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Enabling
Executives
Master
the Art of
Leadership

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Nicole Forward,
Head of Coaching &
Development



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Companies across industries, especially those undergoing transformation, face a common set of challenges: aligning executive behavior with enterprise goals, cultivating future-ready leaders, and fostering psychological safety and inclusivity. In this high-stakes landscape, RHR International has carved a distinct niche as a premier leadership advisory firm that brings together business acumen, deep psychological insights, rigorous assessment tools, and bespoke coaching strategies to transform leaders and organizations at scale. For over 80 years, RHR has helped organizations navigate the complexities of executive development, succession planning, and organizational culture. The firm's long-



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standing commitment to being a deeply data-informed, psychologically rooted consultancy that helps build leaders who get results is what now positions it as a true differentiator in the market. As a pioneer in the industry, RHR International's mission is to help CEOs, boards, senior executives, teams, and tomorrow's leaders master the art and science of leadership. Nicole Forward, Head of Coaching & Development at RHR International, brings a compelling perspective to the company's approach, "We are not a transactional coaching provider. We are strategic partners invested in deep transformation, not just surface-level change," she states.


At the center of RHR's philosophy lies a commitment to systems thinking—developing leaders not in isolation but in alignment with the full complexity of their organizations. This means considering board dynamics, executive team alignment, cross-functional collaboration, succession readiness, and cultural cohesion as interconnected parts of the same whole. RHR's approach to enterprise leadership transcends traditional coaching methods. Rather than focus solely on individual competencies, they evaluate how leaders function within the broader organizational system. This also includes how aligned their actions are with business strategies and whether they can scale to meet future challenges. Forward explains, "When we talk about building enterprise leadership, we're referring to a mindset shift—getting leaders to think beyond their own verticals and align toward collective, cross-functional goals. That's the foundation of sustainable leadership and that's what we really do."

In fact, RHR doesn't believe in off-the-shelf solutions. Their engagements are bespoke, targeted, and often designed for high-stakes contexts—mergers and acquisitions, succession planning, CEO

onboarding, and board transformation. Their coaching and advisory work is intentionally directive, something rare in the industry, with a strong focus on impact. "A lot of coaches ask great questions, but they stop short of telling leaders what they actually need to do to succeed," says Forward. "We challenge their beliefs, address their blind spots, and offer a clear direction. That's why we're called advisors—not just coaches." This commitment to clarity and candor allows RHR's team to act as trusted confidants to some of the world's most influential executives. Their clients often turn to them for the difficult conversations that no one else can have—conversations that cut through defensiveness and drive lasting change.

One of the cornerstones of RHR's methodology is its emphasis on rigorous behavioral science. The firm incorporates deep assessments that evaluate personality, cognitive ability, leadership style, and potential derailers. These assessments are coupled with stakeholder interviews and 360 feedback to deliver a holistic picture of a leader's capabilities and developmental needs. To that end, the firm developed its proprietary "Readiness for Scale" model—an evidence-based tool that assesses a leader's ability to thrive in more complex, enterprise-level roles. This model has enabled organizations to make more confident succession decisions and tailor development strategies with precision. The results speak for themselves. In a recent engagement with a global consumer goods company, RHR deployed its Readiness for Scale model to transform their leadership pipeline. The outcome was a significant increase in promotion rates for high-potential leaders and a measurable shift in organizational culture toward greater operational alignment and engagement.

While RHR is embracing AI and predictive analytics to enhance its services, it remains firmly grounded in the human experience. The firm's coaches are not just selected for their deep understanding of human dynamics and business acumen—they must demonstrate an ability to form peer-like relationships with clients and guide them through difficult, vulnerable moments. "We use deep inquiry and business acumen to understand what success looks like in a particular role at this moment in time," Forward notes. "That's the nuance of coaching—understanding people on a deep, emotional level and helping them unlock their fullest potential." As the firm integrates AI-powered tools to improve scalability and objectivity, it ensures that these technologies serve to enhance—rather than replace—the relational foundation of its work. Its in-house data insights and analytics team develops proprietary tools, ensuring full alignment between technical innovation and client impact.

RHR's future is as ambitious as its legacy. The firm is expanding its footprint in private equity and tech markets, both of which are increasingly recognizing the value of structured leadership development as they mature. Its cohort-based leadership programs are also seeing growth, blending group learning with individualized coaching to serve more layers of the organization. Additionally, RHR is doubling down on culture-building and inclusion as strategic levers, particularly as organizations seek to retain talent and drive performance in rapidly evolving markets. And with a strong presence in over 20% of the Fortune 100 companies, the firm's impact is already shaping the global leadership landscape. "As volatility and complexity are the norm today, mastering leadership is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity," concludes Forward. "That's what we help our clients do: prepare for scale, lead with intention, and transform with purpose." 

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