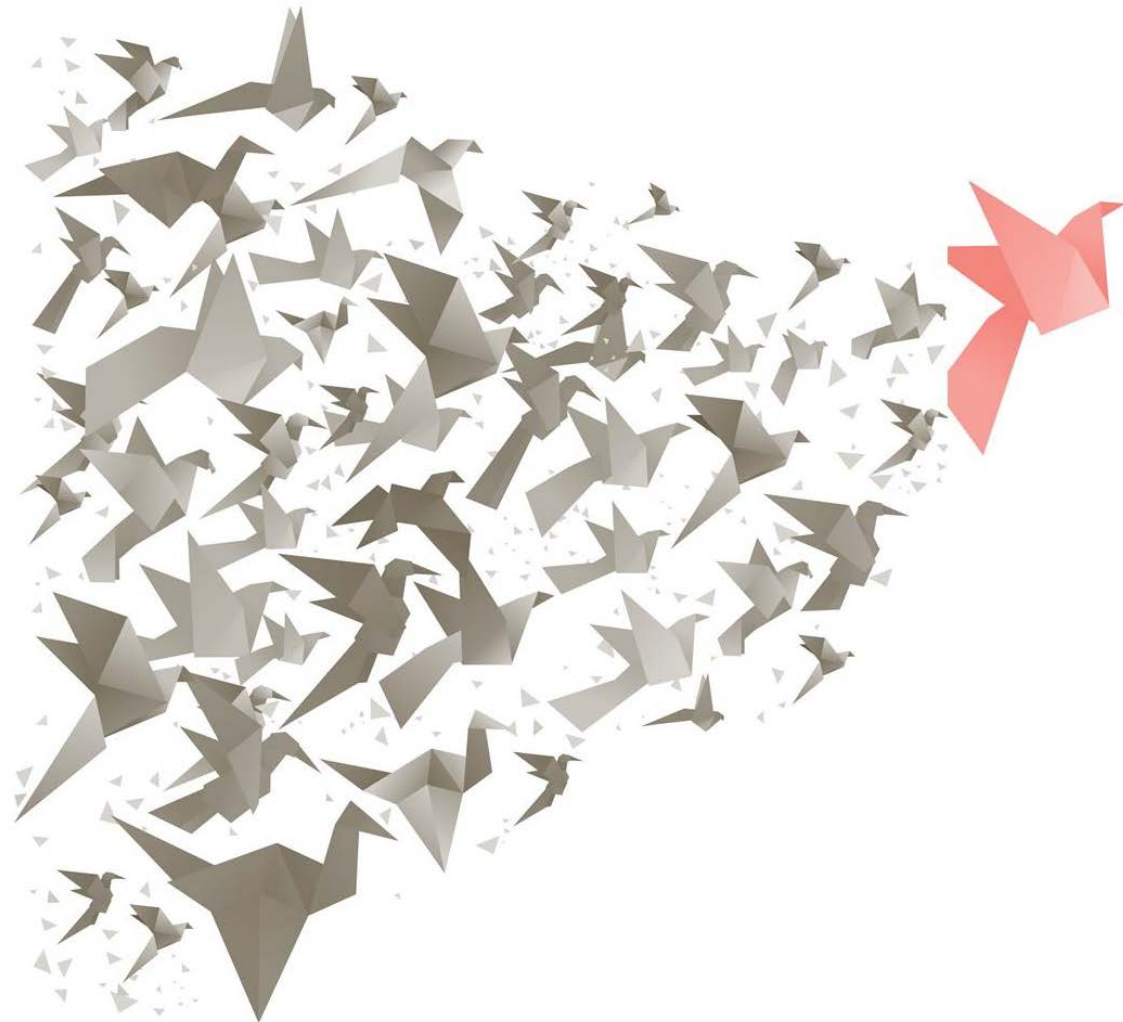Ei World

BATES EXPI™

Helping leaders influence the world.

THE CASE OF JANE
USING THE BATES EXPI[TM] *TO DEVELOP SENIOR LEADERS*

Using the Bates ExPI^{TM} to Develop Senior Leaders

The idea of executive presence is a common theme in discussions of leadership. What has been lacking is a clear conceptualization of what it is and how it can be assessed in order to guide its development in senior leaders and those who aspire to such roles. The Bates Executive Presence Index (Bates ExPI™), which is based upon the Bates Model of Executive Presence, fills this gap. (See figure 1, p.4).

In the case of Jane, we highlight just one real-world example of a talented leader on her way up. As you will see, despite her compelling performance history and business savvy, top management worries that what has gotten her this far is not enough to ensure her continued success. Let's now consider the case.

Jane, President of Logistical Systems Advisors

Jane is a hard-driving executive who has made a tremendous impact through individual thought leadership and resourceful innovation. In addition, she has become quite effective in driving organic growth by hiring smart people and relentlessly demanding improvements in product performance and responsiveness to client demands. While her style can chafe some, top management believes that such issues have been mitigated if not muted up to this point because business performance has yielded lucrative rewards for all.

Logistical Systems Advisors (LSA) is one of several companies owned by their parent, ICON Corporation, and management has identified LSA as a strategically important engine for growth over the next 2-5 years. However, this strategy has raised some questions about whether or not Jane is the right person for the future of this business. The strategy requires timely entry into opportune markets by means of an aggressive growth-through-acquisition approach. Moreover, management is keenly aware of how difficult it can be to navigate the post-acquisition integration of new businesses into the portfolio.

The CEO of ICON does not want to lose Jane. Therefore, in consultation with his COO and the Chairman, he decided to talk frankly with Jane about the firm's expectations for LSA and about their concerns over the suitability of her style to this bigger leadership challenge. It was a true "heart-to-heart" discussion.

Jane's response was encouraging. Not only did she acknowledge her "flat sides," she expressed genuine desire to address the development needs identified by the CEO. She welcomed the opportunity to cultivate the more effective leadership style required to help build the LSA of the future. Management agreed to give Jane a chance to prove herself in this role. However, they felt it was critical that Jane have some professional support. She agreed and an executive coach was engaged.

Business Imperatives – The major business challenges for Jane were identified: 1) getting "schooled" in the art of acquisition while concurrently implementing this strategy with the support of the CEO and outside experts; 2) creating a leadership team that is highly collaborative and that will assert dissent and adaptively function in moments of constructive conflict; 3) developing a management structure and processes that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the several lines of business that will operate under the LSA umbrella; and 4) empowering and enabling the leadership of those who are directly charged with the day-to-day operations of the several LSA business units, old and new.

Development Themes – Key development areas were also identified: 1) becoming more able to orchestrate the leadership of others, playing a more facilitative role; 2) increasing her self-awareness of and capacity to moderate the intensity of her drive in order to reduce the risk of dominating discussions and discouraging the input and initiative of others; 3) attending carefully to the qualities of judgment and thought that her CEO and outside experts exemplify in order to grasp the reasons (hard and soft) that guide their decisions and actions; and 4) expressing interest and openness to others in order to become more approachable and to position herself as a sounding board and coach to others.

Actions Taken – Jane and her coach took some specific actions responsive to her development themes: 1) Jane obtained ExPI™ feedback, learned more about how she is perceived, and compared these perceptions to the requirements of the new role in order to generate hypotheses about how the gaps are created, and what she might do to close them; 2) she used self-management techniques to notice when her drive level was spiking, causing her to become too intense, and how to interrupt this cycle in order to make better choices about how to respond; 3) she adopted an active listening style and practiced it at work and outside of work to make it a more natural part of her dialog with others; and 4) she sought advice from her coach on how to approach team dynamics, how to structure interactions in regular meetings and in 1:1s in order to promote constructive conflict and free expression of dissent.

Impacts Observed – Within the first 90-120 days, Jane obtained feedback on early indicators of progress: 1) from the CEO, "I've noticed that you are asking more questions and really seem to be paying attention to relationships and people issues, and that is very encouraging"; 2) from her leadership team, "you seemed to almost be trying too hard at first – trying not to say too much or dominate discussion – but lately we are glad to see you speak up a bit more, it feels more natural and helpful"; and 3) self-observations included "at first I was almost too self-conscious, trying too hard to do it the right way, but now I am feeling more comfortable with standing back a bit from the day-to-day and figuring out when and how to intervene."

Leveraging the Model - In the case of Jane, the Model is helpful in highlighting behavior-change goals that a) moderate her intensity and b) address needs for greater self-awareness of the Character and Substance tendencies that require attention. These aspects of her development are rather predictable themes in adult and leader development. Let's just consider a few. Note that the facets are italicized:

- **The results of feedback** – In the Character dimension, no one questioned Jane's *Authenticity* or *Integrity*, but she was not seen as having *Concern* or giving focused developmental attention to her people. She was also perceived as lacking *Restraint*; she could be volatile and overly reactive. In the Substance dimension, *Composure* and *Resonance* were rated low, but she was given higher marks for *Practical Wisdom* and for *Vision*. And she was certainly not seen to be lacking in *Confidence*! In the Style dimension, her gaps clustered around *Inclusiveness*, *Interactivity*, and *Assertiveness* (too much). She had some work to do!

- *Emphasizing areas of strength* – Although her style was seen as intense, bruising, and even intimidating by some, most (like her CEO) recognized Jane's good intentions. Their comments suggested that there was a lot to learn from working with her. If you had "thick enough skin" to speak up, she would listen to dissent and feedback. Nevertheless, it took some coaching for Jane to appreciate the "silver lining" in her mixed feedback. She needed to learn how to self-manage her intensity, discover the satisfaction of getting things done through others, and encourage others to express their voice and talent, just as she had done.

- *Parallel pathways of development* - On the one hand, Jane had discovered that while certain long-standing, person-based tendencies (Character) helped her (*Authenticity* and *Integrity*), others (*Concern* and *Restraint*) were limiting her growth as a leader. It took time for her to recognize that cultivating the capacity to help other leader's develop (*Concern*) could actually be quite satisfying for her. And discovering that most issues were not life or death (*Restraint*) — and that a lack of patience can close more doors than it opens — motivated her to develop techniques for exercising *Restraint*. On the other hand, the opportunity to deploy new Style-oriented skills and strategies provided her with a more overt route to change, e.g., scheduling time to engage with all rather than some (*Inclusiveness*). Such behavioral changes played to her strengths in *Intentionality* and her capacity to model high energy (*Appearance*) and spark executional excellence.

- *Leading indicators and later consequential impacts.* The early feedback from her CEO was encouraging, but on its own it was not enough for her or for him. As he and she got feedback from her leadership team, both knew that change really was possible and that it would also require sustained deliberate effort. Being the goal-oriented sort by nature, Jane was encouraged by her coach to "operationalize" her developmental outcome goals. She approached this by developing a plan with the assistance of her coach. The question-driven process often started with the stem "What would it look like if …?" In addition to working with her coach, Jane engaged her key stakeholders – both are key factors that predict success in leadership development.

Figure 1. The Bates Model of Executive Presence

An overview of the Bates Model of Executive Presence is provided below. It is the first comprehensive, research-based model of executive presence, and it is the first to be operationalized in the form of an instrument intended for a senior executive population in an organizational setting.

The ExPI™ multi-rater feedback survey measures self-perceptions of the leader and the perceptions that others have of him/her on all 15 facets of the Bates Model of Executive Presence. The Model is designed to be comprehensive and to measure the "right stuff."

Dimensions of Executive Presence

Character: qualities that are fundamental to the leader as a person, to his/her identity, and give us reason to trust him/her.	**Substance:** cultivated qualities of mature leadership that inspire commitment, inform action, and lead to above-and-beyond effort.	**Style:** overt, skill-based patterns of communicative leadership that build motivation and that shape and sustain performance.
Authenticity – being real, transparent, and sincere in one's relations and with others, and willing to reveal the beliefs that shape one's point of view.	**Practical Wisdom** – displaying highly honed qualities of insight and judgment that get to the heart of issues and produce prudent decisions.	**Appearance** – looking and acting like an able executive, adapting dress and demeanor to the situation, and handling social situations with tact.
Integrity – acting with fidelity to one's values and beliefs, living up to high standards of morality, veracity, and promise keeping.	**Confidence** – being self-assured in decision-making and action; ready to accept the risk and responsibility for taking timely action.	**Intentionality** – clarifying direction and keeping actions aligned and on track, all without stifling dissent or neglecting needs to adjust.
Concern – demonstrating interest in others, encouraging adaptive development, and promoting a healthy sustainable culture.	**Composure** – proving to be steady in a crisis, able to calm and focus others, and to bring objectivity and perspective to critical decisions.	**Inclusiveness** – actively involving others, welcoming diverse points of view, encouraging ownership in mission, and empowering.
Restraint – displaying a calm disposition, reflected in reasonableness and by avoidance of emotional extremes, impulsiveness, or a rush to judgment.	**Resonance** – connecting with others; attentive, attuned, and responsive to their feelings, motivations, and thoughts; deepens alignment.	**Interactivity** – promoting an interpersonal style of dialog and timely exchange of information and questions to coordinate action.
Humility – showing awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, openness to others, and a belief that all persons have worth.	**Vision** – generating an inspiring, enterprise-wide picture of what could be; recognizing emerging trends, and engaging all in strategy.	**Assertiveness** – speaking up, valuing constructive conflict, and raising issues directly without shutting others down.

Facets of Behavior

Questions to Prompt Reflection

The questions below are intended to prompt your reflection upon a case that we will be using throughout the Certification Program. You will not be required to share your responses to these questions, but you may find that by briefly responding to each prior to your arrival, you will enhance your readiness to make the most of the learning experience when you arrive.

- *Do you know Jane?* Have you worked with an executive with Jane's characteristics? If so, what were the similarities and differences? Did this person also encounter challenges that prompted her/him to discover self-limiting tendencies and needs for growth and development? What were they, and how were they addressed (or not)? How did it work out?

- *Appraising Jane's potential.* Using the Model of Executive Presence on the previous page and your copy of Jane's ExPI report, briefly and in your own words summarize your sense of how Jane's highest-rated facets suggest a "brand" to be proud of and to build upon.

- *Appraising the impact of her development themes.* As you consider Jane's lowest-rated facets, can you identify ways in which they interact with one another: 1) to generate problems; 2) to mute her potential strengths; and 3) to make change difficult?

- *The challenge of helping Jane*. What would you find most challenging in trying to help Jane as a coach? What would you find most satisfying in trying to help Jane as a coach? Where would you begin, and what would you encourage her to focus on first?

- *The role of her CEO*. If her CEO were to ask you for advice on his role, what would you share with him? What might be most difficult for him initially and over time? How would you plan to involve him in the development process, and what would he need from you?

- *Leading indicators and business outcomes*. If Jane were to ask you how she might approach measuring the progress of her efforts and evaluating the impact of her changes on the business, what would you say to her?