

MillerKnoll: Developing Operations Leaders from Within and Beyond

A Case Study in
Structured Talent
Development

By Haley Glover

UpSkill America,
The Aspen Institute

October 2026



Introduction

For many manufacturers, building a capable leadership pipeline is a persistent and familiar problem. Turnover pushes people into roles before they are ready. External hires struggle to stick. And the institutional knowledge that makes an organization distinctive is hard to pass on at scale.

MillerKnoll, Inc. (MillerKnoll), a global design and manufacturing company headquartered in West Michigan, has responded to these challenges with a deliberate, structured system for developing its own people into the roles it needs them to fill. That system has three programs at its core. **Bridge** and **Propel** each move frontline manufacturing Associates into operations leadership roles through sequenced, hands-on development. Since 2009, nearly 900 Associates have moved through one or both programs. Ninety-three percent have graduated, and 26% have advanced beyond the role the program prepared them for. The third program, **Career Academy** opens a different kind of door – a six-month, full-time placement in an office-based role anywhere in the business, designed to help manufacturing Associates explore and transition into careers beyond the shop floor.

Together, the three programs reflect a clear organizational perspective: MillerKnoll believes its strongest talent is already within the company, and that intentionally investing in its people will deliver better outcomes than relying primarily on outside hiring.

This case study examines how the programs work, what drove the organization to build them, and what others in workforce development and talent strategy might take from MillerKnoll's approach.

Context

The Organization

In 2021, Herman Miller, Inc. (Herman Miller) and Knoll, Inc. (Knoll), two leaders in their industry, merged to form MillerKnoll, a design and manufacturing firm that produces furniture and workspace products for offices, healthcare settings, educational institutions, and residential spaces. The company employs approximately 10,000 Associates, and operates manufacturing sites in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina, California, and Wisconsin, with additional international facilities in Canada, the U.K., China, India, Italy, and Mexico.

MillerKnoll describes itself as being in the business of designing and creating spaces for work, living, healing, and learning, and is recognized as a design leader among peer organizations. It operates as a collective of brands across several channels, and its workforce spans frontline manufacturing Associates and skilled trades through engineers, product designers, and corporate business functions.

Its workforce is occupationally diverse. The same company employs people who operate machines on the shop floor and people who design the products those machines make. People who manage inventory and people who manage brand strategy. That range matters for understanding why a single, coherent development philosophy is both difficult to achieve and worth pursuing.

How MillerKnoll Operates

To understand the programs, it helps to understand how MillerKnoll thinks about the work itself.

The company has organized its operations around a proprietary system called the MillerKnoll Performance System (MKPS), which is modeled on the Toyota Production System (TPS), the approach to manufacturing developed by Toyota and widely studied for its emphasis on continuous improvement, quality, and waste reduction. MillerKnoll has been coached directly by Toyota for 30 years, a relationship that is unusual even among organizations that aspire to lean manufacturing.

MKPS is not a toolkit or an initiative. It is the way MillerKnoll operates. "We don't take an event-based improvement approach," said Jill Miller, Continuous Improvement Manager for Global Learning and Development. "MKPS is about engaging people to surface and solve problems daily."

That distinction matters for talent development. In most manufacturing environments, a strong leader is someone who knows the technical side of the operation and can keep production moving. At MillerKnoll, a strong leader also must be able to teach, coach, and develop the people they work with daily, in real time, on the floor. Technical skills are necessary but not sufficient. And the behaviors required to lead in this environment like coachability, composure, the ability to build trust and manage conflict are not ones that show up automatically, even in experienced manufacturing leaders.

Within MillerKnoll operations, leaders understand that their role is to support their teams, essentially flipping the traditional "org chart" upside down. The people doing the direct manufacturing work are the priority, and each layer of leadership exists to help them do that work safely, with quality, and on time. Within that structure, there are five levels in operations:

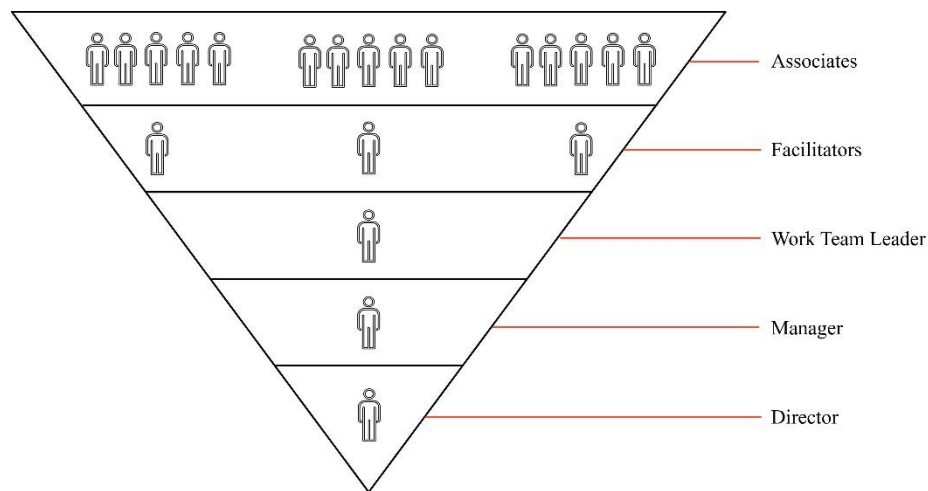
- **Associates** are frontline manufacturing employees doing the direct work of production.
- **Facilitators** support Associates. When an Associate encounters a problem, they signal for help; the Facilitator responds, works to get things back on track, documents what happened, and uses that information to prioritize and solve problems. This role is the linchpin of the entire system. Without capable Facilitators, the improvement engine stalls.
- **Work Team Leaders** are the equivalent of supervisors. They oversee Associates and Facilitators, coach them on technical and operational skills, and manage the day-to-

day decisions of running a team: ensuring they have trained staff producing high-quality work, on time.

- **Managers** and **Directors** provide operational oversight and strategic direction for all those within their remit.

The programs MillerKnoll has created support that leadership mindset by helping Associates grow, take on new responsibilities, and move through the operations structure with the support of the leaders around them.

- **Bridge** is designed to develop Facilitators.
- **Propel** is designed to develop Work Team Leaders.
- **Career Academy** serves as a pathway for all three levels into corporate roles.



Talent Challenges That Impacted the Programs

For most of its history, Herman Miller, MillerKnoll's predecessor organization, was considered an employer of choice in West Michigan, known for strong wages, long tenure, and generational loyalty. That history also shaped a long-standing belief in developing people from within, which led to programs like Bridge, Propel, and the Career Academy. Over time, the pandemic and the 2021 Herman Miller-Knoll combination put new pressure on the talent environment, increasing turnover and creating gaps across parts of the operations leadership pipeline.

One response was to hire from outside, which introduced a new problem. Experienced manufacturing leaders who came from other organizations brought habits and instincts shaped by different systems. Some of those habits directly conflicted with how MKPS works. "The behaviors that may have helped you be successful at other companies may not be the same here," Jill Miller said. "Not only might they not be what we're looking for – they might actually make you struggle in this organization."

The cultural challenge compounded the technical one. Individuals we spoke to consistently described MillerKnoll as a deeply relational organization, where success depends not only on technical expertise but also on building relationships and navigating informal networks. While external hires may possess strong technical credentials, they often require additional time and support to build the relationships needed to be fully effective.

A separate challenge emerged in parallel. Many manufacturing Associates who weren't interested in becoming supervisors had no visible path forward. They could see how to move into leadership within manufacturing, but had no idea how to get into marketing, finance, operations support, or any of the other functions that make up the rest of the business.

The common insight behind all three programs is simple: people who already understand MillerKnoll's culture, operating system, and relationships are often better positioned to succeed than people who have to learn it from scratch. Bridge, Propel, and Career Academy are the infrastructure MillerKnoll has built around that belief.

The Programs

MillerKnoll's three programs are connected but serve distinct purposes. Bridge and Propel are sequential stages in a single operations leadership pathway. Career Academy is a separate track designed for manufacturing Associates who want to explore roles elsewhere in the business. The paths can intersect – some Career Academy participants have already been through Bridge or Propel – but they do not have to.

What Bridge and Propel Have in Common

Before describing each program separately, it is worth noting the structural features they share.

Both programs run as cohorts. Participants go through together and graduate together. The cohort is not just a scheduling convenience. It creates a shared reference point and a peer network that lasts well beyond the program itself. Bridge runs three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring with cohorts of 12 to 20 participants, while Propel's three cohorts include 5 to 8 students each. Cohorts are larger in Bridge than in Propel because the organization needs more Facilitators than Work Team Leaders.

Both programs involve competitive selection. Candidates are evaluated by their Work Team Leader and their Manager before they are considered. The selection process is intentional and involved, and the organization does not aim for a 100% graduation rate. "If we had a 100% graduation rate, I think we're not reaching far enough into the pool of potential," Jill Miller said. A net cast broadly enough to include genuine stretches will sometimes come up short, and that is by design.

Both programs fully release participants from their current roles. For the learning phase of each program, participants are not expected to keep doing their regular jobs on the side. Development is the job.

Both programs assign each participant dedicated coaches. The primary coaching pool for both programs consists of Continuous Improvement Leads, who provide consistent coaching throughout the programs. Additional coaching is provided by Work Team Leaders in Bridge and Managers in Propel. This creates a double benefit: participants receive consistent, experienced guidance while coaches strengthen their own leadership and coaching skills in the process.

Both programs assess participants weekly on two dimensions. One is technical: how well participants are learning and applying MKPS tools and concepts. The other is behavioral: how they are showing up across ten specific characteristics. Coaches review both assessments with participants each week, so there are no surprises about where someone stands.

The behavioral framework is the same across both programs. The ten characteristics are: coachability, engagement and initiative, integrity and trust, perseverance, adaptability, interpersonal savvy, composure, conflict management, time management, and leadership.

The list was built by starting with MillerKnoll's existing organizational competency model and adding characteristics that are specifically important in an MKPS environment. Coachability and composure, for instance, are particularly critical when a leader's job is to coach others through daily improvement work, not just direct traffic. The framework is reviewed periodically with operations Directors and is currently being updated as the company revises its broader competency model.

Technical skills are assessed on a four-level scale. The levels move from "can recall the concept" to "can apply it with support" to "can apply it independently" to "can coach someone else to do it." Bridge and Propel target different levels on this scale for the same skills, which creates a clear, shared picture of what development looks like at each stage.

Level	Criteria to be Achieved	Targets
R - Recall	Can recall the general concept	Bridge Target = AC
AC - Apply with minimal coaching	Can do with minimal support	Propel Target (Bridge skills) = CC
AO - Apply on Own	Can do without coaching	Propel Target (new skills) = CC
CC - Coach with minimal coaching	Can coach concept with minimal support	



Bridge: Developing the Facilitator

Bridge exists to develop people for the Facilitator role. Facilitators are the first line of support for frontline Associates. They are the people who respond when something goes wrong, who work to restore normal conditions, and who document and solve problems systematically. "MKPS literally could not function without this role," Miller said. "It is one of the keys to the whole system."

Structure. Bridge is nine weeks of structured learning followed by a three-month internship. During the nine weeks, participants are freed from their regular responsibilities and spend

much of their time on the shop floor, working under the guidance of a dedicated coach. There is a classroom component as well, but the emphasis is on application.

The internship puts participants into the Facilitator role on a temporary basis, where they are doing the job, but have not yet been permanently hired into it. It is a final test of fit, for the participants and for the operational leaders evaluating them.

What participants learn. The technical content in Bridge covers the core MKPS tools a Facilitator uses every day: observing and documenting stability and waste, measuring cycle time against the target pace of production, using standardized work to establish and document the current condition, applying Kaizen (structured, small-scale improvement) to improve that condition, and using the quality principle of Jidoka to identify defects when they occur and perform root cause analysis to eliminate the underlying cause and prevent recurrence. Bridge graduates are expected to be able to apply all of these skills and tools with minimal support, operating at the second level of the four-level proficiency scale.

Soft skills. Alongside the technical content, Bridge includes five classes focused on the interpersonal side of the Facilitator role: building relationships, communicating effectively, earning trust, managing change, and navigating conflict. These are delivered by or in partnership with the HR team and are treated as equally important to the MKPS content. "You can be as technically proficient as you want," Jill Miller said, "but if you can't do this work with other people, you're not going to be successful. You can't have one without the other."

The prerequisite. Completing Bridge is required before entering Propel. Someone can apply to Propel without having been a Facilitator, but they cannot start Propel until they have finished Bridge. The reason for this is Work Team Leaders are responsible for coaching Facilitators. Because Bridge teaches the core skills and tools Facilitators use in their roles, Work Team Leaders need a strong understanding of those same concepts before they can effectively coach others.

Propel: Developing the Work Team Leader

Propel develops people for the Work Team Leader role, the supervisory level responsible for a team of Associates and Facilitators. Work Team Leaders manage the daily operation of their areas, coach their Facilitators, and handle the range of decisions that come with having direct reports: ensuring trained staff are producing high-quality work, on time.

Structure. Propel is twelve weeks of learning followed by a three-month internship. The three additional weeks compared to Bridge reflect the added complexity of the Work Team Leader role, particularly the people management dimension.

The twelve weeks cover four stages:

- **Management Basics (about two weeks).** Led by the HR team, this phase covers the practical responsibilities of having direct reports: MillerKnoll's HR policies, how to deploy them consistently, and how to handle the day-to-day realities of managing a

team. The five soft skills from Bridge are revisited here, this time from the perspective of someone with formal leadership responsibility and direct reports.

- **Bridge Skills Assessment (about one week).** Before teaching any new content, Propel starts by finding out what participants actually retained and can do from Bridge. They go directly to the shop floor without review or warm-up and demonstrate their current capability across everything Bridge covered. They complete hands-on station work, then take a closed-book technical quiz, then work through the quiz in a deep-dive review. Finally, they receive the core instructional slides for each topic and are asked to annotate them: not to read the slides back, but to identify the key points, come up with their own examples, and explain how they would teach the concept to someone else. All of this is assessed against the four-level technical scale. The target for Propel participants on Bridge-era skills is the top level. They should require minimal support to coach others on Bridge concepts.
- **New MKPS Content (about one week of instruction, then floor application).** Propel introduces skills not covered in Bridge that Work Team Leaders specifically need: a structured eight-step approach to solving more complex problems; capacity analysis; leader standardized work, which is the practice of structuring a leader's own time and routines for consistency; and labor management, meaning how to adjust staffing in response to shifting customer demand and the current stability of the operation. For these new skills, the target is the same as Bridge graduates on their material: able to apply with minimal support.
- **Floor Application and Execution (about six weeks, split between planning and doing).** Participants move into a work area that is not their own, the same practice used in Bridge, where they spend two weeks observing, shadowing an existing Work Team Leader, and building a fact-based plan for what they will work on: what does the area need? What are the data telling them? What resources do they have? The plan is reviewed before they act on it. Then they spend four weeks executing it, coaching Facilitators, applying the tools they have learned, and handling the day-to-day realities of the role, all with their coach alongside them.

The internship. Following the twelve weeks, participants enter a three-month internship in the Work Team Leader role on a temporary basis, mirroring Bridge's structure and serving as the same kind of final, applied test of fit for the individual and the organization.

Career Academy: Manufacturing to Office

Origins

Richard Scott, MillerKnoll's Chief Global Manufacturing and Operations Officer, heard the same thing from Associates at site after site: they could see how to move up in manufacturing but had no idea how to move elsewhere in the business. Some had college degrees they were not using. Most had spent years developing real skills like problem-solving,

communication, working in teams, and understanding how a complex operation functions that were not visible to hiring managers in other departments.

In January 2020, MillerKnoll hired a new Career Development Liaison to address this gap, providing dedicated career coaching to manufacturing Associates. While the role helped create greater awareness and support, it quickly became clear that coaching alone was not enough. Associates wanted opportunities to apply what they were learning and gain hands-on experience in new areas of the business.

"The intent wasn't that we wanted everyone to get into office positions," said Monica Ramirez, who now leads the Career Academy. "It was really about addressing what we kept hearing from Associates: they wanted opportunities to explore different career paths within the organization. When Associates were given the chance to participate in development roles, the host departments quickly recognized the value they brought. They understood our culture, knew our products and processes, and became valuable contributors. In many cases, the host department would say, 'I don't want to lose this person,' because they had become such an important part of the team."

How it works. The program places manufacturing Associates, including line workers, Facilitators, and Work Team Leaders, into a six-month, full-time development role in an office-based department anywhere in the company. Participants step completely out of their manufacturing roles for the duration. Their home position is held for up to a year, so the decision to try something new does not require giving anything up.

Placement is not automatic. Positions are posted in the company's HR system. Associates apply, interview, and must be selected by the hiring manager using the same process as any other open role. There is no college degree requirement. The only eligibility conditions are a minimum of six months in the current role and no active performance management plan.

The funding model. Each quarter, MillerKnoll posts funded Career Academy positions in the U.S., Canada and U.K. These positions are paid for by the manufacturing organization: the Associate's labor cost stays within the manufacturing budget, which means the host department gets a full-time contributor at no cost to them. This was a deliberate choice to remove a common barrier - departments that might be interested but unwilling to absorb an unbudgeted head count can participate without a budget impact.

Departments can also choose to make self-fund placements, absorbing the cost themselves, which removes them from the quarterly cap. Roughly 22% of Career Academy participants to date have been in self-funded positions, reflecting genuine demand from departments that exceeds what the funded slots can accommodate.

What participants do and learn. For six months, participants work full-time in their host department, doing real work alongside existing teams. They keep their manufacturing wages, including shift premiums and quarterly bonuses, plus their benefits. A pay adjustment of up to 7% is available once they demonstrate independent competency in the role and if guidelines are met.

Alongside their on-the-job experience, participants go through a structured curriculum covering four areas:

- Technology tools they will use in an office environment: Outlook, Teams, OneNote, Workday, and Excel from basic through advanced
- Professional development: public speaking, professional presence, resume writing, interviewing, and goal setting
- Self-awareness: a Birkman personality and occupational assessment, plus discussions of imposter syndrome, psychological safety, growth mindset, and blind spots
- Operations tools: productivity and innovation tools used in the MKPS

At the end of six months, each participant presents to Scott, Chief Global Manufacturing and Operations Officer, and other senior leaders, an intentional design choice that gives graduates visibility with people who have influence over future opportunities, and signals to those leaders that someone worth knowing just came through the program.

Each participant is also paired with a peer mentor, someone who has already completed Career Academy and moved into a permanent role, who can offer guidance from their own recent experience.

What happens at the end. Development roles are six months, with a single three-month extension available if needed, funded by the host department. Total time in a development role cannot exceed one year. After that, participants either convert into a permanent role in their host department, apply for other open positions they are now qualified for, or return to their manufacturing role, which has been held for them.

Monica Ramirez joined MillerKnoll in June 2013 as a temporary third-shift manufacturing Associate with a goal she held onto from day one: she did not want to be on the line forever. "I remember in my interview saying, give me five years and I'm going to become a Work Team Leader," she recalled. "I was very eager to learn as much as I could and really push myself."

About a year and a half in, a conversation with her Work Team Leader changed her trajectory. She had been eyeing a machine operator position, but he asked if she had ever thought about Bridge. She applied, got in, completed the six-month program, and returned as a Facilitator. She moved across shifts and sites, and a year and a half later applied to another program that would eventually become Propel.

This time, she made a decision that colleagues still remark on. As Propel participants were permitted to start applying for supervisor roles partway through the program, Monica held off. "I really wanted to soak as much as I could in," she said. "I wanted to understand: is this the career path I want to take?" She waited until nearly the end before applying. When her five-year anniversary arrived, she had her Work Team Leader role, right on schedule.

She was good at it, but what she loved most surprised her. "The thing I loved the most was working with people, helping them grow, develop. Seeing people who sometimes thought, I don't know if I can do this, and being like, look at me, if I can do it, why can't you do it? I was really passionate about development."

When a brand-new role, Career Development Liaison, was posted in late 2019, Monica applied. While she didn't have an HR background or a degree, she had a decade of navigating MillerKnoll's development ecosystem, a network built across shifts and sites, and a firsthand understanding of what manufacturing Associates need because she had needed it herself. She was selected, launched the role in January 2020, and by April had met with more than 150 associates across West Michigan.

Then COVID hit. Hiring stopped, the role was paused, and Monica returned to the floor. "It was kind of scary for a little bit," she says, "but I stayed positive." She used the time to prepare Associates for when hiring resumed. In June 2020, Richard Scott, Chief Global Manufacturing and Operations Officer brought her back permanently. When her manager left the organization in May 2021, the Career Academy landed in her hands.

She has been running it since from a chair she never could have anticipated sitting in when she started on third shift. "I think maybe I could have gotten into a supervisor role, because I feel like I'm a natural leader," she says. "But I don't think I would be where I am right now. This company really opens a door."

That perspective shapes everything about how she runs the programs. She has been in the room when participants find out they got the permanent position. She knows what a manufacturing Associate feels when a salaried offer arrives. "I get to see that vulnerability in them that sometimes others don't," she said. "And I can tell them: I understand what you're feeling. That change in salary, that break – it just makes such a difference."



Results. As of the current cohort cycle:

- 92 Associates have completed Career Academy through cohort 15, with 14 additional Associates currently active in cohorts 16 and 17. Cohort 18 is currently being posted, with openings in the U.K., North Carolina, Georgia, and Michigan
- 82% have converted into permanent office roles
- 26% have received additional promotions since completing the program

What the transition actually means. The shift from hourly manufacturing work to a salaried office role is about more than compensation. For many participants, it creates access to new career experiences, broader professional networks, different kinds of development opportunities, and a clearer path into roles Associates may not have previously considered. The value of the program is not just in helping people move into office-based work, but in expanding their sense of what is possible inside MillerKnoll and giving them the tools, confidence, and support to pursue it.

What We Learned

People developed from within show up differently

When manufacturing Associates who have been through MillerKnoll's programs step into new roles, whether a leadership role in operations or an office role through Career Academy, the people around them notice.

Nearly 900 employees have moved through Bridge and Propel since 2009, with a 93% graduation rate. Of those graduates, 26% have advanced beyond the role the program prepared them for, a figure that reflects not just successful placement but continued momentum. Career Academy tells a similar story: 82% of participants have converted into permanent office roles, and 26% of those have received additional promotions since completing the program.

The people behind those numbers tend to arrive in their new roles differently than external hires do. "When they step into these positions, everyone is blown away," said Jill Miller. "Not just by the amount of work they can accomplish, but how quickly they can ramp up, and how well-versed they are in the expectations around relationships here at MillerKnoll."

Onboarding time is an inherent cost of external hiring, and cultural fit can be one of the most difficult factors to assess during the hiring process. By contrast, internal talent often brings organizational knowledge and established relationships that can accelerate the transition into new roles.

Behavioral challenges surface before technical ones

When participants struggle in Bridge or Propel, the problem is almost never a technical knowledge gap. It is a behavioral one, someone who is not responding well to coaching, or who is struggling to manage their composure under pressure, or who is having difficulty building trust with the people around them.

The weekly behavioral assessment, combined with HR's active presence in weekly coaching reflections, is designed to catch these struggles early and create space for support. Having a shared framework that identifies specific characteristics, assessed on a defined scale, discussed openly between coach and participant means that when a conversation needs to happen, there is language for it.

Sequencing is not arbitrary

Requiring every Work Team Leader candidate to complete Bridge first, including people hired from outside into supervisor roles, is a deliberate choice grounded in a simple principle: you cannot coach something you have not done. Work Team Leaders coach Facilitators. Facilitators need Bridge-level skills. Therefore, Work Team Leaders need Bridge-level skills first.

Clear expectations are a gift to learners

MillerKnoll's technical proficiency scale and behavioral assessment framework create something that is rarer in workplace development than it should be: learners who know exactly what they are being evaluated against, and coaches who have a clear, shared standard to work toward. There are no hidden goalposts. Progress is discussed openly every week. When someone is struggling, the conversation can be specific.

Preparation is necessary but not sufficient

Career Academy's origins make this point clearly. Manufacturing Associates at MillerKnoll were being coached on career development and encouraged to think about their futures, but without real roles to move into, that coaching had limited impact. The program only started moving the needle when it created funded, structured placements that gave people actual experience to point to.

The 82% conversion rate is not just a product of having well-prepared candidates. It is a product of well-prepared candidates combined with a structure that put them in the right rooms with the right opportunities.

The three programs interact in ways that are not always tidy

Career Academy benefits from Bridge and Propel. The manufacturing employees who tend to be most successful in office placements are often the ones who have been through the most development. They arrive with strong communication skills, an understanding of how to work across an organization, and a problem-solving orientation shaped by years of MKPS practice. Host departments recognize this and frequently want to keep them.

That creates backfill pressure in manufacturing. MillerKnoll's leadership has made the deliberate choice not to restrict access to Career Academy based on what other programs someone has already completed, recognizing that these opportunities matter too much to gatekeep. But the interaction between programs is something the organization watches carefully.

Conclusion

Bridge, Propel, and Career Academy are built on a practical philosophy: that MillerKnoll has great talent already inside the organization. Finding that talent, developing it, and aligning it to the right opportunities is key to its success. The programs are the infrastructure that helps make that possible.

None of the programs are simple. Each requires real investment: time, coaching capacity, freed-up headcount, cross-functional coordination, and organizational patience. But the alternative of cycling through external hires who struggle to navigate a demanding operating culture, or watching capable Associates leave because they cannot see a future carries its own costs, and they compound.

What makes MillerKnoll's approach worth studying is the coherence of the structure. The technical framework and the behavioral framework reinforce each other. The programs are sequenced in a way that builds genuine capability rather than just checking a training box. And the funding model for Career Academy was designed with enough care to actually work, making it easy for host departments to participate rather than creating one more budget conversation to avoid.

The people who have been through these programs are the clearest evidence of what that coherence produces. Some are now Facilitators and Work Team Leaders who coach their teams the way they were coached. Others are in marketing, finance, HR, or operations support, bringing a shop-floor perspective that their colleagues did not know they were missing. And one of them is running the very program that helped shape her, which may be the most fitting outcome of all.

Licensing

Creative Commons

The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program owns this work and is proud to release it under a Creative Commons license ([CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)) so that other organizations can use and share it to inform and support their work. Note that the use and redistribution of this publication must include an attribution, and this license does not permit use for commercial purposes or modification of the source material. If your use of this publication is not covered by this license, please email us at eop.program@aspeninstitute.org for written permission. We encourage you to contact us to share your feedback and let us know how you've used this publication in your work.

Suggested Citation

Glover, Haley. "MillerKnoll: Developing Operations Leaders from Within and Beyond – A Case Study in Structured Talent Development." UpSkill America at the Aspen Institute. October 2026. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/millerknoll-developing-operations-leaders-from-within-and-beyond-a-case-study-in-structured-talent-development/>

About

About the Authors

Haley Glover is the senior director of UpSkill America at the Aspen Institute. [Connect with her on LinkedIn.](#)

About UpSkill America

UpSkill America, an initiative of the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program, supports employers and workforce organizations to expand and improve high-quality educational and career advancement opportunities for America's frontline workers.

We seek to create a movement of employers, civic organizations, workforce intermediaries, higher education institutions, and policymakers working collaboratively to implement education, training, and development strategies that result in better jobs and opportunities for frontline workers, more competitive businesses, and stronger communities. Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and learn more at upskillamerica.org.



About the Economic Opportunities Program

The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program (EOP) advances strategies, policies, and ideas to help low- and moderate-income people thrive in a changing economy. We recognize that race, gender, and place intersect with and intensify the challenge of economic inequality and we address these dynamics by advancing an inclusive vision of economic justice. For over 25 years, EOP has focused on expanding individuals' opportunities to connect to quality work, start businesses, and build economic stability that provides the freedom to pursue opportunity. Learn more at aspeninstitute.org/eop.



About the Aspen Institute

The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world.

Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Institute has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, and an international network of partners. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.





The Aspen Institute
2300 N Street NW #700
Washington DC 20037

upskillamerica.org

upskillamerica@aspensinstitute.org