



TrueBridge Interim Leadership Evaluation Methodology and Model

Interim and Fractional
Leadership Competencies
and Assessment

Introduction

Leadership experts and hiring managers know: assessment is a critical part of a successful hiring process. This is especially true when filling C-Suite roles because of the significant and long lasting impact leaders can have on culture, strategic direction, revenue, and public image. A talented, culturally competent executive can drive crucial change in an organization while a failed placement can destabilize teams and drain financial resources.

Furthermore, just as in all aspects of a hiring process, standardization is key. The use of a standardized executive assessment model can support both the organization's and the candidate's success alike by counteracting bias, better gauging competency and culture fit for a role, and aiding successful onboarding and development.

Here at TrueBridge we have developed the **TrueBridge Interim Leadership Evaluation (TILE)**, a standardized assessment model tailor made for interim and fractional executives. This model reflects the distinct skills required of successful interim and fractional leaders across functions. We use this model to deepen our relationships with our Talent Network Members and in turn, as interim and fractional C-Suite executives become more common, ensure that hiring managers have the necessary tools to make data driven decisions.

Why Interim Assessment?

With the storied history of full-time executive assessment, one might question the value of an interim-specific competency model and assessment methodology. Beyond this, one may also question the value of investing in interim assessment — *if an executive is only sticking around for a short amount of time, how successful do they really have to be?*

The answer lies in what is expected of interim leaders. With a specific, time-bound scope of work, an interim leader needs to step in and step up with confidence, urgency and determination right off the bat in situations that full-time leaders can ease into.

Importantly, interim leaders are not only “placeholders” for a full-time leader; high performing organizations cannot afford to have an executive in seat for months who is doing nothing more than keeping the trains moving. Further, interim and fractional leaders often possess expertise and skills beyond what the organization can afford in a full-time leader.

When a company needs A+ talent but does not have the budget, bringing in an experienced interim leader can be a solution to set the organization up for long-term success, solve an especially challenging short-term problem, and accelerate the growth of successors and less experienced C-Suite teammates.

Further, most organizations are looking for an interim leader *now*, not in months. Given the accelerated search process, hiring teams have less time to fully evaluate candidates and are more prone to making a wrong decision.

By bringing forward talent that is assessed on a deeper, more intensive behavioral level — in addition to being vetted from an experience perspective — TrueBridge can better serve our clients through deeper talent knowledge. We eliminate some of the internal assessment clients may need and ensure the strength of the talent they are considering. Assessment increases both bandwidth and fidelity.

From the executive’s side, the depth of knowledge gleaned from an assessment can provide a great deal of self-insight and awareness. By better understanding oneself, an executive can seek out support, leverage their strengths, and work around their gaps with greater dexterity. Within an interim capacity, this is highly valuable. With the limited time interim executives have to build collaborative relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, assessments can help all parties meet one another with deeper understanding and insight.

Finally, executive assessment as a whole helps to set both executives and organizations up for success at the start of an engagement. By building a better understanding of a person’s strengths, gaps, and preferences, organizations can prepare for onboarding, build teams around their interim leaders, and set the scope of work accordingly.

TILE Methodology

Through analyzing literature on interim executives, hundreds of hours interviewing clients and interim executives alike, and leveraging the knowledge of leadership subject matter experts, we've identified three main factors that uniquely affect the success of interim and fractional leaders.

- **Demands of leading through high levels of ambiguity and with limited information**
- **Time constraints placed on delivering results**
- **Unique challenges to building trust with stakeholders**

Often, organizations look to interim and fractional executives in high pressure situations that the organization has not faced before. These leaders must be able to use their own expertise to drive change during what is necessarily an ambiguous time for the organization where limited information exists. As such, interim leaders need to be confident while navigating the unknown, making decisions with incomplete information, and helping others remain comfortable in ambiguity.

Additionally, because interim executives must deliver results in limited time, an extensive leadership history and deep functional expertise are crucial; they do not have time to learn the ropes. However, expertise alone is not sufficient. Interim leaders must also have intellectual curiosity and agility to successfully assess both their new organization's needs and the resources available in meeting their objectives.

Finally, interim leaders must be particularly skilled at building trust in their role. They are generally tasked with delivering substantial change in a short period of time – a recipe for tension – while of course being reliant on support from the organization to achieve their objectives. Interim leaders need to cultivate trust from team members, peers, and stakeholders (including the Board) within a matter of days while also bringing a somewhat independent perspective from which they can drive change.

TILE Model

The TrueBridge Interim Leadership Evaluation (TILE) assessment model is rooted in the unique competencies required of successful interim and fractional executives. The model consists of three overall categories – **Understanding, Delivery, and Interactions** – which gauge interim/fractional executive readiness regardless of function, organizational context, and other case-by-case factors.

These categories correspond to the following:

- **Understanding** the objectives and organizational context is crucial for successfully meeting objectives
- **Delivery** must entail a strong sense of urgency and exceptional level of determination
- **Interactions** with all stakeholders must be conducted with a high degree of emotional intelligence

TILE Competencies

Understanding

A successful interim or fractional executive must be able to quickly grasp the requirements of their role and the available organizational resources.

This requires a high degree of the following competencies:

- **Intellectual Agility:** to learn quickly and be adaptable, open-minded and curious in order to get up to speed in a fraction of the time a traditional leader has
- **Ease with Ambiguity:** to be confidently decisive with limited information and retain composure amid pivots
- **Managing the Matrix:** to possess an understanding of the social and political dynamics of the organization and navigate both formal and informal channels

Delivery

The nuances of delivering specific objectives in a short period of time require that an interim or fractional leader possess the following three competencies for success:

- **Ensuring Focus:** to be mindful of and focused on established priorities while keeping stakeholders involved in measuring success and adjusting goals
- **Bold Decision and Swift Action:** to possess an exceptionally high bias for action, urgency, and decisiveness
- **Hunger for Impact:** to deliver on goals with a high sense of ambition and exceptional degree of determination

Interactions

Interim and fractional leadership roles present unique interpersonal relationships, and a successful executive will excel in the following competencies:

- **Interpersonal Insight:** to understand and manage the emotions of those around; highly developed emotional intelligence
- **Listening and Sensing:** to let go of assumptions and absorb information in an intentional, expansive manner
- **Establishing Credibility:** to cultivate trust with stakeholders and others across the organization in a matter of days in order to be capable of meeting deadlines

Conclusion

TrueBridge is at the forefront of the future of work. We are helping world class companies change how they address their most pressing talent needs as our Talent Network Members revolutionize how they leverage their extensive expertise. Interim and fractional work presents incredible opportunity for companies and talent alike, and we are here to provide industry-leading service, resources, and insights.

We are excited to share this proprietary interim leadership competency model as a powerful way for us to further deepen our relationships with our Talent Network Members. The secret to success in any organization is to have the right talent in the right role, and these thorough, data and research-based assessments will help us to further expertly match our clients' needs to the right talent at the right time.

Nobody knows interim and fractional talent like TrueBridge.

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