

DEVELOPMENT

ENGINE

Leader-to-Leader Program Improves Leadership Pipeline

The Challenge

This leading power generation engineering company successfully emerged from Chapter 11. Few new managers were added during this period, and there was no real investment in leadership development, creating a gap in the leadership pipeline. A serious leadership shortfall was predicted as current managers retire over the next five to 10 years. To further complicate matters, changes in the power industry and in the structure of the parent corporation required new leadership approaches and competencies.

The Goal

For these reasons, accelerated leadership development became a strategic imperative. The *Leader-to-Leader* program was developed to help current and potential future executives gain insight into the strengths and weaknesses of their current leadership style, learn new leadership skills and insights, and make significant progress developing the next generation of leaders in the pipeline.

The Approach

The 8-month long *Leader-to-Leader* process has four elements that are integrated in a unique way:

1. A series of four workshops over eight months, using 360° feedback, lectures, small group work, and participative exercises on leading, coaching and developing new leaders;
2. On-going peer coaching teams to reinforce accountability and support for results;
3. Action-learning projects to apply concepts and skills to their regular assignments;
4. An online follow-through goal tracking process to ensure results are delivered.

The Results

- **Leadership “bench strength” is increasing.** *Leader-to-Leader* has graduated seven groups of executives (as of 2008) and is consistently producing positive results. Greater engagement is leading to better project performance and knowledge transfer. *Leader-to-Leader* participants are delegating more, and creating learning opportunities and stretch assignments for the next level down. This is building competence and confidence in the next generation and enabling participants to be more strategic in their focus.
- **The “leadership pipeline” model is catching on.** As participants communicate and use the leadership pipeline model from the program, it is providing improved clarity of career paths for younger aspiring leaders.
- **The “coaching” leadership style is increasing employee engagement.** *Leader-to-Leader* participants frequently report that they are getting stronger results by using a coaching style than they were able to get with the old command-and-control style.
- **Participants are handling the stress of growth and workload better.** The *Leader-to-Leader* focus on how to sustain a high level of energy and effective balance is enabling leaders to deal with increased stress, complexity and ambiguity with a lower risk of burnout.
- **Networking is accelerating integration between the newly combined parts of the company.** Participants are taking advantage of the opportunities to build a cross-organizational network that supports “One Company, One Culture.”

The Value of Follow-Through with DevelopmentEngine®

According to Dave Schrader, PhD, President of LeadingWork LLC, who designed and implemented the program, “follow-through was key.” Participants were asked once a month to record what practical steps they had taken to implement their new knowledge and skills as well as recording their personal insights and reflections.

“*DevelopmentEngine* helped participants stay focused, allowed leaders to monitor and encourage progress, and facilitated feedback and coaching.”

Additionally, *DevelopmentEngine* enabled the company to demonstrate the ROI for Leader to Leader by compiling the impact of participants’ efforts to improve the overall leadership capacity of the company.