

The *Perfect* Game

Traditional leadership development is like Parkinson in "The Perfect Game", one of the short stories in G.K. Chesterton's 1909 book *Tremendous Trifles*.¹ Parkinson, drawing on all his skills, knowledge, and abilities, to master the game of croquet, loses sight of the joy that comes from just playing the game – as Chesterton tells him, "It is logically possible, to play croquet too well to enjoy it at all."

Many work hard to win the games they play, few allow themselves to go beyond... to more fully experience the players, to see the players as individuals, and to imagine the players realizing their full potential. In most organizations, leaders neglect to use their imaginations to see undiscovered talent... talent potential that is critical to successfully carrying out each organization's mission and strategy. By helping leaders use their imagination, they can better see talent as strategy. Currently they rely on staff experts or standard interviewing techniques rather than exploring fresh approaches to developing internal prospects...a fatal flaw!

The workshop enabled participants to go beyond the obvious... to visualize the complete player. Grounded in best practices from the player development systems that professional sports teams employ, participants practiced scouting skills while playing croquet. They learned how to apply scouting skills to real life situations, surface and debate the potential to make smarter picks, and realize that scouting is not a *perfect* science – its hard work that requires practice to produce results that build more productive and competitive organizations.

After introducing core concepts, participants played a round of 6-wicket croquet. As they played, they were task to scout a prospect ... to see if the prospect demonstrated leadership *potential*. At the conclusion of the match, teams shared their comments on the prospect. They also provided feedback on the learning experience and suggested ways it could be improved and applied in broader arenas.

¹ As a pre-workshop preparation, participants read "The Perfect Game".