

Leadership Drivers



June 18, 2007, Training Magazine a Neilson Publication

Earlier this year, several Training Top 125 company executives gathered in New York City for an informal roundtable primarily focused on leadership development and best practices. Here, some highlights from the roundtable that offer a glimpse into what the companies are doing to strengthen and promote leadership development.

By

Vince Gonzalez (Booz Allen Hamilton): We currently are in the process of implementing a leadership institute. The goal is to take a holistic perspective on leadership and ensure the expectations are aligned with the firm's business objectives. We're leveraging leadership development, which is something very different from training. Training is event driven, while the notion of development is spread out over a wider range of time and is more impactful across a wider range of activities. The objective of the institute is to gain a better understanding of what the business needs in order to be successful from a leadership perspective and to create the opportunities to maintain and enhance the skills of our current leaders while developing the skills of our future leaders.

We're creating a program that will be spread out over several years and is based on a wide range of methodologies, tailored to the learners and aligned with the firm's needs. These include classroom learning, plus a variety of different methodologies—including action learning, participatory learning, and leveraging senior leadership as instructors—so it's a real change in the overall model.

Vernita Parker Wilkins (Booz Allen Hamilton):

About two-and-a-half years ago, we partnered with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) to create a program called Principal Centered Leadership. This three-and-a-half-day off-site program targets Principal-level staff. With CCL, we gathered a work group of Principals to ensure we captured the appropriate topics in the program. Self-reflection and coaching are key components of the program. Participants complete a battery of leadership development assessment tools, including CPI 260 (identifies strengths and development areas as seen through the eyes of others), FIRO-B (explores interpersonal relationships), 360 By Design (focuses on competencies re-quired for success in our organization), and the Change Style Indicator (increases understanding of how you approach and lead change within an organization). They also work one-on-one with a coach to explore, "What kind of plan do I need to put in place to be more effective in my role as a leader in the organization based on all of this information I just found out about myself?"

Additionally, participants take part in activities that help facilitate networking and getting to know each other better over the three-and-a-half days. The goal is to help them expand their professional relationships, and their knowledge about the different capabilities across the organization. The insights participants gain about their leadership style, and the relationships they build over the course of the program, contribute to their ability to be more effective developers of people, business, and the institution.

Cathy Salvatore (Ernst & Young): Approx-imately six or seven years ago, we started a significant drive to enhance the level of feedback throughout the organization at all levels. We did this through organizational surveys and 360 assessments. Everyone in the firm had the opportunity to provide feedback to any partner, principal, director, and executive director. We call this program "People Point." To support and drive the change, we added several organizational metrics. By promoting feedback, we gave our people the opportunity to be heard and made changes based on that feedback. Further, we were able to demonstrate how the individual feedback our principals and partners received through the 360 assessment contributed to the results in our global people survey.

Lyn Maize (ACS Learning/ACS):

We drive everything right now by our ranks—managers, senior managers, part- ners, principals. We classify our efforts into two segments: what we do for all our people, and differential efforts (ethnicity, gender, people in specific roles, etc.). We have a mentoring program that pairs a group of high potential women and minority partners with members of our executive board. Participants are given a 360 assessment, an external coach, and a sponsoring partner who supports the activities outlined in the individual's development plan. Exposure to the board broadens their perspective and gives them visibility, which can be important when it comes to succession planning.

Rick Western (Ernst & Young): The concept of EYU is to take a more holistic view of learning and development. For many years, we've had what we think are terrific classroom programs for our people, and

we have been doing a lot informally on the development side. But within EYU, we tried to crystallize a strategy that had three key elements: formal learning, experiential development (you might think of it as on-the-job training), and apprenticeship. Our professionals attend a classroom program and then are assigned to a particular client or project and actually use that knowledge and put it into practice in client service. But they do that in a team environment where they have the opportunity to be apprenticed, if you will, by other more experienced members of the team.

We've tried to crystallize all of what we consider to be part of the apprenticeship experience, from feedback and coaching—which we think happens on a daily basis in client service—to more career-oriented elements of our feedback, which includes counseling, mentoring, and providing career advice that looks out further than just the next 12 months.

Mike Hamilton (Ernst & Young): One of our most recent and largest executive development efforts is known as "Leadership Forum." This program is designed for our partners and principals, who are not only the owners of the firm, but also our most senior client service executives. In a survey of these leaders, they asked for help in their personal growth as a leader and for help in better understanding how to build, lead, and motivate high-performing teams.

In response, a three-and-a-half-day program was created to support the skills they said they wanted to enhance over the course of the next 12 months. The Leadership Forum sessions are organized around the industry sectors served by our leaders, which allows us to not only enhance the networking experience of the sessions but also to attach a one-and-a-half-day industry sector meeting. By linking these two programs into one event, we were able to reduce the amount of time our most senior executives spent away from their teams and their clients.

Jacqueline Palac (Lockheed Martin): Lockheed Martin is a combination of former companies—there's a piece of IBM, Loral, a large part of GE Aerospace. All had very defined cultures and great ways of developing leaders, but the challenge for our corporation and CEO was: How do we become one company? Over the last two to three years, we've spent a lot of time on one company, one team, one set of values, one leadership competency model for articulating how we develop our leaders. We have probably close to 60,000 engineers in our 140,000-employee company. Many of the skills sets are transferable to our lines of business. We recognize that in order to build our next set of senior leaders, they need to have led large programs and large pieces of our business areas. We're not moving individuals quickly enough, so part of my charter is to get the executive coaching in place.

We spend a lot of time infusing the pipeline with grads, especially the technology grads in science and math. They're very hard to get in today's competitive environment. We have leadership development programs run by the various pieces of our business—engineering, technology, finance, human resources, etc. We get them in these programs and move them up to the various levels. We have an account management process that is consistent across all our business areas and defines what a high-potential employee is and how we accelerate his or her development.

Mandy Holloway (Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company): One of the tools we use to reduce turnover is the QSP (quality selection tool) from a company called Talent Plus. We recruit our ladies and gentlemen [employees] based on 11 themes. Each position has what we call a talent intensity index chart, including a leader. We need to start right at the root cause.

In 2006, we implemented what we call the Q12. We work with the Gallup Organization in evaluating the engagement levels of our external ladies and gentlemen—our customers—and also our internal ladies and gentlemen. We've upgraded from our employee satisfaction survey, so for both leaders and hourly ladies and gentlemen, we now look at their engagement, which includes level of confidence, integrity, pride, and passion.

Jill Guindon (Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company): For our new Manager In Training (MIT) program, we benchmarked other organizations and looked at having an 18-month program. As we become more global, we will end up with more hotels internationally than domestically, so we're looking at putting employees through a nine-month program internationally, and then nine months domestically. You can come in as a generalist or you can work four months in each department—sales, operations, etc. Then you would spend 12 months in the specialty and then another four months in another department.

We're going to have an MIT advisory board. Each MIT will have a mentor. In addition, we have full-time directors of training—who now are called directors of learning—at each one of our 63 hotels. They also will

be driving the program.

Lou Tedrick (Verizon Wireless): We have an executive development program that we initially made available to our regional presidents of sales and all functional vice presidents. This year, we are rolling it out to directors and executive directors. The program uses an action-learning model designed to develop our leaders around the top three issues our executives face in the current competitive and dynamic business environment. The three-day program includes a group application project directly aligned with these real-life business issues.

We also are looking for ways to improve our customer experience through improving our retail leadership capability. As a result, we've embarked on several initiatives across the company, as well as business unit-specific initiatives. Examples include a program for our district managers that uses developmental assignments and video models to develop effective leadership skills. We also piloted a floor manager online simulation to help our retail leaders effectively manage daily decisions that impact their relationships with our customer and our employees. Using an online gaming approach, the program proved to be a cost-effective mechanism for leaders to try out different decision approaches in a "safe" environment. We anticipate using this online gaming approach with our retail store representatives, as well, now that we have an online store created. We believe online gaming is a mode we need to have in our array of delivery options given that our future workforce will include employees who prefer to learn online through games and simulations.

Doug Trainor (Pfizer): All our programs have Level 1 metrics, but our focus tends to be on Level 3. In our culture, senior line and HR managers tend to respond favorably to seeing the metrics on behavioral change. We built into our program the ability to analyze pre- to post-behavioral change as seen by others on the job. The 360 is a primary tool, although it's not perfect. What are a few of the other things we measure? One is coaching of the participants by their supervisor, both before and after the program.

Ross Tartell (Pfizer): There's a report the Corporate Leadership Education and Development group uses to track—by business unit and by country—who is in a program so you can click and drill down deeper into the data. When we upgrade our LMS (learning management system), each business unit leader will be able to click and see which of their people are going through the program and how they are doing.

Trainor: We've done studies on business return for our program, but those types of studies require a big investment of time and effort, so we don't do them as regularly as Level 3. And while our senior leaders are interested in results, they aren't asking for ROI studies explicitly.

Nancy Lewis (IBM Learning): That's interesting. I think it always comes down to who the dialogue is with. If you are working with someone who wants statistical rigor or someone who wants an answer that matches what they already think or know, the context of who you're working for and with will determine how you go about articulating your value. I'd get kicked out of the office if I were not able to describe impact. We have to be able to articulate learning's value in business terms. In the case of leadership development, the corollaries are indirect. In the case of sales learning, it's more direct.

Brent Bloom (KLA-Tencor): We have some simple goals. One of them is zero outages, which means we have an immediate replacement since we're two to three people deep for any key position, and they're all ready to go. The next one is succession, not replacement; our goal is to bring in someone who has greater capabilities than the person they're replacing. Finally, we aim to be a talent magnet, so we can get people into the organization externally and attract the highest caliber resources possible.

We want to have high potentials coming into the organization from the get-go. Obviously, we have our own standard, which we believe is higher than our competitors'. Thus, once those high potentials have been identified or hired, there are different programs in place to develop them, including learning, coaching, external universities, mentoring, continued education, and job rotation. We then assess how well we did against our development strategy. Sometimes, we find we really don't have a leader, per se, but rather we simply have an extremely competent technical resource. That does not mean we want to get rid of them; instead, we want to continue down a development path to reach the greatest level of technical contribution.

Our biggest dilemma from the hiring to the development was in getting leaders to agree on the defined competencies for a given position. So we identified three specific elements (we customized the middle one). Those three elements are: the technical knowledge; strategic thinking process (the way we assess future activity and marketing needs); and execution. For the customized component, we helped managers zero in on the top five or seven competencies using Lominger cards. This way, they feel like they're getting a

customized solution, but in reality, 85 percent of what they're going to use to develop their people is predefined.