growth. "We knew that we had great people in the business and that we wanted to recruit more great people over time, but we weren't quite sure who all of them were" says Steve. So to closely align their talent Steve embarked on the following approach:

### The process

1. The business wanted to identify who fitted in three different talent groups:

- Leadership talent – high level managers
- Development talent – junior managers with high potential to move into a leadership position
- Technical talent – a core of individuals who know and understand the key processes and systems crucial to the organisation

2. In order to decide who should be part of these groups, senior managers were asked to put individuals forward based on their own views and qualitative information. Performance review at the time was not an established process across all regions. Whilst the company had good qualitative information on its employees, it also knew that it needed more objective and quantitative data. This data would enable internal and external benchmarking and could be used in recruitment as well.

3. Keen to create an open culture based on transparency, Steve ensured that the short listed individuals were invited to join the programme on a totally voluntary basis. The benefits of using psychometric testing - such as the opportunity to receive professional feedback – and how the data would be used were carefully explained. The participants were also told how this would give them access to global development programmes adapted to their specific needs, mentoring provided by senior managers, mobility opportunities across the group and, ultimately, a path to more senior positions. More importantly, they were explained how, if they didn't make the cut, this didn't mean that they weren't valued by the organisation and that they wouldn't be able to join the programme later on.

4. Candidates were invited to take three psychometric tests (Watson Glaser and RANRA to test their critical thinking and numerical ability, and Intrinsic™ to measure their motivation). Provided by Getfeedback, these were delivered online and branded in their company logo. Results were made available immediately.

"Getfeedback came recommended to me because they had impressed one of my senior colleagues in his previous organisation. They definitely met all my expectations. Their processes are very efficient. Their platforms are very easy to use and fast and, as an organisation, they are very responsive" says Steve.

"I found the tests very challenging but also very rewarding, some of the questions made you think from a different perspective to situations and decisions that you would

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make in your normal function” says Mark Homan, Global PPE / Accessories & Gas Equipment Business Manager.

ESAB tested around 300 of their 8,000 employees worldwide. Candidates were given access to their own results and then offered one-to-one feedback sessions. Feedback was either provided by trained members of the HR community or, in the case of senior managers, by Getfeedback’s consultants. Out of the 300 tested, ESAB retained 200 people for inclusion into the talent pools. This number is organic and will vary with the needs of the organisation.

### Results

The programme created an open culture. Staff comment that they feel more motivated and empowered as a result. ESAB now have instant access to an international talent pool resulting in improved global utilisation. With a better understanding of their employees’ capabilities they are able to target training resources far more efficiently, resulting in a much bigger impact. Succession planning is also greatly enhanced and profiles of their existing talents are now being used as benchmarks when recruiting for new jobs. “I like to think of the programme as a football league where everyone is part of the league. Those who are in the league know the responsibilities that come with it, and those who are not understand what they need to do to get in” says Steve.

### Plans for the future

ESAB are very pleased with the results so far. “HR is definitely seen as the enabler to the business. Our organisation is dependant on having high performing people. By

knowing who they are, we are able to monitor the impact that they have. We have already seen internal promotions as a result of the programme, and this is clearly a financial benefit to the organisation” concludes Steve.