

EVALUATION OF A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:
INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT AND KEY FACTORS FACILITATING OR
IMPEDING SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

Leadership development has become a popular topic in both research and practice. Organizations devote significant resources in terms of time and money to programs aimed at developing their leadership talent. However, there is a lack of definitive evidence that such programs are effective. The present study adds to existing research by providing an evaluation of a leadership development program implemented in a mid-sized architecture and engineering firm. The program emphasized leadership involvement, application of program learning, and ongoing support for development. Each of the three phases of the program had a particular focus (e.g. emotional intelligence and effective communication skills). Participants completed these phases in distinct groups. Each group was composed of a specific hierarchical layer of the organization, beginning with the top and working downward. Once a group (e.g. the Executive Leadership Team) had completed a phase of the program, they served as facilitators for the next group (e.g. Senior Leadership Team) to reinforce and apply what was learned and communicate leadership commitment and involvement. To encourage ongoing support and development, participants were assigned to *Cohort Groups*, led by leadership team members. These small groups met monthly to reinforce learning and continue the ongoing development of members. The evaluation employed Kirkpatrick's (1994) model and consisted of observations, group interviews, and individual interviews with participants, their managers, subordinates, and peers. Results indicated that the Leadership Development Program at Company XYZ was effective in achieving its intended goals. The evaluation also examined the key factors that facilitated or impeded

the success of the program and its participants. Critical factors identified by the evaluation included follow-up (the extent to which others held participants accountable for results), participants' buy-in to the program, and the commitment and ability of the leadership team, which affected the first two factors. Findings indicated that the program's somewhat unique structure provides benefits, but also presents challenges. Guidelines for implementing a similar program are discussed. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Modestino Carbone, who exemplified leadership through example. By watching him, I learned what dedication, perseverance, and strong ethics really meant. I was always impressed by his intellectual curiosity and keen analytical mind. Dad instilled in me the importance of education, hard work, and always maintaining your sense of humor through whatever life hands you. He taught me that with some determination, a great many things are possible, and I am grateful for his belief that I could accomplish anything. Words cannot express his impact on who I have become and what I have achieved. I know that he would be proud.

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I would like to thank my sisters, Jody and Erin, for giving me the love and support that only sisters can. Throughout the difficult recent years, they have remained remarkable women and examples for me, both personally and professionally. Jody's dependability and ability to always get things done made completing a dissertation seem possible if not easy, and I would have been lost without Erin's ear to listen and her humor to keep me laughing. I am grateful to my parents for giving me the most important gifts they could ever have given me: my sisters.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The concept of leadership is one that has been studied and theorized about since antiquity (Drath, 1998). Plato's "gold" men were leaders, designated such by birth, innately destined to lead their followers. Conversely, men of "bronze" were incapable of such leadership. Over time, new theories of leadership have emerged and the conception of leadership has evolved. As the distinctions Plato outlines in *The Republic* imply, earlier theories of leadership emphasize the innate characteristics of individuals. In contrast, later theories view leadership as a complex interaction between the designated leader and the social and organizational environment (Fiedler, 1996).

Literature on leadership is abundant, and the conclusion drawn by researchers in the field is that leadership does have an impact (Burke & Day, 1986; Clark, Clark, & Campbell, 1992; Collins, 2002; Ulrich, Zenger, & Smallwood, 1999). This is not to say that a unified field of leadership research exists or that a universal theory or approach has emerged. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Klenke (1993) believed "there are probably few areas...which have produced more divergent, inconsistent, overlapping definitions, theories, and educational models than leadership" (p. 112), describing it as a field "riddled with paradoxes, inconsistencies, and contradictions." As theories emerged and various leadership attributes were identified, the result seems to have been an abundance of "confusing and often overlapping terms (Ulrich et al., 1999, p.4)."

Leadership Theories

An examination of the evolution of leadership theories reveals a progression from a focus on the qualities the leader to an understanding of the interaction between leaders, followers, and the environment (i.e. social and organizational factors). The predominant theories include trait, style, power-influence, contingency, path-goal, leader-member exchange, charismatic leader theories, competency-based theories, and team leadership theories. A brief review of these theories is useful.

According to Covey (1998), the idea of leadership prior to the 1900s centered on Great-Man theories, which contended that great leaders are born, not made. Dowd (1936) theorized that individuals in every society vary in their personal characteristics, such as intelligence, and that “in whatever direction the masses may be influenced to go, they are always led by the superior few.” From this idea of a “Great Man,” studied as early as 1869 (Bass, 1990), emerged the trait approach, which theorized that leaders were distinguished from followers by a set of traits with which they were born, such as ambition, achievement-orientation, and decisiveness (Stogdill, 1974). Yukl (1989) adds “tireless energy, penetrating intuition, uncanny foresight, and irresistible persuasive powers” (p. 260) to the list of traits that early theories cited as the distinguishing factors between leaders and followers.

Related to the trait approach is a theory that emerged in the late 1940’s, which emphasized what leaders do and how they act in situations. Called the style approach, this described a leader’s style as democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire (McCall et al, 1988).

The power-influence approach to leadership incorporates both leader characteristics and the environment, in terms of the power the leader has (both in quantity and type) in that environment. Gardner (1990) describes leadership as “the process of persuasion or example by which [a leader] induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.” As Yukl (1989) explains, power is important for influence at all levels of the organization. Leaders who do not possess the necessary position power will have difficulty accomplishing necessary leadership tasks, such as managing subordinates or driving changes.

Contingency leadership theory continues the movement toward understanding the role of the environment in leadership. Compared to earlier theories, such as the trait approach, the contingency theories portray leadership as an interactive process. Effective leadership, according to this theory, is contingent upon matching a leader’s style to the setting, including the attributes of the followers, such as their motivation and abilities (Fiedler, 1964). This theory holds that the extent to which a leader will be successful depends on the extent to which his or her style matches the context. One type of contingency theory is situational leadership theory, which emphasizes factors related to the leader (such as his or her authority), the situation (such as the work to be performed by the group), and the followers (such as their readiness) (Heresy & Blanchard, 1969). The four leadership styles include telling/directing, selling/coaching, participating/supporting, and delegating/observing. In various situations, a leader needs to adapt his or her style to meet the needs of a particular situation.

Path-goal theory involves understanding how leaders provide motivation and support to facilitate followers reaching a specified goal (House, 1971). In essence,

leaders show a clear “path” for subordinates to follow, providing encouragement and support along the way. According to Yukl (1989), “aspects of the situation such as the nature of the task, the work environment and subordinate attributes determine the optimal amount of each type of leader behavior for improving subordinate satisfaction and performance (Yukl, 1989, p. 263).” The interaction between the leader’s style and variables of the particular situation are considered important.

Leader-member exchange theory (LMX) (Graen, 1976) describes leadership as a process of interactions between leaders and followers. Compared to earlier theories which focused on traits or behaviors of the leaders, this approach emphasizes the importance of relationships. While LMX provides greater understanding of how role making by leaders occurs, it offers limited guidance in terms of what the optimal patterns of downward exchange would be (Yukl, 1989).

The dominant theory of the 1990s was Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978), which Burns describes as a process by which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Drath (1998) describes transformational leadership in terms of “creating in people an inner commitment to social goals, of transforming a person’s self-interest into larger social concern” (p.407). The idea of Transformational Leadership Theory holds that visionary leaders are catalysts for the transformation of organizations to an improved state, recognizing that change is necessary for organizations to remain competitive. Bass (1998) asserted that transformational leadership can “move followers to exceed performance” (p. 2). A transformational leader provides a clear and inspiring vision to

followers and builds commitment among the group toward the organization's mission, strategies, and objectives.

Competency-based approaches contend that there are critical competencies that have been shown to distinguish exceptional performers (leaders) from average performers (Boyatzis, 1982). By learning and developing these important competencies, individuals can become better leaders. The concept of emotional intelligence is one example, which encompasses several underlying competencies that have been linked to effective leadership, such as empathy and emotional control (Goleman, 2001). Another example of a competency-based approach is that of Bennis (1984), which outlines four competencies important for leaders, including developing a vision, making meaning of the vision through communication, building trust, and searching for self-knowledge and self-regard.

Team leadership theories (Hackman & Walton 1986; Larson and LaFasto, 1989) have become increasingly popular as organizations have developed structures based on teams and work groups. Team leadership theories view leadership behavior as team-based problem solving. To be effective, leaders must ensure that team members complement one another in terms of strengths, development needs, and interests. This requires leaders to possess an accurate self-perception in terms of their own strengths and development needs to build an effective team (Ulrich et al., 1999). Collins (2002) predicts that "team leadership theory will continue to be a focus of managerial leadership development research in the future as more organizations employ management teams to accomplish core organizational goals."

Manager versus Leader.

Through the evolution of the above leadership theories, debate has emerged regarding the difference between *manager* and *leader* behaviors. This distinction is hardly controversial, as most individuals would agree that managers and leaders exhibit different behaviors; the exact distinction and definition of each has been more hotly contested. Yukl (1989) explains, “Nobody has proposed that managing and leading are equivalent, but the degree of overlap is a point of sharp disagreement” (p. 253). Traditionally, the distinction involved the idea that managers focused on ensuring tasks were completed, and leaders focused on building vision and commitment (Kotter, 1990). As Bennis and Nanus (1985) explain, “Management controls, arranges, does things right; leadership unleashes energy, sets the vision so we do the right thing” (p. 21). The term “managerial leadership” emerged, which according to Collins (2002), “integrated the traditional managerial and leadership behaviors where those behaviors are different but complementary.” The consensus is that most leaders possess the skills and competencies of a manager. One would be required to achieve proficiency in a role lower in the organizational hierarchy before he or she would be promoted to a leadership role.

Leadership Development Theories

As suggested above, literature on leadership is robust. However, as Collins (2002) points out, “in comparison, the research on managerial leadership development and its impact is miniscule” (p. 38). Existing literature falls short of providing extensive, in depth understanding of leadership development (McCall, 1998; McCauley et al., 1998; Northouse, 2006; Ulrich, Zenger, & Smallwood, 1999).

However, it is clear from existing literature that just as theories of leadership have emerged and evolved over time, so too have the concept of and approach to leadership development. Drath (1998) describes the evolution of the idea of leadership as moving from domination to influence then common goals and finally to reciprocal relationships. Aligned with this, Drath describes the shift in focus of leadership development as moving from the power of the leader to the interpersonal skills of the leader to self-knowledge of the leader and finally to the interactions of the group.

While early leadership theories suggested great leaders are born rather than made, the current prevailing belief is that leadership can be learned (McCall 1998; McCauley et al., 1998; Northouse, 2006), and that most people are capable of acting as leaders (Drath, 1998; Northouse (2006). The idea that leadership can be taught is an important one, particularly when considering the existence of leadership development programs. If leadership could not be learned, these programs would be of little to no value.

Leadership development theories and approaches, aligned with theories of leadership, have moved toward understanding the development of leadership in the context of the group. In the late 1980s, Yukl (1989) pointed to the need for theories to “describe interactive leadership processes that unfold over time in social systems” because he believed the majority of the prevailing theories to be “simple, unidirectional models of causality that focus on what a leader does to subordinates” (p. 279). Theories and leadership development approaches have followed that course.

Day (2001) emphasizes the difference between *leader development* and *leadership development*, explaining that leader development can be conceived of as an individually-focused endeavor that, by enhancing self-understanding and building

individual identities, ultimately leads to differentiation. In contrast, leadership development “can be thought of as an integration strategy by helping people understand how to relate to others, coordinate their efforts, build commitments, and develop extended social networks by applying self-understanding to social and organizational imperatives” (Day, 2001, p. 586).

Today, leadership development programs increasingly focus on groups as well as looking at leadership development from an organizational perspective. As Conger and Benjamin (1999) explain, the focus of these programs is no longer “on the individual learner but increasingly on shaping the worldviews and behaviors of cohorts of managers and...transforming even entire organizations” (p.xii). They discuss the “radical shift in learning approaches and program designs” (p. xiv). Leadership development programs today also include a variety of elements, including 360-degree feedback initiatives, executive coaching, mentoring and networking, and action learning job assignments (Day, 2001).

Development programs today are not only targeting groups of program participants, but also ensuring an element of social support. Supervisory support and reinforcement, coaching and opportunities to practice are the top most common best practices human resource development professionals cite as critical to include in training and development programs (Burke & Hutchins, 2008). The understanding is that development must be inclusive and viewed systematically.

This sentiment, prevalent in the corporate world, is illustrated by the following statement by John Lynch, the Senior Vice President for Human Resources at General Electric: "Leadership development is embedded in GE's philosophy and operating

system.” Companies have been increasingly recognizing that leadership development should follow a systems approach (Moxley & Wilson, 1998).

Many organizations allocate significant resources in terms of both time and money to leadership development (Gibler, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000; Van Velsor, 1998). These organizations vary in the amount of time and funds spent on development efforts; however, at the top end of the spectrum, money is seemingly not an issue. For example, the training and development budget at General Electric is an impressive \$1 billion (Hansen, 2008). It has been predicted that leadership development budgets would continue to grow throughout the decade (Gibler, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000).

Evaluation of Leadership Development Programs

Given the prevalence of leadership development programs and substantial investment made by organizations in this area, it is somewhat surprising that there is a lack of strong evidence that this type of training results in more effective leadership behavior (Burke & Day, 1986; Collins & Holton, 2004; McCauley et al., 1998).

Evaluation of training programs in general is rare. Bersin’s (2006) survey of more than 140 companies revealed that only 2.6% of their total training budgets was spent on evaluation of training programs. Training managers also indicated that their organizations continue to grapple with the task of ascertaining the value added by training programs.

Collins and Holton (2004) summarize a number of explanations for the lack of evaluation, which include time and money constraints as well as difficulties inherent in evaluation. With a finite amount of time and funding, decisions must be made regarding where resources will be allocated. Competing priorities may mean that while

development programs receive funding, evaluation initiatives do not. As training methods vary (i.e. classroom sessions, on the job experiences, coaching), evaluation and comparison may be difficult. In addition, measuring the organizational outcomes proves difficult because of the complexity in terms of factors involved. Further exacerbating the problem may be the lack of evaluation model that effectively targets organizational performance outcomes.

Fiedler (1996) asserts that the existing “reviews of leadership training stress that we know very little about the process of leadership and managerial training that contributes to organizational performance. At least one reason for this lack of knowledge is the scarcity of meaningful and rigorous research.” (p. 244). Given the existing literature, Cherniss (2009) argues for careful evaluation before concluding a program is indeed effective.

There have been several studies aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of these types of development programs. Burke and Day (1986) conducted a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of development programs, based on seventy studies during the time period of 1951 - 1982, which included at least one control or comparison group, evaluated more than one program, and targeted managerial or supervisory staff. The analysis included six training content areas (e.g. general management programs, human relations/leadership programs, motivation/values training programs) and seven training methods (e.g. lecture, sensitivity training, behavioral modeling). The meta-analysis indicated that managerial training was moderately effective, though some studies had mixed results in demonstrating success in terms of individual, group and/or organizational improvement. Burke and Day concluded that more research on managerial training was necessary.

In addition to Burke and Day's study, there have been a few other relevant meta-analyses. Most recently, Collins and Holton (2004) complimented Burke and Day's work with a meta-analysis of 83 studies conducted from 1982 – 2001. These studies utilized various types of interventions, including feedback, developmental relationships, on-the-job experiences, and formal training. Collins and Holton investigated knowledge, expertise (behavior), and system outcomes of the programs. The results indicated great variation among outcomes. The effect size of knowledge outcomes ranged from .96 to 1.37, and expertise outcomes ranged from .35 to 1.01. System outcomes averaged .39. Collins and Holton concluded that development programs can succeed or fail and that organizations must invest in evaluations to ensure a return on investment. Collins and Holton also argue for sufficient front-end analysis by training and development professionals to enhance knowledge and skills outcomes.

Research in areas related to leadership development, such as organizational training, has provided additional support for the effectiveness of training programs. Arthur, Bennett, Edens & Bell (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of published training and development studies between 1960 and 2000. The effect size for organizational training was .60 to .63.

Results from other studies related to leadership development, such as emotional intelligence, also indicate the effectiveness of some development programs. Boyatzis (2007) evaluated the outcomes of a multi-month competency-based assessment and training course and found that the program resulted in improvements in the emotional and social competencies related to effective leadership. However, while the results of Slaski and Cartwright's (2003) four-week training course indicated improvements in some areas

- EI (self-report measures), reactions to the job, and health status - no impact on managerial performance was indicated. Other studies also call into question the effectiveness of many managerial training programs (Morrow, Jarrett & Rupinski, 1997).

Overall, there is a lack of definitive evidence as to the uniform effectiveness of leadership development programs. Results vary with numerous factors, including how and where the program is implemented (Cherniss, 2009), the time between training and evaluation, and evaluation design, such as pretest-posttest studies producing a larger effect size than control group studies (Chen 1994).

Arguably, the most widely-used evaluation model is Kirkpatrick's (1994) pyramid evaluation model, illustrated in Figure 1. This model outlines four "levels" of evaluation: the initial *reaction* of the participant to the program (e.g. whether the participants thought the program was a positive experience), the *learning* that occurred during the program (e.g. what new information the participants now possess), the *transfer* of that knowledge by the participants (e.g. the extent to which participants apply the knowledge to their current roles, such as displaying certain behaviors), and ultimately the *results* on the organization as a whole (e.g. increased financial measures, etc). The information at each level increases in both importance and difficulty in obtaining and assessing. While Level 1 evaluations can be easily measured with a simple questionnaire of participants' reactions, Level 4 evaluations require the collection of more complex data from multiple sources, such as financial and employee data. In addition, these data can be influenced by a number of factors internal and external to the organization, making interpretation difficult as well.

As such, it is not surprising that evaluations typically target the lower levels of Kirkpatrick's model. Moller and Mallin (1996) found that assessment has been aimed primarily at the lower levels of evaluation and that instruments are often misused. Most organizations polled conducted one or more types of Level 1 evaluations, and seventy-one percent evaluated changes in learning following programs. However, only forty-three percent evaluated the transfer of learning that took place after training (Level 3 evaluation). Further, many respondents indicated that they implemented Level 1 instruments when measuring Level 4 outcomes.

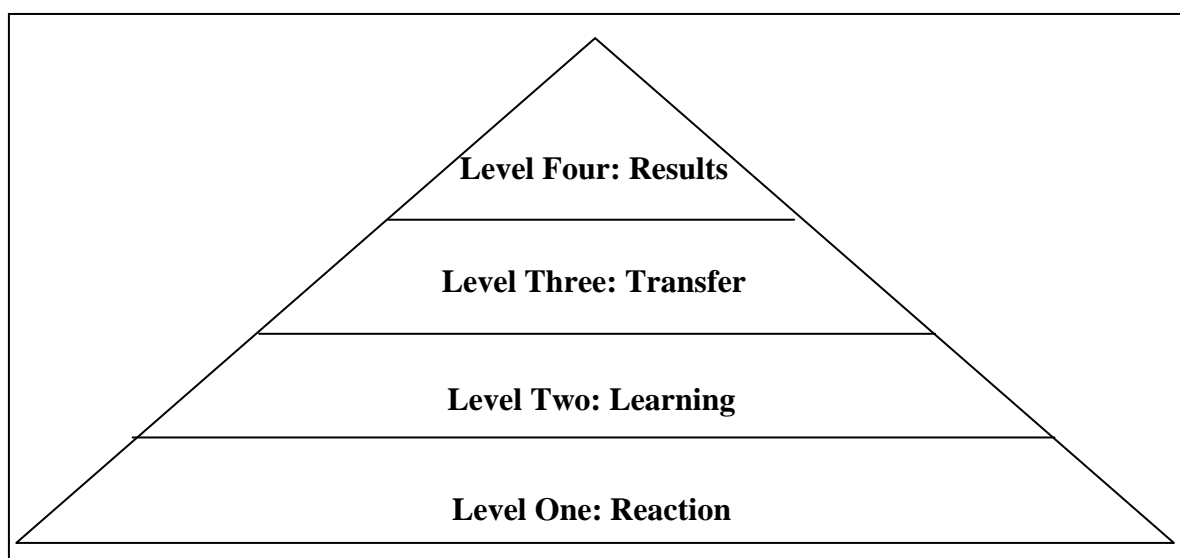


Figure 1. Kirkpatrick's framework for evaluating program outcomes.

Research to date falls short of providing insight into the impact of programs at the organizational level, Level 4 evaluation of results. Swanson and Holton (1999) argue that "every (leadership development) intervention should lead to a system outcome at some point." Yet, evaluations of leadership development programs - when they are conducted - lack analysis at the system level. Of the seventy studies in Burke and Day's (1986) analysis, only two used organizational variables as outcome criteria. Only eleven

of the eighty-three studies in Collins & Holton's (2004) meta-analysis measured system objectives, and only one study provided financial outcomes.

Factors Contributing to Success

In addition to understanding whether leadership development works, the question of why leadership development works is also of interest. There has been research into the factors that facilitate or inhibit success. Literature indicates that the current approach to leadership development - using an organizational lens - is important for successful outcomes. As Day (2001) asserts,

The key to effective implementation is having the organizational discipline to introduce leadership development throughout the organization, rather than bounded by specific (usually top) levels. Another key to effectiveness is linking initiatives across organizational levels and in terms of an overall developmental purpose within the context of a strategic business challenge.

In addition, research on transfer of training – the extent to which participants apply what they learned during a program to their jobs – has revealed several factors that influence transfer outcomes. These include the extent to which learning takes place during the training, the level of motivation of the participant to apply what he/she has learned, and the organizational or interpersonal support for the participant applying what he/she has learned (Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1995).

The environment to which a participant returns following training has received increased attention in recent years. Previously, research and evaluation efforts were focused on elements of the training itself (i.e. design, implementation, and participants' reactions and learning), as opposed to post-training events and factors (i.e. post-training environment and transfer of training) (Alliger & Janak, 1989; Noe, 1986). As Tracey et al. (1995) explained, "Despite the potential importance of the work environment, very

little research has been conducted to identify, operationalize, and empirically assess training-specific situational factors that either facilitate or inhibit the application of newly acquired skills” (p.240). Since that time, research has increasingly examined the influence of factors related to the post-training environment.

According to Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992), “elements of the post-training environment can encourage (e.g. rewards, job aids), discourage (e.g. ridicule from peers), or actually prohibit the application of new skills and knowledge on the job (e.g. lack of necessary equipment)” (p. 420). The transfer climate refers to organizational situations and consequences that either inhibit or facilitate the use of what was learned in training (Burke & Hutchins, 2008). Research indicates that the transfer climate impacts the transfer of learning (Lim & Morris, 2006, Tracey, et al., 1995). Specifically, social support is critical to the transfer of training (Tracey et al., 1995). There is also evidence that peers influence transfer of learning as well (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Jellema, Visscher, & Scheerens, 2006). Continued research into the various factors that influence the success of training and development programs will help to “go beyond the question of whether training works to the more important question of why training works (Tracey et al., 1995, p. 248).

Conclusion

In summary, theories and approaches to leadership and leadership development have evolved over time. Earlier theories focused primarily on the characteristics of the leader, which were believed to be innate and not teachable. Contemporary approaches, in contrast, recognize the importance of the interaction between leaders, followers, and the environment and organizational context. Further, it is currently understood that

leadership can be taught, which has given way to leadership development programs that aim to develop various leadership skills and target multiple levels of the organization, rather than strictly the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Though organizations allocate significant resources in terms of time and money toward leadership development programs, few engage in evaluation of those programs. Literature on leadership development program evaluations indicates that more research is needed to confirm the efficacy of leadership development programs as well as ascertain the reasons these programs do or do not prove to be effective.

The present study seeks to add to the field by presenting an evaluation of a leadership development program as well as investigating key factors that facilitated or impeded success.

CHAPTER II

Background of the Organization and Leadership Development Program

History of the Organization and Program

The organization is a mid-sized (250 employee) engineering firm based in the northeastern United States, which has been employee-owned since the summer of 2006. During the transition of company ownership from the Chief Executive Officer to employees, it became apparent to the Senior Leadership Team that leadership training and development was necessary to ensure the success of the organization. Prior to the shift in ownership, the company had been led by the founding CEO. The transition to an employee owned company brought with it a transition from a single, dominant leader to a 15-person leadership team.

The history of the organization is important because it provides context for understanding the culture of the organization. The organizational culture can be defined as

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1990).

According to Schein, the culture of an organization reflects the ultimate problems every group inevitably faces, including survival, growth, adaptation to the environment, and internal integration.

Prior to the implementation of the Leadership Development Program, the culture of the organization in this study did not place an emphasis on leadership development, especially regarding the “softer” leadership skills (e.g. empathy). The culture fostered by the founder of the organization was effective during the initial years of the company’s life cycle; however as the company grew and then became an employee-owned company with a leadership team replacing the single CEO, leadership skills became increasingly important in order to move the company in the right direction. While the founding CEO had led the organization with somewhat of an iron fist, the new culture of the company that accompanied the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) was one of inclusion and participation by all.

To address the leadership development needs of the newly established leadership team, the external consulting firm hired to help with the ESOP transition began working with the company to design and implement the Leadership Development Program. Utilizing the outside perspective of consultants in this work was crucial because true understanding and change requires both “insider knowledge with outsider questions (Schein, 1990).”

The ultimate goal of the program was to develop participants’ leadership skills in order to increase their effectiveness in their roles, which would ultimately lead to enhanced overall company performance as well as increased employee satisfaction. To accomplish this, the Leadership Development Program was created with the following intermediate goals:

- Identify the leadership skills that should be targeted for development

- Establish expectations for leaders and managers in the company regarding those leadership skills
- Increase participants' awareness of and knowledge regarding the leadership competencies expected of them
- Improve participants' competence on one or two leadership skills

Structure of the Leadership Development Program

In creating the Leadership Development Program, the consultants were guided by Schein's (1990) theory of Organizational Culture, Prochaska and Diclemente's (1992) theory of individual change, and theories of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998), specifically the role of emotion and certain non-technical competencies in organizational effectiveness. These will be discussed further below.

In addition, each phase of the program incorporated Knowles' (1980) concept of andragogy, which assumes the following regarding adult learning design:

1. Adults have the need to know why they are learning something.
2. Adults learn through doing.
3. Adults are problem-solvers.
4. Adults learn best when the subject is of immediate use.

Following from this, the consultants introduced the program and each of its phases by explaining why the knowledge and skills to be developed were targeted (why they are learning something). The structure of the program then provided the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired as well as teach those skills to others (learn by doing and problem solving). Because the material covered in the program was directly applicable to their roles as leaders and managers in the company, they were able

to utilize what they learned in their interactions with staff and other leaders (immediate use).

A central belief underlying the Leadership Development Program was that Executive Leadership involvement was critical to the success of the program. In addition to providing the learning benefits described above, leadership involvement in the program was required in order to change the culture of the company, as the culture of any organization is fostered by the leadership. Further, by participating in the Leadership Development Program, leaders demonstrated their commitment to leadership development and communicated that to the rest of the organization that the program was a high priority by showing the very top executives of the company were spending time focusing on it. It also provided opportunities for the leaders to interact with lower levels of the organization to establish visibility and build relationships.

Therefore, not only did the Executive Leadership Team sponsor the program, they participated in it themselves, and more importantly, served as facilitators and leaders throughout the implementation of the program at the lower levels of the organization. To accomplish this, the Leadership Development Program, consisted of three waves, with each wave targeting a specific hierarchical level of the organization, initiating at the top and working downward. It should be noted that the program consisted of only these three waves at the time of the evaluation. The ultimate plan for the Leadership Development Program was to continue to cascade the program down through the organization to include additional layers of the organizational hierarchy.

The first wave of the program began with the highest hierarchical level of the organization, referred to as the *Pilot Group*. This group is a subset of the larger *Senior*

Leadership Team (SLT) and is composed of the five most senior leaders in the organization, including the President and Chief Financial Officer.

The second wave of the program targeted the next level down in the organization, the full *Senior Leadership Team*, which included the Pilot Group members as well as 12 other leaders who head different departments in the organization (e.g. Director of Marketing, etc.). The third wave of the Leadership Development Program targeted the next hierarchical level of the organization, which consisted of 60 manager-level individuals below the Senior Leadership Team. This group is referred to as the *Non-SLT Cohort Group*.

The hierarchical groups in each of these waves (Pilot Group, Senior Leadership Team, and Non-SLT Cohort Group members) followed through three phases of the program, described in detail below. As mentioned previously, leaders facilitated the program sessions after completing them as participants. Therefore, once the Pilot Group had completed a phase of the program, members of that group then served as facilitators for the following group, the Senior Leadership Team. These two groups then served as facilitators for the third group.

Each group followed the same process, though the Non-SLT Cohort Group's experience did not involve some of the activities discussed in detail below. The general framework of each phase included feedback to participants on their current skill-level, workshop sessions to provide learning, the creation of individual plans to target improvement on one or two specific areas, and follow up on those plans. Because the focus of this study was the Senior Leadership Team, the process the Pilot Group and the Senior Leadership Team followed through the program will be described.

The three phases of the program focused on different components: the first phase concentrated on emotional intelligence, feedback and communication skills. The second phase focused on the organization's Core Competencies. Lastly, the third phase focused on reinforcing the knowledge and skills learned in the first two phases of the program and ongoing leadership development. Figure 1 illustrates and summarizes the program structure. The three phases will be described in greater detail later.

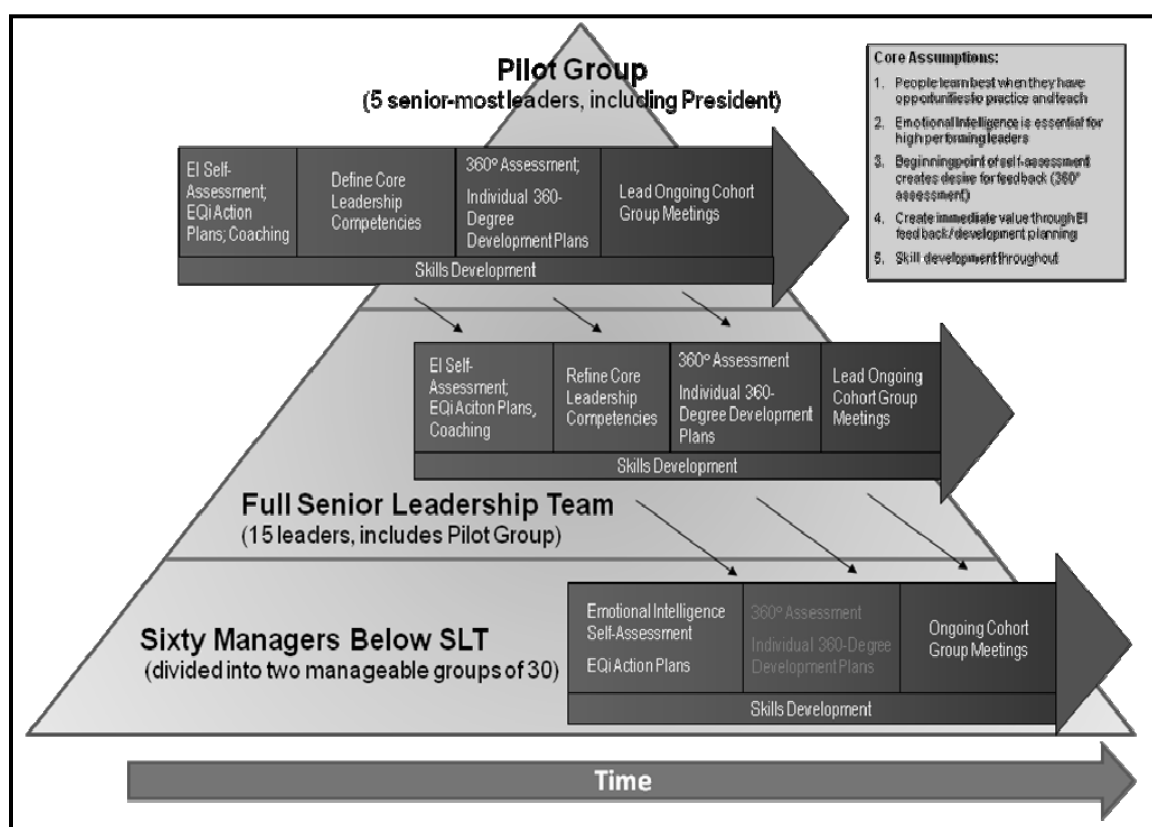


Figure 2. Leadership Development Program structure.

To assess the effectiveness of the program toward its goals, the organization and consultants brought in the author, a fifth-year student in an Organizational Psychology doctoral program, to conduct an evaluation. One of the consultants working with this company completed his doctoral degree through the same program in which the author was enrolled. The author and the consultant agreed that the work would be valuable for

all parties involved. It should be noted that the author was given guidance from the consultants and the organization, however, to increase the objectivity and accuracy of the evaluation, the design of the evaluation was predominantly created by the author.

The evaluation commenced 22 months after the first phase of the program began. The evaluation was conducted by the author over a 3-month period. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the program had been successful toward the following goals, which were listed previously:

- Identify the leadership skills that should be targeted for development
- Establish expectations for leaders and managers in the company regarding those leadership skills
- Increase participants' awareness of and knowledge regarding the leadership competencies expected of them
- Improve participants' competence on one or two of those skills

The evaluation consisted primarily of interviews with participants to obtain an understanding of their experience with the program, including key factors that facilitated or impeded their success.

Individual interviews were conducted with SLT members as well as a sample of non-SLT members. These individuals were interviewed regarding their experience with the Leadership Development Program, including what changes they experienced as a result of the program, what the impact of those changes were, and what key factors facilitated or impeded their success in the program. To ascertain whether SLT members' self-assessments of progress translated into changes observed by others, colleagues of the

SLT members were also interviewed regarding SLT members, including any observable changes in behavior that had occurred.

In addition to individual participant and colleague interviews, group interviews were also conducted, providing all participants in the program an opportunity to share their experience of the Leadership Development Program.

CHAPTER III

Method

Leadership Development Program Structure Details

The previous chapter outlined the overall framework of the Leadership Development Program. Details are now discussed. The program included three distinct waves, each composed of a different level of the organizational hierarchy. The program also included three phases, each with a particular focus: the first centering on emotional intelligence and communication and feedback skills, the second on competency models, and the third consisted of ongoing development. The program structure is described herein as three separate phases for purposes of clarity and simplicity. It should be noted that these phases did not occur in strict chronological order from first to third phase. While the vast majority of the third phase of ongoing development occurred after the second phase of the program, it began between the first and second phases and continued through to the time of the evaluation because participant development was targeted following each offsite workshop. In addition, the timing and order varied with the different waves. Table 1 provides an actual timeline of the various components of the program. As illustrated, the order and timing varied between groups. Further, as discussed previously, the third wave of the program (i.e. Non-SLT Cohort Group members) had not completed the second phase of the program at the time of the evaluation. The details of each phase of the program are now discussed in detail.

Table 1
Leadership Development Program timeline

Leadership Development Program Component	Date	Summary of Event
Decision to Create Leadership Development Program (LDP)	Oct 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision to create and implement the Leadership Development Program is made by the leadership team
Phase One, Wave One: Pilot Group EQi Completed, Pilot Group attends 2 day offsite	Feb 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot Group members complete their EQi's Pilot Group members meet to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review EI as a specific competency Receive EQi reports and create EQi action plans based on results Receive training on competency models Begin creating competency model for Company XYZ
Phase One, Wave Two: Senior Leadership Team EQi Training	March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT members complete EQi's and then attend 2-day offsite session which Pilot Group helps facilitate, in which SLT members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review EI as a specific competency Receive EQi reports and create EQi action plans based on results Receive training on competency models Review the competency model Pilot Group created
Competency Model Defined	Apr 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company XYZ's Core Competencies are finalized
Phase One, Wave Three: Non-SLT Cohort Group 1 Session	May 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First group of Non-SLT Cohort Members attend 2-Day session post EQi in which members of the Senior Leadership Team play an important role in helping this group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret the results of their EQi self-assessments Give and receive feedback Translate the reports into action plans
Phase Three: Cohort Groups Continue to Meet	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort Groups meet on a monthly basis
Phase Two, Wave One: Pilot Group 360-Degree Feedback Survey Completed	Aug 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 360 Degree Feedback Surveys are completed for Pilot Group Pilot Group attends offsite session to discuss results and create 360 feedback development plans based on results

Phase One, Wave Three Continues: Non-SLT Cohort Group 2 Session	Sept 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second group of Non-SLT Cohort Members attend 2-Day session post EQi in which members of the Senior Leadership Team play an important role in helping this group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Interpret the results of their EQi self-assessments ◦ Give and receive feedback ◦ Translate the reports into EQi action plans
Phase Two, Wave Two: Senior Leadership Team 360-Degree Feedback Completed	Apr 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 360 Degree Feedback Surveys are completed for SLT • SLT attends offsite session to discuss results and create 360 feedback development plans based on results

Phase One.

The first phase of the Leadership Development Program focused on effective feedback and communication skills and emotional intelligence (EI). The program began with an introduction to these topics based on the needs and abilities of the target population as well as the known benefits of these topic areas. The consultants believed EI competencies to be important factors of success as a leader and critical to creating a foundation for the Leadership Development Program. This assertion is supported by research indicating a relationship between the competencies associated with social and emotional intelligence and effective leadership (Cavallo & Brienza, 2002; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005; Stubbs, 2005).

As stated previously, because the organization is composed of engineers and architects, employees in this company are highly skilled in these technical areas, but generally less experienced and adept in areas related to emotional intelligence. Participants in the Leadership Development Program had limited, if any, experience with the ideas associated with EI. Based on data collected, the organization as a whole was

not proficient with giving and receiving feedback prior to the implementation of the program.

Given the experience and skill sets of the participants in the program, a prerequisite for development was providing a foundation in effective feedback and communication skills. In addition to being important skills for leadership, these skills would also be critical to the program because participants would need to receive feedback from their colleagues regarding their leadership competencies and provide one another with feedback as well.

The initial step in the program was to gather feedback regarding participants' emotional intelligence by having participants complete a self-assessment, which would be reported back to them at the off-site workshops that followed. This was aimed at increasing the likelihood that participants were in at least the contemplation stage, where they were "aware that a problem exists and seriously thinking about overcoming it (Prochaska and Diclemente, 1992)." This is important because awareness of a problem is clearly a prerequisite for addressing it.

Again, because the organization had little to no experience with feedback, care was taken in introducing feedback in a relatively safe manner. The Bar-On EQi, a self-assessment of emotional intelligence capabilities, was selected as the assessment tool because there is substantial research suggesting that it is a valid measure of EI, and it is a widely used instrument (Bar-On, Handley, & Fund, 2006; Bar-On, 2004; Dawd, 2000). In addition, the EQi also provided a self-assessment for the participants to first experience feedback, as opposed to receiving assessments from others. As will be discussed in the results, some participants were surprised and/or upset by the results of

their EQi and asked, “Who said this about me?” This reaction provides support for the decision to ease participants into the concept of feedback with a self-assessment.

As stated, the program began with the Pilot Group. These individuals completed the Bar-On EQi and then attended a two-day offsite meeting. To reinforce buy-in and the focus on leadership development, the session began with a reiteration of the company’s goals and priorities for the year, among which was leadership development. The concept of emotional intelligence was introduced as one important set of leadership competencies. The research on EI and the business case for this approach were then presented to participants, followed by the principles and competencies of EI.

Group members were then debriefed on the Bar-On EQi and given their feedback reports. The group discussed their results, specifically their strengths and areas for development, what questions they might have, and on what area(s) they might focus their development. Following training on goal setting best practices (e.g. SMART model), participants were directed to begin creating an EQi action plan based on their EQi results.

For the Pilot Group, the EI workshop session was followed by training on competency models. The presentation included an introduction to Competency Models, including the research supporting the process, as well as examples of competency models from a range of organizations. The Pilot Group then created a draft leadership competency model, the “Core Competencies” for the company, to be reviewed and refined with the entire Senior Leadership Team during the next wave of the program. Following the Pilot Group’s offsite, each member of the Pilot Group was assigned to one of two consultants for regular one-on-one coaching sessions.

The next wave of the program, which included the non-Pilot Group members of the SLT, then began the first phase of the program. This group followed the same process the Pilot Group engaged in, described above. They completed the Bar-On EQi and attended the two-day offsite workshop to learn about emotional intelligence, receive their results, and create an EQi action plan based on these results. During this off-site, the Pilot Group helped facilitate the sessions and led small group discussions regarding participants' EQi action plans. The aim of their participation was to help the Pilot Group members reinforce the knowledge and skills targeted in the first phase of the program by teaching others, reinforce their EQi action plans by discussing them with others, demonstrate their commitment to this program and to leadership development in general, communicate that the program was a high priority for the organization (by showing the very top of the organization was spending time focusing on it), and provide an opportunity for the team to interact and communicate in the same language around these ideas.

The full Senior Leadership Team (including the Pilot Group) then reviewed and revised the competency model the Pilot Group had drafted. Following the workshop, the model was further refined by the team and then finalized.

This completed the first phase of the program for the Pilot Group and the full Senior Leadership Team. The program continued with the next level down in the organizational hierarchy participating in the first phase of the program. This group consisted of the 60 manager-level employees below the SLT, who were divided into two manageable groups of 30. As shown in Table 1, one group of 30 went through the first phase of the Leadership Development Program, one after the other immediately after the

SLT, and the other went through it several months later. Like the Pilot Group and SLT before them, these two groups completed the EQi and attended a workshop on EI and feedback during which they received their results and created EQi action plans. Again, senior leadership played an active role in the workshops. The SLT presented information on EI, feedback and communication skills, and the new competency model they had developed. They also facilitated small group discussions regarding the EQi action plans.

Phase Two.

The second phase of the program focused on the Core Competencies the leadership team had developed. As discussed previously, the ultimate goal of the program was to develop participants' leadership skills to increase their effectiveness in their roles. The Core Competencies were the initial step in doing so by clearly defining what leadership skills were critical for success at Company XYZ. Once these competencies were outlined, the program targeted development of these skills, as they were the competencies leaders in the organization needed to possess.

The first phase of the program provided a foundation in basic communication and feedback skills as well as an introduction to receiving a formal feedback report, which most participants had never experienced. The second phase built upon this foundation to further the development of participants' skills.

As in the first phase of the program, the Pilot Group members composed the first wave of phase two. Similar to the first phase of the program, the initial step in phase two was to assess participants on their current skill level and provide that feedback to them. Because the focus of this phase of the program was on the Core Competencies developed

in the first phase of the program, a 360-degree assessment process based on that competency model was used. Individuals who work closely with each Pilot Group members completed a 360-degree feedback survey for that Pilot Groups member. The Pilot Group then attended an offsite workshop where they received their 360-degree feedback results and created 360 feedback development plans based on those results. The Pilot Group members then met with the consultants for regular one-on-one coaching sessions, focusing on their 360 feedback development plans.

The second wave of the program followed the same process, again including the remaining SLT members. They participated in a 360-degree feedback initiative, and then attended an offsite workshop where they received their reports and created 360 feedback development plans based on their results. They were then assigned to one of the two top executives in the company (the President or the Chief Financial Officer) for ongoing one-on-one coaching sessions. The aim of having these two individuals serve as coaches rather than the consultants was to develop their leadership and coaching skills as well as continue the expectation that the leaders in the organization were responsible for ongoing leadership development.

At the time of the evaluation, the next level of the organization - the 60 managers – had not yet completed the second phase of the program.

Phase Three.

The third phase of the program focused on ongoing leadership development, including behavior changes and maintenance of those changes. Once behavior modifications have been made, maintaining those changes becomes the challenge. The third phase of the program targeted change maintenance by providing what Prochaska

and DiClemente (1992) refer to as *helping relationships*, which offer the opportunity for “being open and trusting about problems with someone who cares” and *reinforcement management*, which encompasses “being rewarded by others for making changes.”

This phase centered on *Cohort Groups*, small groups created by dividing all non-SLT members into 6 groups. Two Senior Leadership Team members were assigned to lead each Cohort Group. Again, senior leadership played an active role in the organization’s leadership development.

Because participants in the third wave completed the program in two rounds – the first 30 completed it in May and the second 30 in September – there were originally separate Cohort Groups for each of these groups of 30. Eventually, the groups were combined so that each leader had one, not two, Cohort Groups. In addition, two of the Cohort Groups later merged leaving 5 distinct Cohort Groups. The rationale was that a larger group would introduce more ideas and energy into the group. In addition, with a larger group, attendance was less of a problem because if a few members had to miss a meeting, there were still enough individuals to have a productive and interesting session. The purpose of these Cohort Groups was to reinforce the training from the first phase of the program, to reinforce the Core Competencies, to provide members with support on their EQi action plans, and to provide a forum for ongoing leadership development. The Cohort Groups met monthly for one hour sessions. The structure and content of the groups was left open for each leader to establish for his/her respective groups. Therefore, the activities each group engaged in varied. Initially, all groups discussed members’ EQi action plans. However, activities eventually shifted. All groups discussed the Core Competencies, however, the time allotted for discussion of the competency model and the

nature of the discussion varied. One group created an acronym to remember the competencies. This group also engaged in creative activities aimed at learning the competencies. One such activity required group members to decorate lunch bags (because the meeting took place during the lunch hour), with a depiction of one of the competencies. Cohort Group members then shared their bags with the rest of the group, explaining why they chose that illustration.

All groups eventually read one or more of the follow books:

- *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey
- *Who Ate My Cheese?* by Danny Schnitzlein
- *The Leadership Paradox* by Denny Gunderson

Typically, the groups focused on one chapter of the book each week. Most groups decided to listen to an audio recording of the book during the meetings rather than having each member read it prior to the meeting and then discuss the material in the session. Because of the time constraints employees faced, many were not able to prepare for the meeting by reading the book beforehand. By listening to the audio version during the meeting, it was guaranteed all members reviewed the material. Groups then engaged in a discussion of the materials they had either listened to or read. The discussion in some groups centered on how materials could be applied to group members' day-to-day roles. Other groups did not explicitly discuss this.

Cohort Group meetings were also used to discuss events that transpired in the business as they arose. For example, an employee was tragically killed in a car accident, and Cohort Groups used their meeting to discuss the event. When layoffs were conducted, Cohort Groups discussed the impact on the organization as well as how the

process was handled by the company's leadership. The nature of these discussions differed with the Cohort Group. Some were more emotional venting in nature while others were tied back to leadership development (i.e. layoffs were handled poorly by some because they need improved empathy and communication skills). Summaries of each group's activities were compiled and disseminated monthly to all Cohort Group leaders to provide updates on what each group was doing.

In summary, at the time of the evaluation, the following groups had experienced the following elements of the program:

- Pilot Group and SLT members had completed and served as facilitators for the first phase of the program (targeting EI, feedback and communication skills) and created EQi action plans. These two groups had also completed the 360-degree feedback process and created 360 feedback development plans. The Pilot Group and SLT members had also led the Cohort Groups composed of non-SLT members.
- All non-SLT members had completed first phase of the program (targeting EI, feedback and communication skills) and created EQi action plans. This group had also participated in Cohort Group meetings led by SLT members.

Participants and Procedure

The evaluation was conducted over a 2-month period approximately 2 years after the first phase of the program was implemented. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the Leadership Development Program described above was effective in meeting the aims set forth, which were delineated previously. The evaluation consisted of four main components:

- Participant Interviews
- Colleague Interviews
- Cohort Group Observation
- Cohort Group Interview

Participant Interviews.

A total of 28 individual participant interviews were conducted to gather data regarding the interviewees' experience as participants in the Leadership Development Program. Because the primary focus of the evaluation was on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), each of the 15 SLT members (5 female, 10 male) was interviewed individually. In addition, two non-SLT members from each of the six original Cohort Groups were also interviewed individually in order to assess the impact to date of the third wave of the program (the hierarchical level of the organization below the SLT) as well as provide a basis for comparison of the different Cohort Groups. As noted previously, two of the six Cohort Groups eventually merged. To provide data regarding the program in its original form as well as its current state at the time of the evaluation, members from each of the original Cohort Groups were selected, even though four of those members were in the same Cohort Group at the time of the evaluation. Non-SLT individual participant interviewees were selected to include different locations and departments. In addition to the SLT and non-SLT participants, an interview was also conducted with one non-SLT member who dropped out of the program after several months because he did not want to continue his participation.

Each interview was approximately 90 minutes in length, conducted in a secluded office without windows to increase privacy. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the

interviewees. Interview questions targeted events that transpired prior to the Leadership Development Program through the time of the evaluation in order to assess the impact of the program on the individual level. Specifically, participants were asked about their experience with the offsite workshops, and Cohort Groups. They were also asked about the details regarding their specific EQi action plans (created based on EQi results) and their 360 feedback development plans (created based on their 360-degree assessment results), including factors that facilitated and impeded their success in achieving their goals. Critical incident interviewing techniques were utilized to maximize the accuracy of the participants' responses. See appendix for complete interview protocol.

Colleague Interviews.

The participant interviews described above provided information regarding the participants' experiences with the Leadership Development Program. These interviews also provided participants' self-assessments of success on their EQi action and 360 feedback development plans. To assess whether self-perceived progress on those action and development plans translated into observable behavior changes, individual interviews were conducted with a select number of employees who work closely with members of the Senior Leadership Team. Given the time and cost constraints on the organization and the labor-intensive nature of interviewing, Colleague Interviews focused on SLT members only. This group had the longest experience with the program as well as the most extensive experience. SLT members had completed the 360-degree feedback process, which non-SLT members had not. They had also experienced the program as participants, facilitators, and group leaders. As such, their results would be most

indicative of the impact of the program. Therefore, colleague interviews were conducted for SLT members and not Non-SLT Cohort Group members.

For each SLT member, these colleagues included: his/her manager, three peers, and any direct reports he/she had. The three peers interviewed for each SLT were selected by the company's CFO based on how closely each colleague worked with that particular SLT member. The number of direct reports each SLT member had varied, from zero to four. The average number of direct reports interviewed per SLT member was two.

A total of 48 individuals were interviewed for colleague interviews. However, most of these interviews focused on more than one individual, given the overlap at the highest hierarchical levels of the organization. For example, three peers were interviewed for each SLT member. Because SLT members are each others' peers, each SLT member was interviewed as a peer for three other SLT members. As such, the 48 individuals interviewed represented 74 distinct interviews regarding SLT members.

Like the Individual Participant interviews, these individual colleague interviews were conducted in a secluded office without windows to increase the privacy. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewee. Interviewees were asked about a specific SLT member(s), including any changes observed in the past 18 months since the program's inception. A six-point Likert scale with anchors was provided to participants to quantify any changes observed by the interviewee on each area the interviewee noticed changes. Colleagues were asked to rate participants on each particular area pre-program and post-program on the six-point scale. Critical incident interviewing techniques were utilized to maximize the accuracy of the participants' responses. For example, if a

colleague indicated that they had noticed a change in the participant's listening skills, they were asked to reflect on the participant's listening skills 18 months ago and provide a rating for that point in time. A rating of 1 indicated a low proficiency, where the individual did not engage in good listening behaviors, and a rating of a 6 indicated a high proficiency, where the individual consistently engaged in good listening behaviors. The interviewee was then asked to cite specific reasons for selecting that particular rating, including at least 2 specific behaviors witnessed by the interviewee at that pre-program point in time. The follow illustrates an example exchange:

Colleague: *(Based on the scale provided)* He was a 2.

Author: What makes you say that?

Colleague: Because he would not make eye contact when I was talking to him. Rather, he would be reading something on his desk. He would also frequently interrupt me while I was talking and would not acknowledge what I had said.

Author: Can you give me a specific example of a time when he engaged in these behaviors?

Colleague: Um, I remember one time when we were working on a proposal for [company name]. I met with him and explained to him why we need to make the necessary changes, but he continued to argue that we should go in the same direction even though I had already explained the reasons why we couldn't, which made it clear to me that he was not listening to what I had said. He didn't acknowledge any of what I had told him...it was obvious he

wasn't listening. I finally just gave up and did it his way. We ended up changing it later on anyway. This happened a lot- that he wouldn't really listen to what I was saying.

Following the colleague's assessment of the participant's skill level prior to the Leadership Development Program, he or she was then asked to rate the participant's current skills in that area on that same six-point scale at the present time, again providing specific examples. Continuing the example above:

Colleague: *(Based on the scale provided)* Now he is a 5.

Author: Again, what makes you say that?

Colleague: He's gotten so much better, but he's not perfect. I would say pretty much every time I talk to him now, he maintains eye contact, nods his head, and repeats back to me what I've said to ensure he heard me correctly. He also refrains from doing what he used to do, like reading papers while I'm talking to him.

Author: Can you give me a specific example of a time when he exhibited these new skills?

Colleague: Yeah, actually it happened just before I met with you. I went into his office, and he was in the middle of writing an email. He asked me to wait a minute while he finished it before starting the conversation with me. And sometimes we've agreed on a time for me to come back, rather than having me talk while he's involved and distracted by something else. He also does not roll his eyes at me while I'm speaking or interrupt me anymore for the most part,

although sometimes when he's stressed he'll do stuff like that. But he has also asked me to point it out to him if he does do those things, so it makes it easy to fix.

The complete colleague interview protocol is included in the appendix.

Cohort Group Observations.

Unstructured Cohort Group Observations were conducted to provide an understanding of the groups' structures, activities, dynamics, and to provide a basis for comparison of the different group meetings. These observations consisted of the author attending one meeting for four of the five Cohort Groups, acting solely as an observer, not participating in the group. The author recorded impressions of the groups, including employee and leadership attendance and participation, meeting tone, and other elements of the groups' dynamics, such as any subgroups that existed. Data also points included the leaders' style of leading the group, what percentage of the group participated and how often, the extent to which the leader encouraged active participation from all group members, and the extent to which the leader and group shared personal information.

Cohort Group Interview.

Cohort Group interviews were conducted for each of the five Cohort Groups during the regularly scheduled meeting time of the group. Leaders of the group were not present during the interview. Interviewees were asked about their experiences with the Cohort Group, including the impact of their participation in the Cohort Group on their EQi action plans. Interviewees were also asked to assess the effectiveness their Cohort Group leaders. To maximize the accuracy of the participants' responses, all questions were probed for specific examples illustrating the interviewees' points of view. For

example, if the group member indicated that the tone of the group was one of open and honest communication, he/she was asked what specifically made him/her say this. The following is an example exchange:

Author: What makes you say that the group members were open and honest with one another? Can you give me some specific examples?

Group Member: When [group member] was going through his divorce, he shared the details of what he was feeling with the rest of the group. He became very emotional...he cried while he was talking about it. No one really pushed him into talking about...I think he just really wanted to, and he felt comfortable opening up to us.

Author: What other examples can you think of?

Group Member: During the lay-offs, I told [group leader] that I didn't agree with how the leadership team had done them. I expressed my anger and frustration and told him that I strongly disagreed with their approach and handling of it. Even though he's on the leadership team, I felt comfortable saying it in the group, and most of the other group members agreed with me and said similar things to him- that the leadership team hadn't done the best job and that people were angry.

See the appendix for the complete interview protocols.

Results were analyzed utilizing Kirkpatrick's (1994) framework for program evaluation to determine the outcomes of the program. As discussed previously, the goal

of the evaluation was to assess what the impact of the program was, specifically its efficacy in terms of its goals. In addition, the evaluation was conducted in order to provide an understanding of the key factors affecting outcomes (why was the program successful or unsuccessful?).

As discussed previously, the ultimate goal of the Leadership Development Program was to develop participants' leadership skills in order to increase their effectiveness in their roles, which would ultimately lead to enhanced overall company performance. To accomplish this, the Leadership Development Program targeted the following interim goals:

- Identify the leadership skills that should be targeted for development
- Establish expectations for leaders and managers in the company regarding those leadership skills
- Increase participants' awareness of and knowledge regarding the leadership competencies expected of them
- Improve participants' competence on 1-2 of those skills

The above goals are aligned with Kirkpatrick's framework, specifically the second and third levels: Learning and Transfer.

Data were analyzed at the first three levels of Kirkpatrick's evaluation framework: Reaction, Learning, and Transfer. While data at the Results level were of great interest, the existing company financial data were clouded by the depressed economic environment at the time of the evaluation. Drawing accurate conclusions based on this information would be extremely difficult if not impossible given the impact of the difficult economy on financial performance. This is particularly true for this industry

because it is directly impacted by the economic environment. As such, analysis of the program at the Results level was not conducted at this time.

Kirkpatrick's first level of evaluation, reaction, was evaluated based on the data provided by participant interviews. Participants were asked how they felt about the program prior to its implementation as well as their overall feelings of the program at the time of the evaluation. Interviewees were asked about their reactions to each phase of the program. Again, all responses were probed for specific examples.

To assess the outcome at the Learning level, participants were asked about the Core Competencies, specifically if they had heard of it and what it was. Participants were also then asked to recall the eight competencies of the Core Competencies, providing data regarding the retention of critical knowledge from the program.

Data collected from Colleague Interviews were the primary basis for determining the extent to which SLT members experienced change at the Transfer level of Kirkpatrick's framework. These data provided the best assessment of the extent to which participants transferred knowledge from the program because it was collected from those working with SLT members. As stated previously, Colleague Interviews only collected data regarding SLT members given the time and cost constraints. For each SLT member, averages were calculated for both the pre-program and follow-up ratings obtained during colleague interviews. As such, an average pre-program and follow-up rating for each SLT member on his/her EQi action plan and his/her 360 feedback development plan was obtained. These average ratings provided the basis for assessing the extent to which SLT members had transferred the knowledge obtained in the program to their roles.

To ensure data from Colleague Interviews provided an accurate assessment of each SLT member's competence prior to the program and at the time of the evaluation, data provided by colleagues who were unable to assess a participant's skills in the development areas related to their plans were not included. The extent to which colleagues were able to assess a SLT member's ability and change in a particular area varied with the focus of the participant's EQi action and 360 feedback development plans and the scope of each colleague's role. Some of the targeted behaviors were less observable by a particular colleague.

For example, one SLT member targeted enhanced relationships with his staff in his EQi action plan. Therefore, his plan included spending an increased amount of time with his direct reports engaging in non-work related conversations to get to know them as individuals. Given that his plan targeted interactions with his staff, his peers and managers would not necessarily be aware of these changes in behavior, even if they were aware of what his 360 feedback development plan included. This is explicitly illustrated by the following statement, made by a colleague of this SLT member. One of his peers explicitly stated, "I haven't seen a change, but he may doing something with his guys...I just don't know about it." In this example, the data provided by this particular colleague, indicating that no observable behavior changes had occurred ("I haven't seen a change.") was not included in the above results. It should be noted that not all data indicating no change occurred was removed. Only data in which colleagues were not able to assess the SLT member's competence in a particular area were removed.

The percentage of data removed according to the above parameters was as follows: Of the 74 distinct colleague interviews, data regarding development areas

related to EQi action plans were omitted from 14 interviews. Data regarding 360 feedback development plans was omitted from 15 of the 74 interviews. Though removing the data lowered the number of perspectives provided from colleagues, it enhanced the accuracy of the data by including only data provided by individuals able to readily assess the SLT member's competence in a particular area.

While an analysis at Kirkpatrick's fourth level of evaluation, Results, was not conducted, data were collected regarding participants' perception of the impact of the changes they had made. Data from individual, colleague, and Cohort Group interviews were aggregated to provide information regarding what impact any changes made by individuals had.

To determine the key factors that facilitated or impeded change, data were analyzed in the following manner: SLT members showing the most changes were compared to those showing the least, examining differences between the two groups. In addition, a thematic analysis was conducted to uncover common factors across participant groups, including non-SLT members. All interviewees were asked about what facilitated their success and what obstacles got in their way. Interviewees' responses to these direct questions, as well as information provided during other segments of the interview were used to ascertain the key factors involved.

Data were also analyzed to investigate the impact of a unique aspect of the program, the cascading approach of having leaders complete and then facilitate segments of the program for the next wave (lower level of the organizational hierarchy). Data were taken from interviews conducted with the SLT, non-SLT, and Cohort Group interviewees. These data were then separated into two groups - SLT and non-SLT -

analyzed separately and compared to examine the effect of the cascading approach of the program. Themes that transcended groups as well as disparate themes between the two groups are discussed herein.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Results were analyzed utilizing Kirkpatrick's (1994) framework for program evaluation to determine the outcomes of the program. As discussed previously, the goal of the evaluation was to assess what the impact of the program was, specifically its efficacy in achieving its goals. In addition, the evaluation was conducted in order to provide an understanding of the key factors affecting outcomes. In other words, why was the program successful or unsuccessful? The outcomes of the Leadership Development Program at each level of Kirkpatrick's model are now discussed.

Level One: Reaction

Kirkpatrick's first level of evaluation is that of participant reaction, which examines the extent to which participants liked the program.

Senior Leadership Team.

Interview data indicated that the vast majority of the SLT regarded the program positively prior to the actual implementation of the program. Twenty percent of the group described being skeptical toward the program before it began. This was due in part to the fact that the company had implemented leadership development programs in the past, which had been less than successful. As such, these SLT members expressed anticipation that this program would lack results as the previous program had. One SLT member explained that when the program was announced he thought, "Here we go

again...” denoting the belief that this program will follow the inefficacious process the previous program had taken. Though some were initially skeptical, most described their feelings prior to the program as “excited,” “enthusiastic,” and “eager.” In addition, 67% of those describing their pre-program feelings as skeptical stated they felt positively about the program following the first phase of the Leadership Development Program.

Overall, the reaction to the program following its implementation was generally positive at the SLT level. However, data indicated greater variation among SLT members’ reactions to the third phase of the program (ongoing development through coaching and Cohort Group meetings) than to the initial two phases (off-site workshops targeting EQi and 360-degree feedback assessments). The initial two phases were viewed more consistently positive than the third.

Overall, SLT members reacted positively to the first phase of the program. According to one SLT member, the EQi process was “kind of fun. Everyone wants to learn about themselves and in relation to their peers.” Most SLT members stated that they were not surprised by the results of the EQi. With regard to the first phase of the program, some SLT members cited anxiety when taking the EQi and awaiting their results. This was particularly true for individuals who had not engaged in this or any type of evaluation prior to this program. Participants described the EQi reports as “useful” and “interesting.” Only one individual expressed surprise at the results. The rest of the SLT found the results to be consistent with what they already believed about themselves.

SLT members also reacted positively to receiving feedback via the 360-degree process. Many expressed anxiety prior to receiving results, although most SLT members described being pleasantly surprised by the feedback they received. Reaction to actual

feedback varied. Some individuals were pleasantly surprised. As one individual explained, “I was actually flattered by what people said.” Another individual discussed that “There was some really good stuff in there...I beat myself up and don’t give myself enough credit.” Other members found some of the feedback more challenging. For example, one SLT member stated, “It was more difficult because some of it was an inaccurate perception.” Though some feedback for some of the participants was surprising or difficult, they agreed that the process was generally positive because it provided them with a better understanding of how individuals they worked with saw them.

SLT participants’ reaction to the third phase of the program varied. Eighty percent of the SLT member felt positively toward the groups. As one SLT member explained, “I think they’re well received. They are a great tool to promote discussions of leadership skills.” Another SLT stated, “I love my Cohort Group meetings. I thrive in interpersonal interactions, and I’ve been able to develop relationships with others through the groups.” One SLT member explained the benefits of the groups as he saw them:

They’re probably the best tool we have during the workweek because that’s the time where we get to intermingle with interdisciplinary groups. I think it’s very important for an integrated services company like ours for somebody in accounting to sit with an environmental engineer, or an architect or civil engineer because sometimes not having a relationship with somebody is what’s causing poor project management results, so I think they are probably the biggest driver of our competencies.

Though most reacted positively, 13% of SLT members were less positive. One SLT member felt negatively about the Cohort Groups. He explained, “They’re a pain...I’m there because I have to be.” SLT members’ reaction to the third phase of the program varied with the Cohort Groups they led. SLT members who expressed negative

reactions to the group were in the same Cohort Group. This reaction was correlated with other factors which will be discussed later, such as leaders' buy-in to the program and confidence in their ability to lead the groups.

Non-Senior Leadership Team.

Overall, the reaction to the initial phase of the program (off-site workshop) was very positive at the non-SLT level. One non-SLT member described it as “one of the most beneficial classes I’ve ever taken.” Others described the EQi as “the most eye-opening experience I’ve been in” and “fascinating.” Most participants enjoyed the process of taking the EQi, though they did express some anxiety prior to receiving the results. Generally speaking, this level of the organization had less experience with this type of program. This may have contributed to the positive reaction in that they were provided with new information and experiences, which is typically a positive experience for most individuals. Further, a lack of experience can also result in less negative prior experiences, thereby reducing the possibility of possessing a skeptical view based on prior disappointments.

Non-SLT participants' reactions to the second phase of the program were not available due to the fact that this group had yet to complete that phase at the time of the evaluation. However, they had participated in the Cohort Groups. Their reactions to the Cohort Groups were generally positive as well. All non-SLT participants responded positively when asked “Overall, how do you feel about the Cohort Group experience?” While concerns were expressed, which are discussed in detail later, the overall sentiment toward the Cohort Groups was positive. One non-SLT member stated, “It’s great. It gets people together for face time with one another and with leaders.” Another discussed the

value of the groups, “I’m walking away with a lot. Depending on what we’re doing...for example, right now I’m learning new skills on planning, and I’m applying them to my own job.” Another non-SLT member explained, “I leave the group feeling very close and connected. It’s good.”

Level Two: Learning

Kirkpatrick’s second level, *Learning*, assesses the extent to which participants learned new information as a result of the program. Kraiger, Ford and Salas (1993) put forth a model that further expands upon Kirkpatrick’s (1994) evaluation framework by further describing learning outcomes as cognitive, skill-based, and affective. In the Leadership Development Program, cognitive learning included comprehending what the Core Competencies were, self-awareness of participants’ skill level on EQi competencies as well as the Core Competencies. Behavioral learning included the one or two development areas each participant targeted in their EQi action plans, as these increased their knowledge of how to improve a particular skill. Affective outcomes included a common commitment to the norms, values, and what is important to learn. For Company XYZ, this included increased communication and feedback.

Data indicated that learning had taken place across the three learning outcomes Kraiger et al. (1993) outline. This was true for SLT and non-SLT levels. However, success varied with the topic. As stated previously, the first step in the program was defining the skills leaders need to possess for success at the company. The program was successful in accomplishing this by establishing the company’s Core Competencies. However, to be of any value, these competencies had to be communicated to the organization and then acted upon. The results indicate that the Core Competencies were

in fact communicated to all participants, as all participants knew that Core Competencies existed. Further, all participants stated that they believed the Core Competencies were appropriate and inclusive, and they would not make any changes to the model if they were able to do so. As such, data indicated that the program was successful in the first two steps listed above. An appropriate (as determined by participants) set of competencies was established and communicated to the organization.

However, the results also indicate that overall, the program was only somewhat effective in ensuring participants learned what the Core Competencies were. The extent to which participants were able to recall the eight Core Competencies varied by hierarchical level as follows:

- 50% of SLT recalled all competencies
- 93% of SLT recalled at least half of competencies (4 or more)
- 25% of non-SLT recalled all of the competencies
- 50% of non-SLT recalled at least half of the competencies

Recall of competencies also varied by Cohort Groups. Members of some groups were able to recall more than members of other Cohort Groups. Of the eight competencies, *Accountability* and *Communication* were the most recalled by participants. According to individuals most responsible for the program (consultants and members of the Pilot Group involved in the design of the program), these two competencies were of particular importance to the organization and had been emphasized during the program.

In addition to the competency model, another area of content knowledge to be learned by the participants involved their personal development areas. This self-awareness falls under Kraiger et al.'s cognitive outcomes. Data indicated that the

program was very successful in providing participants with knowledge in this area.

Results varied slightly between the SLT and non-SLT members in this area. Each SLT member discussed his/her action and 360 feedback development plans during interviews. This indicated that he/she had learned what his/her areas for development were as well as what steps were necessary for working toward improvement in these areas. At the non-SLT level, all but one individual were able to describe their EQi action plans.

All SLT members indicated that the Leadership Development Program was responsible for their attention and action towards addressing their specific development area(s). All SLT members stated they would not have worked on this area(s) had it not been for the program, regardless of their awareness of this developmental need (i.e. whether they had known for a long time that they needed to work on this area). Some individuals indicated that they had wanted to improve in this area previously, but had not attempted to make the changes necessary to do so. Others stated that they had not focused on improving in this area previously because though they were aware of the development area(s), they did not view changing as necessary.

One SLT member explained that without the program, “I probably would not have been disciplined enough with my time or with my habits for that matter to have realized that this is probably the most important thing I need to do...and that is be a good leader. And I wouldn’t have had the tools we’ve learned to use.”

Non-SLT members also indicated that they would not have targeted the areas they did had it not been for the Leadership Development Program.

Level Three: Transfer

The third level of Kirkpatrick's model, Transfer, refers to the extent to which participants applied the knowledge they learned through a particular program. Transfer of learning is critical to the success of a program. While learning the content is important, the extent to which participants apply what they have learned on the job determines the success of most programs, particularly the Leadership Development Program at Company XYZ. Assessment regarding transfer was limited to the SLT members. As discussed previously, changes in behavior as observed by others were measured for SLT members only because this group had the most experience with the program from multiple vantage points, as participants, facilitators, and group leaders. The lower level of the organization, non-SLT program participants, also provided valuable insight into the program experience, which was included in the analysis at the reaction and learning levels. However, because their self-assessments of change were not validated via interviews with colleagues, results on the transfer level are not included for this group. However, their perspectives regarding facilitating and inhibiting factors provide insight into the unique experiences of their level of the organization and program wave as well as further support the findings of the SLT group.

As stated previously, data indicated members of the SLT learned what their development areas were through the program. In addition, they learned how to address these areas through the creation of action and 360 feedback development plans. However, the critical question was whether this learning translated into changes, particularly as observed by others. While participants may have believed that they had

followed their 360 feedback development plans and now exhibited improved skills, their colleagues may not share the same perception of change.

Results indicated that SLT members exhibited changes across the board on either their action or 360 feedback development plan or both. Overall, SLT members' colleagues perceived more change in behaviors related to SLT members' 360 feedback development plans than those of their EQi action plans. Two SLT members did not exhibit any changes on their EQi action plans. The average pre-program rating for participants' EQi action plan development areas was 2.1 on a scale of 1-6 (where 1 is low and 6 is high), and the average follow-up rating on the same scale was a 3.3. This rating was an average of the colleagues' assessment of SLT members' competence in a particular area based on the frequency with which the SLT member engaged in the behaviors associated with the competency. The average change in rating was 1.2, with a range of 0 to 2.5. These results are illustrated in Figure 3.

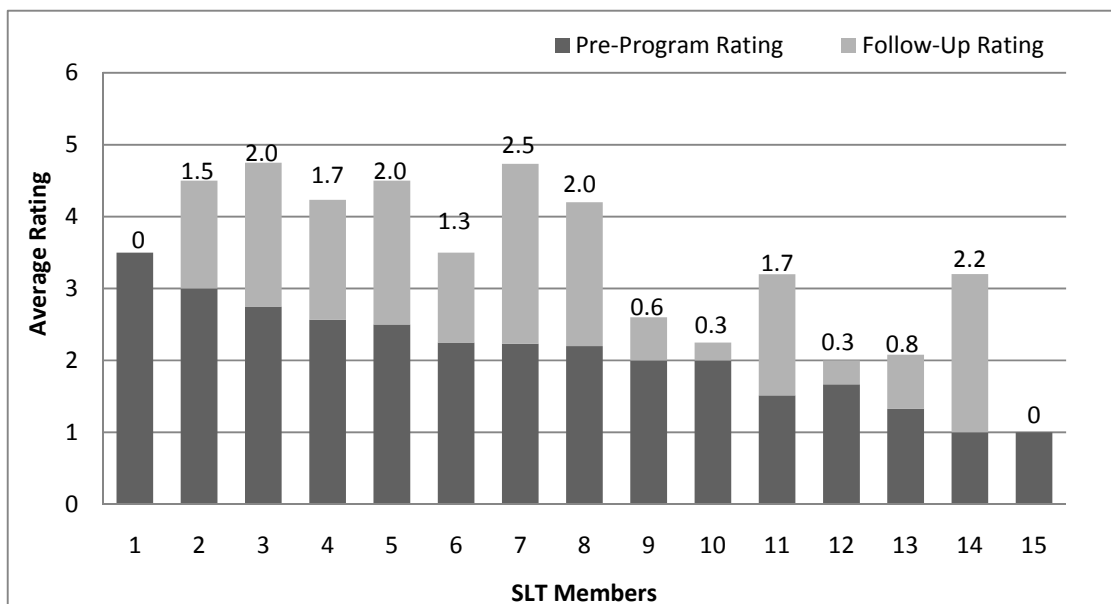


Figure 3. Colleagues' average pre-program and follow-up ratings of SLT members on development areas related to EQi action plans. The number above each bar indicates the change in rating from pre-program to follow-up. The bottom, darker portion of the bar illustrates the pre-program rating, and the follow-up rating is indicated by the total height of the bar (darker and lighter portions combined).

For 360 feedback development plans, the average pre-program rating was 2.1 on a scale of 1-6 (where 1 is low and 6 is high), and the average follow-up rating on the same scale was a 3.8. This indicates that average pre-program ratings on development were on the negative half of the scale (3.5 is the median of a six-point scale), and average follow-up ratings had moved into the positive end of the scale. The average change in rating was 1.7, with a range of 0.8 to 2.5. These results are illustrated in Figure 4.

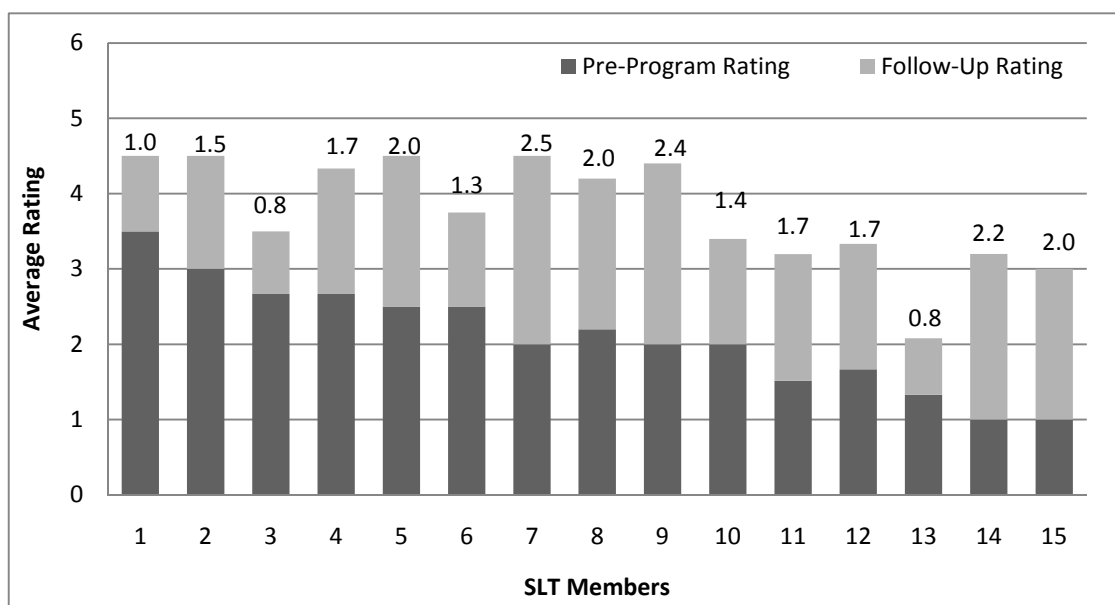


Figure 4. Colleagues' average pre-program and follow-up ratings of SLT members on development areas related to 360 feedback development plans. The number above each bar indicates the change in rating from pre-program to follow-up. The bottom, darker portion of the bar illustrates the pre-program rating, and the follow-up rating is indicated by the total height of the bar (darker and lighter portions combined).

To assess the overall greatest perceived change in participants by colleagues, data from EQi action plans and 360 feedback development plans were also combined in the following manner: the average change in ratings for each SLT member was taken from the plan (EQi action or 360-degree development) that showed the greater increase in rating. This provided a clear assessment of the maximum benefit of the program to the participants and provided a basis for comparison to investigate the factors that facilitated or impeded change. Comparing EQi action plans and 360 feedback development plans or the average change for each SLT was complicated because some SLT members targeted the same development areas for their action and 360 feedback development plans, and

some members had different degrees of changes on one plan versus the other. Examining the greater changes of the two plans provided an additional opportunity for comparison on a common platform. These average changes are displayed in Figure 5.

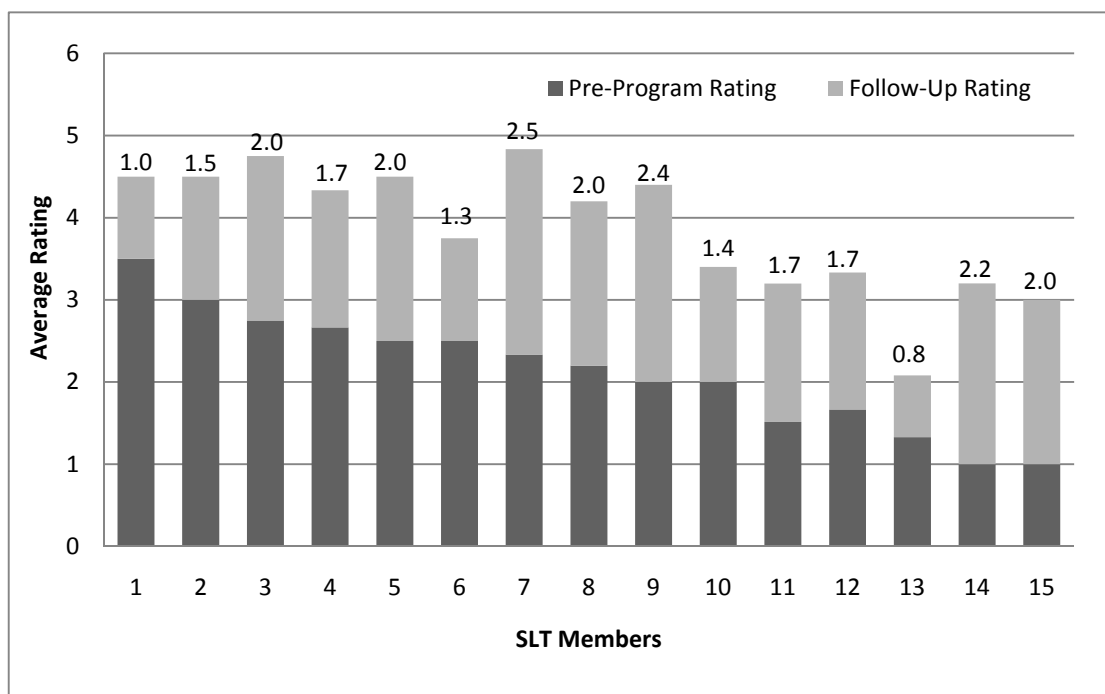


Figure 5. Colleagues' average pre-program and follow-up ratings of SLT members on either EQi or 360 feedback development plans, whichever had greater changes in perceptions. The number above each bar indicates the change in rating from pre-program to follow-up. The bottom, darker portion of the bar illustrates the pre-program rating, and the follow-up rating is indicated by the total height of the bar (darker and lighter portions combined).

The average pre-program rating on a scale of 1-6 was 2.1, and the average follow-up rating on the same scale was 3.9. Again, data indicates that average pre-program ratings were on the negative half of the scale, and average follow-up ratings had moved into the positive end of the scale. The average change in rating was 1.8, with a range of

0.8 to 2.5. Results indicate significant outcomes at the transfer level in terms of participants displaying changes in behavior observable by those with whom they work.

Benefits of Changes

While an analysis at Kirkpatrick's fourth level of evaluation, Results, was not conducted, data were collected regarding participants' perception of the impact of the changes they had made. Data on the impact of changes to date was collected from Individual Participant Interviews with both SLT and non-SLT members, Colleague Interviews, and Cohort Group Interviews. During interviews, each participant was asked not only what individual changes had taken place, but also the impact of those changes on themselves, those they work with, and the business overall. Colleagues were also asked to detail the impact they witnessed as a result of changes in SLT members' behavior.

An analysis of these data revealed that the changes described were beneficial on multiple levels, as summarized by Figure 6. Results indicated that changes in behavior resulted in positive outcomes at the individual level, the team level, and the overall business level. At the individual level, participants experienced personal satisfaction as a result of progress on their EQi action plans. In addition, participants stated that these changes made their jobs and/or interpersonal interactions easier, which made them more effective in their roles. Participants also cited examples of how the changes they made in relation to their action and/or 360 feedback development plans resulted in improved performance on their part.

Changes made by individuals also resulted in benefits at the team level, including increased teamwork and collaboration, which led to increased team effectiveness.

Participants who improved their communication or interpersonal skills cited benefits at the team level, including enhanced interpersonal relationships.

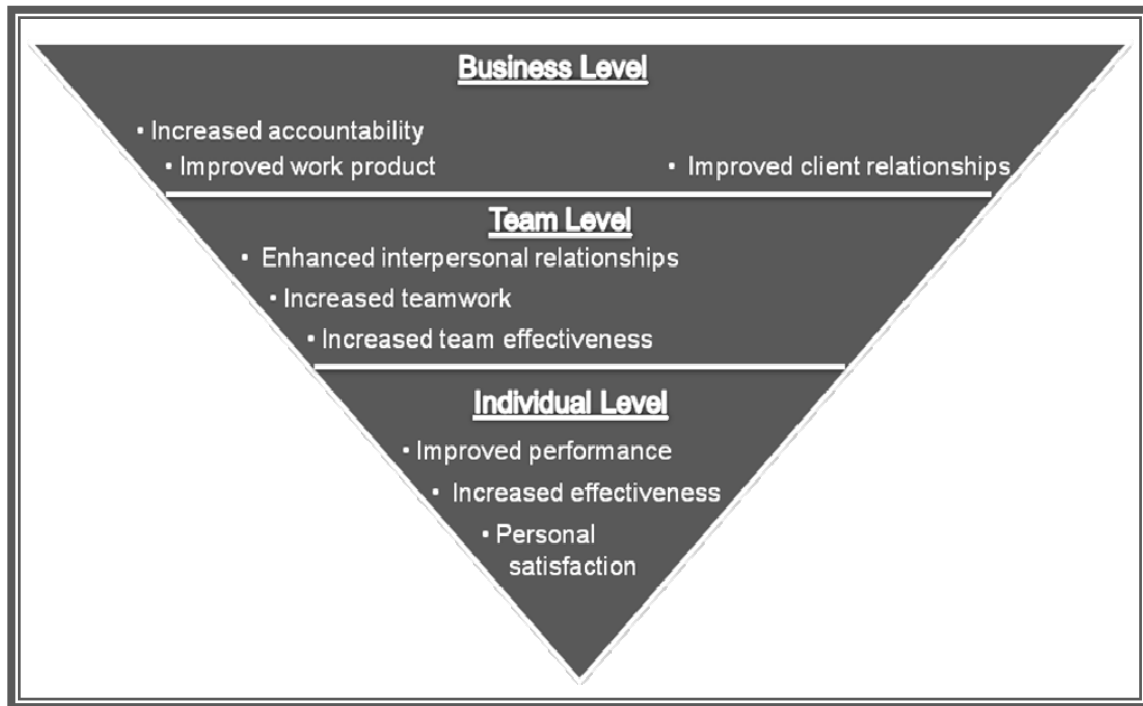


Figure 6. Summary of benefits of participants' individual changes.

Finally, participants cited benefits at the business level resulting from individual changes, including increased accountability, improved work product, improved client relationships, and savings in terms of time and money.

It is useful to examine an example of one individual change and the benefits and end results of that change to understand how a specific change at the individual level results in the above outcomes. Several participants targeted better listening skills in their EQi action or 360 feedback development plans. These individuals and their colleagues explained the benefits of the participants' improved listening skills. Table 2 outlines the benefits and results improvements in this development area.

Table 2

Summary of benefits and results of improved listening skills as cited by participants and colleagues.

Skill	Benefit	Results
Better Listening Skills	“People are happier because I listen”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employee satisfaction • Enhanced relationships
	“I get better information”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better decisions are made • Problems solved faster (and root issues are resolved)
	“I give better information”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of staff needs enables resources to be provided • Address clients’ needs

Better listening skills increased employee satisfaction and enhanced relationships because others reacted positively to being listened to and heard. Colleagues stated that they felt more positively toward individuals who had improved their listening skills and cited benefits including the ability to provide necessary information, to which these individuals now listened. In addition, participants explained that they received better information sooner from others because they listened better. Colleagues also indicated that this was true. The result was that they were able to address problems earlier on in process.

Finally, participants who improved their listening skills stated they were able to provide better information, to both staff and clients. By listening and fully understanding what their staff needed for a particular task, they were able to allocate resources as needed without wasting time or resources unnecessarily. Colleague interviews confirmed these claims, stating that they were able to have their information and resource needs more readily addressed.

In addition, participants stated they were better able to address clients’ need because they listened to what the client was demanding. They were then better able to meet the client’s needs or outline the obstacles to what the client was requesting. One

participant explained, “I have a very short attention span. This program has taught me to pay attention and stay focused on what someone is saying. I have found it easier to respond to clients because I really listen to what they are saying and what they want.”

Another participant explained, “I’ve learned how to be a better listener and have used the skills with clients...The result [of one situation] was that he left the call in a good mood...hopefully the same good mood when it comes time to sign the check.”

Table 3 provides a summary of the benefits participants and/or colleagues cited in relation to four commonly selected development areas: emotional control, delegation to staff, empathy, and confidence.

Key Factors Affecting Success

The evaluation conducted at the first three levels of Kirkpatrick’s framework provided an assessment of the outcomes of the Leadership Development Program. Results revealed consistent themes across different groups as well as variation among those groups. Some participants retained the Core Competencies better than others. Some participants exhibited greater change on their EQi action and/or 360 feedback development plans than other participants. Some individuals experienced greater change on either their EQi action plan or their 360 feedback development plan while experiencing little to no change on the other plan. Data were analyzed to provide insight into the key factors that contributed to variation described in the above results. These findings are now discussed.

Table 3

Summary of benefits cited by participants and colleagues related to select development areas

Skill	Benefit	Results
Increased Emotional Control	“People listen to what I say”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased information sharing • Enhanced decision-making
	“People like me more”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced relationships • Improved collaboration/teamwork • Increased employee satisfaction
	“Conflict doesn’t escalate”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems resolved earlier and more quickly • Improved interpersonal relationships
Increased Delegation to Staff	“My staff has more meaningful work”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employee satisfaction • Enhanced employee motivation
	“My staff learns and grows through assignments”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced skills and abilities of employees • Increased efficiency
	“I have time to focus on important things”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced effectiveness • Increased focus on business development • Improved client relationships
Increased Empathy	“People are happier because I show I care”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employee satisfaction • Enhanced motivation
	“My staff trusts and respects me”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved relationships • Enhanced leadership effectiveness
	“I can get more out of people because I have better relationships”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased accountability • Improved quality of work • Increased effectiveness
Increased Confidence	“I share my opinions more often”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved information sharing • Enhanced decision-making • Increased personal satisfaction
	“I ask for necessary information and resources”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased effectiveness • Enhanced efficiency • Reduction in stress
	“I hold others more accountable”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal commitments met • Improved work product • Client commitments met

Follow-Up.

Results indicated that follow-up was among the most important factors for facilitating change. As discussed previously, the purpose of the Leadership Development Program was to establish lasting changes in behavior. A difficulty faced by many training programs is the transfer of learned behaviors and incorporation of new

knowledge into action and behavior change. Transfer of learning to behavior was at the core of the Leadership Development Program. Participants were provided new information during the offsite workshops. During these meetings, participants learned new concepts, skills, and behaviors. Through the feedback assessments provided, participants were also provided knowledge regarding their own levels of competence, as perceived by others. However, it was the time period following the offsite workshops where the actual behavior changes were to occur.

In order to facilitate this change, the program included follow-up in various forms: all participants were assigned to Cohort Groups for monthly group meetings and members of SLT were assigned to coaches (Pilot Group members were assigned to one of two consultants and non-SLT members were assigned to one of the top two executives in the company) for regular one-on-one sessions. In addition to these formal structures for follow-up, informal opportunities arose from the program as well. Participants stated that they would frequently discuss their plans with other participants – both with those who were and those who were not in their assigned Cohort Groups – outside of Cohort Group meetings. These informal opportunities for follow-up will be discussed further below.

Results indicated that having these structured and unstructured follow-up opportunities was an important factor in participants' success on their plans. Data revealed that follow-up provided accountability, feedback and reinforcement, emotional support, and tactical support. While each of these benefits was cited by participants as outcomes of the various types of follow-up, accountability was particularly important, according to interviewees. Results indicated that accountability for progress was a key factor in facilitating change.

When asked what facilitated success toward their action and/or 360 feedback development plans, 100% of SLT members as well as 92% of the non-SLT members interviewed cited being held accountable by others, including their coach, their Cohort Group, or others in the organization.

Similarly, SLT members who experienced less change or no change on one of their plans cited a lack of accountability as an obstacle to their success. Non-SLT members also cited a lack of accountability as a challenge to their progress on their EQi action plans. For example, one participant who was unable to discuss his EQi action plan because he could not recall what it consisted of. When he was asked what the obstacles were to him recalling this plan, he explained that “[Coach’s name] worked with me. But he didn’t follow up on my EQi action plan at all. I think we might have had one conversation, but I can’t even remember at this point.” He also stated that his Cohort Group did not meet regularly because meetings were frequently cancelled. Because he did not have any follow-up on his EQi action plan, more importantly, no one held him accountable, he was not able to recall his EQi action plan, let alone experience any progress on it. The variation in follow-up with discussed further later.

Non-SLT members also cited arrested accountability as a key factor in their cessation of progress and/or regression on their plans. These participants stated that initially their Cohort Groups engaged in follow-up on their plans. During the initial meetings, members would discuss their progress on their EQi action plans, including what specifically they had accomplished since the last Cohort Group meeting and what obstacles had interfered with their progress. Participants explained that having to report

back to the group on their progress was a powerful motivating force in ensuring that they made progress on their plans.

Results also indicated that accountability superseded other factors involved in participants' success, including buy-in and commitment to the program and self-development. For example, one SLT member, Sara¹, expressed a strong commitment to the program and belief in its goals and approach. She was described by herself and colleagues interviewed about her as an advocate of the Leadership Development Program. However, she explained that accountability was critical to her effort on both her EQi action plan and her 360 feedback development plan. As she explained, "I wouldn't have done it if no one had followed up with me on it." Though she bought in to the program and was committed to her own development, being held accountable was a critical factor in her progress.

Another example provides a reverse illustration of how accountability was crucial to success. Jeff, an SLT member, expressed significant doubts regarding the program and stated that he was not committed to the program. He also stated that he did not work on his EQi action plan, which targeted empathy, because he did not believe that it was important for success in his role and subsequently the business. However, he also cited a lack of accountability as being an important factor for not progressing on this EQi action plan. "No one held me accountable. I wasn't pushed to work on it. If someone had followed up with me on a regular basis to make sure that I had worked on it, I would have."

The two above examples illustrate the importance of accountability to behavior changes, each in an opposite manner. In the first example, the participant stated that a

¹ Actual names of individuals have been changed to protect confidentiality

lack of accountability would have had a detrimental impact on her success, even though she felt committed to the program. On the other hand, in the second example, the participant cited a lack of accountability as a major factor for his lack of follow through on his EQi action plan. He also stated that if he been held accountable for progress toward his EQi action plan, he would have done so even though he was not committed to the program, nor did he believe that his plan was important for his individual or overall company success. This is not necessarily surprising given the setting of this program. In a corporate environment, individual actions are rooted in accountability. Direction is given in a downward succession, and employees are mandated to engage in certain activities in order to remain employed in a given job.

Similar to being held accountable, participants stated that being given feedback and reinforcement from others was important. Interviewees cited multiple settings in which such feedback was provided. This included the Cohort Group meetings and coaching sessions, but also situations outside of the formal structures of the program. According to participants, feedback was also provided during SLT meetings and during one-on-one interactions between two participants. For example, one participant's 360 feedback development plan targeted emotional control. He cited several examples of instances when his peers had contacted him following events in which they witnessed him either successfully displaying the new behaviors he was targeting (i.e. remaining calm and not raising his voice or rolling his eyes) or engaging in the old behaviors he was trying to avoid. One SLT member explained:

What I found to this day has been the best tool is allowing people to give you open and honest feedback and receiving it a manner that is positive, in other words... If I were upset, for example, going to [colleague name] and saying, 'I was obviously upset during that meeting. I tried to really not go off track and let this affect me. Do you think what I did was effective? Should I have been more tough in that incident? Or do you think I should have backed off?

According to interviewees, this type of feedback proved important in helping participants monitor their own behavior as well as providing reinforcement. Results indicated that the structure of the Leadership Development Program was important for this type of feedback to occur. Because all participants completed the same program, and within a relatively short time period, they developed a common understanding of the value of providing feedback to each other. Kraiger et al. (1993) categorize this common recognition of the importance of certain values and norms as an attitudinal learning outcome. According to one participant, an important factor in success toward achieving behavior changes was “asking for feedback, and also being willing to receive it on the spot.” This required both the feedback provider and the feedback receiver to have a common understanding. The provider must be willing and able to provide feedback, and the receiver must be willing and able to receive that information.

Participants indicated that they had developed common skills and language for providing feedback. For example, participants cited the description of feedback as “a gift” (a term taught in the program), explaining that they would often use this language to prepare a colleague for receiving the feedback that they were about to provide.

Interviewees indicated that prior to the program, feedback was not readily shared between members of the organization, and they attributed the increased occurrence of feedback to the Leadership Development Program. As one SLT member explained:

Before...around here...no one without going through the Leadership Development Program would do that. I think if there is any art or skill that people have really gotten comfortable with, it's giving feedback. But honest feedback and direct feedback, not you heard from somebody else...

In addition to establishing accountability and providing opportunities for feedback, results indicated that participants also gained support from the opportunities the formal program structures provided. Cohort Groups established opportunities for helping relationships, "being open and trusting about problems with someone who cares" (Prochaska et al., 1992). Eighty-five percent of the participants interviewed stated that the Cohort Groups gave them support regarding their EQi action plans, as well as other areas of their professional and personal lives. This included emotional support as well as more practical suggestions for increased effectiveness toward plans. One non-SLT member stated:

To be honest with you, more than anything else, just being able to sit in a non-confrontational environment and have people provide honest feedback has been really helpful...that's 95% of the benefit of the program, I think.

Interviewees stated that the Cohort Groups provided emotional support to members. As one participant explained, "It gave you a sense that you weren't in this alone." Participants stated that they commiserated with one another regarding the difficulty in changing long-standing behaviors. Participants also described feeling the support of knowing that everyone was working on something. This had a normalizing effect, allowing participants to feel as though everyone has areas for development and they should not feel negatively about their own development needs. One participant explained:

I was nervous about sharing my [EQi] results...showing my weaknesses, flaws. But it wasn't so bad after all because you realized that everyone had flaws. Everyone was working on something, so you didn't feel embarrassed about your areas you had to work on. It felt OK.

Participants cited these common experiences as the basis for building a sense of camaraderie among group members as they bonded over common goals, successes and failures. This was particularly true for individuals who shared the same development areas.

In addition to the emotional support, participants also cited tactical support from their Cohort Groups as facilitating their success on their plans. As group members shared their development areas and plans, other group members provided suggestions regarding plans. According to interviewees, this included additions to EQi action plans and ideas for overcoming obstacles that arose.

One non-SLT member, Harry, explained that he and another member of his Cohort Group had selected the same development area to target in their EQi action plan. He stated that he and this group member provided one another support, feedback, and suggestions. However, it was not necessary to target the same development areas to receive these benefits from group members. Other participants cited instances in which the group provided suggestions on ways in which they could improve their EQi action plans (i.e. additional behaviors to engage in) or how they could overcome obstacles they were facing in reaching their goals. As one participant explained, "I would be able to call [Cohort Group leader] or [Cohort Group member] if I need something...And now it's expanded to other members of the Cohort Group. I can just call and just bounce an idea off of somebody."

The Cohort Groups also provided an opportunity for participants to actually engage in their targeted behaviors and receive feedback and reinforcement on those attempts. For example, one non-SLT member, Larry, was working on increased assertiveness. One component of his plan was to increase the number of times he spoke up during meetings. He explained that he actually used the Cohort Group meeting as an opportunity for this. He made a point of speaking a certain number of times during each meeting, and the Cohort Group experience provided reinforcement for continuing this behavior. As he explained, “People listen to what I say, and it gives me the confidence to share my opinions next time.” The Cohort Group meetings provided Larry with an opportunity to practice a targeted behavior as well as the reinforcement to encourage him to repeat that behavior moving forward.

Results indicated that while follow-up described above was cited by participants as extremely important to success, there was variation in the extent to which certain sources of follow-up were effective. Some Cohort Groups were more effective than others, and some coaches were more effective than others. Results indicated that the most important factor in Cohort Group effectiveness was consistency of attendance. Some Cohort Groups did not meet consistently because meetings for these groups were cancelled frequently. In addition, some participants missed Cohort Group meetings more often than others, resulting in fewer opportunities for the above mentioned benefits (e.g. reinforcement, support) to take place.

Results also indicated that some coaches were more effective than others. Participants who were assigned to the two external coaches cited their coaching experiences as both positive and as a key factor in their success. As one participant

explained, “Having [coach] as a coach was really important. She kept on top of me to work on my plan. She was tough when she needed to be. But she was also really supportive.”

Participants assigned to one of the two top executives in the company varied in their assessment of their coach. Data indicated that one executive was more effective than the other in coaching individuals. Key behaviors for effectiveness as a coach included following up with participants regularly and applying appropriate amounts of pressure to act on their plans. Some coaches were also more effective than others in providing guidance and motivation to participants. This was also true for the Cohort Groups. Some groups were more effective at holding participants accountable by having meetings regularly and discussing EQi action plans consistently.

Variation in Cohort Group effectiveness was a key factor in recollection of the company’s competencies. Results indicated that an important factor involved in the retention of the Core Competencies was follow-up within Cohort Group meetings. Participants were able to recall the competencies when their Cohort Group followed up on them and discussed them. Some group members cited a focus on competencies as the reason for being able to recall them. For example, one group created an acronym for the competencies, which led to retention for those group members. In contrast, other groups did not discuss the competencies regularly if at all. Individuals whose groups discussed the competencies regularly were able to recall more of the Core Competencies than individuals who were part of groups that did not discuss them.

Some participants also cited a lack of accountability as an obstacle to retention of competencies. These individuals felt that the competencies were not linked to their day-

to-day work in a meaningful way. However, when probed on this, they did concede that the behaviors outlined in the competencies are relevant. They explained that even if they have been engaging in these behaviors, they are not necessarily cognizant of it. Several interviewees discussed the fact that the competencies are not directly tied to performance reviews, which would be an opportunity for reinforcement- both in terms of learning the competencies and following through on them.

Interviewees also discussed tying the competencies to performance reviews as an opportunity to improve retention. Again, this involves follow-up through holding individuals accountable for the competencies. Results indicated that follow-up and holding individuals accountable was extremely important for success in this program at various points.

Commitment and Ability of Leadership.

Results revealed that the commitment and ability of the leadership were key factors in the success of this program. This was not unexpected because the program structure places these leaders in pivotal roles in relation to the program. Also, as stated previously, the majority of the transfer of learning to action was to take place following the offsite workshops, and the Cohort Groups were created to facilitate that transfer and increase the likelihood of successful change. Because SLT members serve as leaders of the Cohort Groups, they are in a position to directly influence Cohort Group members in a variety of ways. Data indicated that the actions and beliefs of SLT members cascaded down and strongly influenced those at the non-SLT level. In general, SLT members transferred their commitment to the program to their Cohort Group members. This was

conveyed to group members not only in explicit verbal communication, but also through body language and actions.

When group leaders were committed to the group, members perceived that the group and program were important. Members of the group led by the president of Company XYZ cited extremely high participation. As one non-SLT member explained, it “added a feeling of importance- not just something [leaders] are doing for face, but they really care about the groups.” Another member stated, “It was important. It felt like my connection to SLT.” Members also described increased participation and preparation due to the fact that SLT members were leading the group. One group member admitted, “I definitely spent more time preparing than I would normally.” Another member cited the impact of the leader on the group’s open participation “I felt uncomfortable sharing my weakness, but the group is supportive, and everyone shared something, even [group leader] does. He puts himself out there, which makes it easier for everyone else to do.”

Conversely, group members stated that when they perceived leaders to be less than committed to the program, it decreased their own commitment to the program. The following are sample quotes from non-SLT members citing the impact:

- “If people above me aren't bought into the program itself, what chance do I have?”
- “When our leaders don’t take it seriously, it makes me think I shouldn’t either.”
- “It’s hard to buy into something when the leaders aren’t doing it and impossible to learn from them when they’re not here. The most important thing is to lead by example.”

- “If [Cohort Group leaders] had to cancel the meeting for whatever reason, I felt kind of let down. I think it's important for members of the company who aren't in SLT to feel that they are following through on what we started in the leadership program... walking the walk.”

In addition to influencing group members' commitment to the group, data indicated that leaders also conveyed their understanding – or lack thereof – regarding how individual development leads to overall company success as well as the goals and direction of the program and the group. This lack of clarity will be discussed in detail later. In general, members of groups whose leaders stated they were unclear about goals and direction of the group and the program expressed similar confusion. Obviously, if leaders of the group express confusion about the goals and direction of the group, it stands to reason that followers would as well since that information comes from the leader to group members.

Therefore, in addition to leaders' commitment, their knowledge and abilities were also important. Leaders of Cohort Groups were required to possess the knowledge and skills in order to successfully impart that knowledge on the Cohort Group members. They were also required to possess certain skills to some extent in order to teach and develop group members. Some SLT members were not confident in their ability to lead groups. The following are sample quotes from three of the SLT members expressing doubt regarding their abilities:

- “I think I've gotten the value, I'm not sure how to give the value to someone else. I'd like to, but I'm not sure how...”

- “We’re engineers. We’re not experts in this stuff like [the consultants].”
- “I’m thinking, ‘How am I going to coach this guy? I’m flying by the seat of my pants!’”

Non-SLT members also indicated that SLT members’ abilities were an important factor. As one non-SLT member explained, “It’s like the blind leading the blind...He’s the type of guy you’d never expect to change, and now he’s helping me change?”

The nature of the organization also played an important role in this. The company is an engineering and architecture firm, and as stated previously, the company as a whole was not particularly proficient in the soft leadership skills prior to the Leadership Development Program. In addition, the culture of the organization was not one that particularly valued these skills either. Several participants discussed the fact that the company was an engineering and architecture firm, and this compounded the difficulty individuals had with leadership skills. They explained that employees in the firm focused on technical skills related to their trade, seeing less value in the softer leadership skills. As one participant explained, “It’s a lot of fluffy, touchy-feely stuff. We don’t do that well. We’re engineers. We focus on the technical...the science.”

SLT members stated that additional resources (program curriculum, a group for Cohort Group leaders, etc.) would be helpful. However, SLT members did acknowledge that summaries of each group’s activities were shared with all Cohort Group leaders on a monthly basis. Regardless, they still expressed a desire to know what other groups were doing, stating the root problem was either a failure to read the summary or a need for further elaboration on the summary document.

Interviews indicated that for some, the lack of confidence in ability may have been at the root of their lack of buy-in to the program.

Buy-In to Program.

Results indicated that the commitment of leadership team members and Non-SLT members to the program was based in large part on their buy-in to the program. Data revealed that most members of the SLT had some doubts regarding the program. These doubts ranged from very minor to significant. However, approximately 20% of the SLT expressed significant doubts about the program. The concerns of these SLT members included the ability of the program to lead to company success, the time required and cost of program, and the focus or content of the program. It is important to note that 100% of SLT members stated their commitment to Company XYZ's success. SLT members consistently expressed pride and confidence in the company. This is important because all leaders need to have the same goal – company success – in order to work toward that goal. However, belief of how to achieve that goal varied among members. For some SLT members, the link between the program and the overall success of the company was unclear, which will be discussed in the following section.

SLT members who did buy in to the program expressed frustration at the lack of buy-in on the part of some of their peers. Though these SLT members were confident in the program, they had concern regarding the success of the program in part because they believed some of their peers are were committed to the program. As discussed previously, buy-in to the program on the part of the SLT was particularly important because their commitment was echoed by Cohort Group members. Again, SLT members

who expressed a decreased buy-in to the program led Cohort Groups who expressed similar views.

Clarity of Program Goals and Process.

Results indicated that there was a lack of clarity for many participants regarding one or more aspects of the program. Perhaps most important, some participants were not clear on how leadership development leads into overall company success. This was particularly true of participants who expressed significant doubts about the value of the program. As one non-SLT member said, “It’s a lot of touchy-feely stuff. We should be focused on the bottom line.” The link between leadership development and the bottom line was unclear. Some participants stated that they had one or more of the following questions regarding clarity around the program:

- What is “leadership development?” As one SLT member explained, “We all talk about the need for leadership development, but what does that mean? It’s so vague...”
- How does it lead to Company XYZ success?
- How does the leadership development program make us better leaders?

For some participants, the lack of clarity regarding one or more of the above questions led to decreased buy-in to the program because they did not see why the program and its components were important. Again, SLT members who were unclear on the above were unable to communicate these answers to their groups, resulting in a lack of clarity at the non-SLT level for these groups.

Most participants agreed that clarity around the above questions would be especially important for the next wave of the program because employees at the lower

levels of the organization are even more focused on technical skills, making it more difficult to make the connection between the program and overall company success. In addition, they may be less inclined to view leadership skills as valuable. Because of their focus on technical skills, interviewees also believed that it would be important to ensure that competencies were translated into skills at the lower level and not described as *leadership* skills, but as skills for everyone in the program.

Participants also expressed confusion around the framework and process of the program. The Leadership Development Program included ongoing coaching and Cohort Group meetings because leadership development is a continuous process, rather than a list of items to be checked off and completed. This idea was difficult for some participants, due in part to the nature of their work. As one non-SLT member explained, “In our jobs, we’re used to grabbing on to something, finishing it, and then moving onto the next thing.” Because leadership development is a long-term process, it is different from what some participants were used to. Some participants also stated that they were unclear on the actual steps in the program and would like a “roadmap” of the program to understand the framework, how each piece fits together and where the program is headed next.

In addition to the need for understanding the link between the Leadership Development Program and XYZ Company success, interviewees also expressed a need for a clear link to the Cohort Group activities. Some participants expressed doubt regarding the value of some Cohort Group activities. Interviewees also stated that the activities in the Cohort Group meetings were not necessarily tied clearly to their day-to-day role.

For example, several participants from different groups cited group activities that revolved around sharing personal information with the group. Some of these individuals felt this was an inappropriate use of time. “This is a business, and I don’t think we should be having social hour,” one participant said. Again, the purpose of the activity and the tie-in to the larger goals were not clear.

Participants also stated that Cohort Group activities were not always clearly tied to their day-to-day role. For example, several groups listened to and discussed the audio book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*. Some participants explained that though it was an interesting conversation, it was not linked back to their day-to-day roles. For example, some asked the questions “How does ‘beginning with the end in mind’ help me as an engineer or architect? How can I use this lesson in my job this month?” Participants also explained that even if this link is made clear, there is a lack of follow-up. During the next Cohort Group meeting, the group will move on to the next chapter without discussing how anyone did or did not apply what they learned during the previous meeting.

Participants’ Recognition of Clear Need for Change.

SLT members who exhibited the greatest change, as measured by colleagues’ perceptions of change, noted a clear need for changing their behavior(s). They were aware of the problem *and* understood the impact of the problem through to its ultimate effect on their personal and/or company performance, which coincided with their goal of company success. Given the information, they then concluded that the impact warranted the behavior change. Understanding the extent of the problem and concluding change is

necessary is, of course, not sufficient for behavior change; however, it is a critical prerequisite.

Participants in the Leadership Development Program who experienced changes in behavior discussed seeing a clear need for change. In discussions of their targeted development areas, they readily described the impact of their behaviors through to the end result. For example, one SLT member explained, “Because I became emotional, people didn’t really hear *what* I was saying. It limited my effectiveness.” Some of these participants cited linkage between behaviors and impact immediately, but all were able to explain it upon inquiry from the interviewer. In addition, they agreed that it was a problem, and the impact was significant.

On the other hand, participants who experienced little to no change in behaviors failed to see the clear need for change. For example, several participants targeted increased empathy in their plans. Some were more successful than others. This variation can be explained in part by participants seeing a clear need for change. For example, one participant, Jerry, targeted increased empathy on his EQi action plan. As Jerry explained, “I know I’m low in terms empathy.” However, he stated that he did not think this was important in his role. He believed, “It’s not going to help me get to the bottom line.” Data revealed that those around him saw no change on this item.

Another participant, Henry, targeted increasing his flexibility on his EQi action plan. However, he stated that he didn’t really think changing his behavior in this area was important. As he explained:

What I do, as a department director...there are times when I really can’t be flexible. So flexibility might be something that’s good to have, but most of the time I can’t be flexible. I have to say ‘This is it. It has to get done.’

Data from colleagues indicated that no changes were observed by others regarding his flexibility. Henry himself stated that his success in being more flexible was questionable.

I'm not sure...I feel that I've become a little more flexible on some things maybe, but like I said, the buck stops with me. So how flexible can I really be before it affects the bottom line, the rest of the group, and the company?

Not only did he not see a clear need for change, he also believed in some ways that refraining from change might provide benefits in his role.

The importance of recognizing the need for change is very clearly illustrated by one participant, Albert. Results indicated that he exhibited significant changes in behaviors targeted by his 360 feedback development plan. However, data indicated that he did not exhibit these changes during the initial stages of the program. There was a significant lag in his progress, due in part to the fact that he did not originally see a clear need for change.

Albert was described both by himself and others as verbally abusive at times. He followed through the first two phases of the program and indicated that he became more aware of his behaviors. As he explained:

I think part of it is that because I did the 'it' so well- doing my job as an engineer, that I didn't know what people thought of me. I didn't know that people were afraid of me because I would cut people off...and there was my body language...

Feedback from others via the 360-degree feedback assessment provided him with the knowledge that he was engaging in these behaviors. However, according to his colleagues, even after being made aware of his behavior, he did not display any changes.

Data indicated that the information initially missing was the full impact of his behavior. Prior to actually modifying his behaviors, Albert needed to first be aware that he was actually engaging in the behaviors. In some cases, he was unaware. Once he was aware that these behaviors existed, he then needed to understand the impact. However, initially, the impact was not clear. As he explained, “I was aware, but didn't think it was as big of a problem.” A critical incident for Albert was a meeting during which the connection between his behavior, the impact on those around him, and the impact on the company as a whole was clearly outlined for him. This linkage provided both motivation and direction. He explained,

I kind of say what I say, you know, but that way doesn't work in the workplace. And it had to be brought to my attention so much that I was like ‘Oh my God, I can't be effective if I continue to do these things... I don't think I could accomplish what I want to accomplish, in my head, without putting these skills in place.

At that point it was clear to Albert that his behavior was impacting his ability to be effective in his role, which in turn impacted the performance of the company. Following this, Albert's commitment to change increased, as did the change in behaviors others around him saw, according to data from Colleague Interviews.

Because Albert was committed to and highly valued his company and his role within it, he was motivated to improve once he recognized the danger his behavior posed to the company and his success within it. He was also able to clearly articulate the impact of his improved behavior following the program. According to Albert, “I was more approachable, so people came to me sooner with problems on proposals...so we resolved issues earlier on and more effectively and possibly saved the company some money.”

As these above cases illustrate, simply being aware that a deficit exists was not necessarily sufficient for changing participants' behavior. A clear need for that change had to be understood and agreed to by participants. Of course, this was not sufficient for producing change. There are several other factors identified in this program that were important for facilitating changes in behavior. However, recognizing a clear need for change was important.

EQi Action Plans Versus 360 Feedback Development Plans.

Data indicated that overall, SLT members' colleagues perceived more change in behaviors related to SLT members' 360 feedback development plans than those of their EQi action plans. As stated previously, the average perceived change in development areas related to EQi action plans was 1.2, with a range of 0 to 2.5. No changes were observed for two SLT members in development areas related to their EQi action plans. In comparison, the average perceived change in development areas related to 360 feedback development plans was 1.7, with a range of 0.8 to 2.5. All SLT members exhibited some change on development areas related to their 360 feedback development plans. In addition to the key factors discussed previously, results also indicated that progression of the program from EQi action plans to 360 feedback development plans facilitated progress on 360 feedback development plans. EQi action plans were created during the first phase of the program, at which point participants had little to no experience with this type of program. In addition, they had no experience creating EQi action plans and working toward them. Several participants discussed the positive impact working on their EQi action plans had on their 360 feedback development plans. Because 360 feedback development plans were created during the second phase of the

program, participants had the benefit of the experience of creating a previous plan, the EQi action plan.

Participants stated that their experience of working on their EQi action plans facilitated their 360 feedback development plan. For example, one SLT member stated that his EQi action plan had been too complicated, and he used that experience to ensure a less complicated 360 feedback development plan, which was much easier to work on. Another participant stated that he recognized his EQi action plan targeted a skill that he didn't believe was important to change and so he didn't work toward changing it. When he then created his 360 feedback development plan, he targeted skills he recognized as being important, which led to greater success on his 360 feedback development plan than on his EQi action plan. Therefore, it was not only the act of creating one plan after the other, but also the learning that took place, which had an impact. Some of this learning was related to the facilitating factors of success discussed previously.

Further, some participants chose to continue their work from their EQi action plans, and their 360 feedback development plans targeted the same skills. In these cases, the changes in their EQi action plans are indistinguishable from that of their 360 feedback development plans because they are the same. As such, the results remain the same for these SLT members on their action and 360 feedback development plans. In these situations, most participants experienced significant changes in ratings, which may be a result of the increased amount of time they had to work on these areas.

Development Area Selected.

Results also indicated that the change perceived by others varied with the development area an individual targeted. Some areas showed greater improvement than

others. Individuals who focused on work/life balance were generally less successful (based on self and colleagues' assessments). In contrast, those who targeted communication skills were generally perceived as exhibiting change in this area. As shown in Figure 4, perceptions of change were lowest for SLT 3 and SLT 13. Both of these individuals' 360 feedback development plans targeted an improved work/life balance. In contrast, SLT 7, 9, and 14 were perceived as exhibited the most change. Each of these individuals targeted communication skills in their 360 feedback development plans. There are several possible factors involved in this. Some skills are easier to observe than others. For example, work/life balance requires others to have insight into an individual's schedule. Communication skills, on the other hand, are readily observed in interpersonal interactions.

In addition, reinforcement from colleagues likely varies among skills targeted. For example, others may be less likely to support an individual's plan to work less, especially given the depressed economic environment. Conversely, the pressure from colleagues to improve upon communication skills may be fairly strong because of the direct impact on them. In addition, work/life balance is influenced by the business environment. In a difficult economy, working an increased number of hours is often necessary. Other development areas are less affected by the external environment.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Results of the present study indicate that the Leadership Development Program at Company XYZ was successful in affecting change among participants, though the extent of that change varied with several key factors involved in the program. Though the ultimate goal of the program, enhanced company performance, was not measured at this time, the intermediate goals of the program were assessed. Returning to those goals, the following summary outlines the program's success toward those desired outcomes:

- *Identify the leadership skills to be targeted for development:*

The program was successful. Core Competencies were created which all participants agreed were appropriate. Participants stated no changes to model were necessary.

- *Establish expectations for leaders and managers in the company regarding those leadership skills:*

The program was successful. All participants were aware that Core Competencies existed and understood their purpose.

- *Increase participants' knowledge regarding the leadership competencies expected of them:*

The program was somewhat successful. Recall on competencies varied by Cohort Group and hierarchical level.

- *Improve participants' competence on 1-2 of those skills:*

The program was successful. Colleague interviews indicated that all but two SLT members exhibited improvements in areas related to their EQi action plans, and all SLT members exhibited improvements in areas related to their 360 feedback development plans.

As discussed previously, research regarding the effectiveness of leadership development programs is sparse. The present study provides additional support to existing research that leadership training is beneficial. This study also provides insight into the key factors responsible for the variation in success between participants as well as the variation in success for each SLT member between their action and development plans. The findings offer guidance for enhancing existing the Leadership Development Program at Company XYZ or creating a similar program, as well as general guidelines to consider for increasing the likelihood of individual behavior changes.

Participants' Recognition of a Clear Need for Change.

At the individual level, results indicated that it was important for participants to recognize a clear need for a particular behavior change. Moving from the pre-contemplation stage (where there is no intention to change in the foreseeable future) to the action stage (where behavior modifications begin to occur) requires cognitive activity (Prochaska et al., 1992). In order to initiate behavior changes, an individual must first be aware that a “problem” exists and what that “problem” is. This may require feedback from others to inform the individual if they are not presently aware of the issue. This feedback, however, may not be sufficient for eliciting a change in the corresponding behavior(s). The accompanying critical information is an understanding of the *impact* of

the “problem” (i.e. the result of the behaviors). Finally, an individual must decide that the impact is great enough to warrant change. This often involves a cost analysis including an assessment of the effort required to change behaviors, the benefit of doing so, and the likelihood of success.

The Leadership Development Program provided these prerequisites for behavior change by increasing participants’ self awareness through assessments from others and themselves. More importantly, the program provided opportunities for participants to gain feedback regarding the ultimate impact of their behaviors, which was important for recognizing a clear need for modifying their behaviors. The findings of this study point to the importance of communicating to participants the need for change by mapping behaviors to their ultimate outcomes and linking them to participants’ goals. This may be of particular importance for the population in this study when targeting softer leadership skills because these individuals are less likely to recognize the end results of these behaviors and the value in modifying them.

Many of the key benefits derived from the program at the individual level were a result of the structure of the program. The Leadership Development Program at Company XYZ is relatively unique in its approach, specifically in the cascading structure of the program (having individuals at higher hierarchical levels of the organization complete and then facilitate the program for the next level of the organization). In addition, the program also included significant follow-up to the offsite training through the ongoing Cohort Group meetings and coaching sessions.

The Cohort Groups were particularly unique to this program. While many leadership development programs include executive coaching, group-level interventions

are extremely rare. The program structure, namely ongoing Cohort Group meetings and coaching sessions, required a significant amount of time as compared to most training programs, which conclude following the workshop session. Results indicated that these elements, when implemented effectively, had a significant facilitating effect on participants' success. As such, the findings suggest that this additional time commitment can lead to increased success of the program, resulting in numerous benefits for the organization. The impact of the program structure, specifically follow-up and the cascading approach are now discussed.

Follow-up.

Results indicated that program follow-up was a critical factor in participants' success toward their EQi action plans. Follow-up in this case refers to the third phase of the program, which targeted ongoing development. This included various forms of interactions that were ongoing at the time of the evaluation (approximately 24 months after the program was first implemented), and there were also no plans for discontinuation.

As stated, 100% of non-SLT members and 92% SLT members cited the follow-up provided through ongoing Cohort Groups and coaching sessions when asked what facilitated their success on their plans. As intended, these sources of follow-up provided participants with what Prochaska et al. (1992) refer to as *helping relationships*, which offer the opportunity for "being open and trusting about problems with someone who cares" and *reinforcement management*, which encompasses "being rewarded by others for making changes." Participants discussed the accountability, reinforcement, and emotional and practical support provided by the program follow-up. In addition, Cohort

Groups provided opportunities for applying new knowledge and practicing new skills. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating the importance of the post-training environment, namely peers and social support (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Jellema, Visscher, & Scheerens, 2006; Lim & Morris, 2006; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; Tracey, et al., 1995).

The Cohort Groups also provided opportunities for interactions between diverse groups because the Cohort Groups were assigned to ensure the groups were composed of individuals from different departments and locations. This cross-departmental communication is important in any organization, but particularly in this company because it is an integrated service firm. This business model requires the various departments to work together to provide client services and products. Vertical communication between the different levels of the hierarchy resulted from the Cohort Groups. Several members of the SLT described an important benefit of the Cohort Groups was the opportunity for the leadership team to interact with lower levels of the organization. This provided the SLT with a pulse on the organization and created an opportunity for information sharing both up and down through the organizational hierarchy.

Cascading Approach.

Findings indicate that having executive leadership leading the program also sent a clear, positive message about the commitment of the highest level of the company to development, investing in its people, and ensuring effective leaders to lead the organization. As one non-SLT member explained, it “added a feeling of importance- not just something they're doing for face, but they really care about the groups.” This was particularly true for younger members of the program who stated they felt inclusion in the

program was an honor. As the results indicated, having Cohort Groups led by members of the SLT increased the likelihood of participants attending meetings and committing to the program when those leaders displayed commitment to the program.

Findings revealed that organization-wide changes had started to occur within Company XYZ during the Leadership Development Program, including a shift in the culture. These changes include an increased focus on feedback and communication as well as accountability. The structure of the program is likely a key factor in this.

As stated, the program provided participants with a common language for the skills associated with leadership development. Most organizations speak the same language regarding their technical areas, but few would speak a similar language with regard to a new topic area, such as leadership development, without this being imparted consistently across all groups. One example from this program was the personality framework referred to as a compass, where personalities are found at the North, South, East, and West. Several members of Company XYZ cited this framework and stated that they used it frequently with one another (e.g. “Bob, I know you’re a North, so I’ll be sure to give you my reasons for why we can’t move forward with this project in a clear, bullet by bullet form so that you are able to listen and digest what I’m saying easily.”) This type of effective communication in a common language is only possible when everyone involved is speaking the same language.

As participants stated, a facilitating factor in their success was having other members of the organization provide them with feedback. This again is a phenomenon that required a common experience, specifically an understanding of the importance of feedback and the knowledge of how to give *and* receive feedback effectively. Again, one

participant's comments illustrate this well, "Before...no one without going through the Leadership Development Program would [give feedback]. I think if there is any art or skill that people have really gotten comfortable with, it's giving feedback."

This sharing of feedback requires both givers and receivers of feedback to have an understanding of the goals; that the organization is working to create a culture in which feedback is readily shared across the company. The culture of the organization cannot shift without affecting the underlying beliefs of the organization. The deepest level of the organizational culture, the *basic assumptions* (Schein, 1988), influences the behaviors of all members of the organization, typically unconsciously. Without embedding the belief within the organization that feedback is valuable for success, and thereby shifting this element of the organization's culture, change would be difficult if not impossible.

Without this shift, individuals might not be prepared to receive feedback, and instead would become offended and defensive. Having the backdrop of the Leadership Development Program provides context and meaning to feedback from others. In Company XYZ, participants refer to feedback as "a gift." This term is often used in a humorous manner prior to providing an individual with feedback to prepare them (i.e. "Sally, I'm going to give you a gift now...are you ready to receive my gift?"). Again, this communication requires a common language and common experience with this language, both of which the Leadership Development Program provided. Each hierarchical group completed the program together, creating a lateral hierarchical experience. Cohort Groups reinforced the common experience and language vertically through the organizational hierarchy by providing opportunities for members of the

organization at lower levels to interact with the highest levels of the organization's hierarchy, apply this common knowledge, and practice these skills.

The program structure provided group-level interventions, which tend to be more effective overall than individual interventions (Shinn & Perkins, 2000). Change at the individual level in this program was facilitated by targeting the group level. Cohort Groups provide numerous benefits, as discussed. These findings are consistent with existing research that points to the benefits group-level interventions have in an organization, including a positive impact on employees' attitudes and organizational productivity and performance among others (Neuman, Edwards, & Raju, 1989; De Meuse, & Futrell, 1990; Woodman & Sherwood 1980). Shinn and Perkins (2000) posit that group interventions may prove particularly useful in situations with diverse groups, including those of disparate professional backgrounds, where those differences interfere with the processes of the group. In the case of Company XYZ, the different departments represented in the Cohort Groups were at times in opposition due to their different backgrounds, objectives, and ways of thinking.

Of course, as the results reveal, there are confounding variables with regard to the success of the program's structure. The value of having leadership at the helm of the program was dependent upon each leader's commitment to the program, his/her understanding of the tie-in to the overall goals of the business, and his/her abilities in the area of leadership development and leading a group. As results showed, the success of the groups varied with these above factors.

This variation could have been at least mitigated by providing a structured format for the Cohort Group meetings. Findings indicated that the open structure of the Cohort

Groups resulted in difficulties for some groups whose leaders were uncertain of how to lead the groups and what activities to perform. Continuing the well structured approach taken to the first two phases of the program would have benefited participants during the final phase of the program by providing Cohort Group leaders and members with a clear direction for the Cohort Group meetings. Further, it would likely provide the benefits discussed above regarding a common experience if all participants across groups were engaged in the same activities during the same relative timeframe. At the time of the evaluation, the Cohort Groups were engaged in different tasks, which precluded cross-Cohort Group discussions and sharing.

Clarity of Program Goals and Process.

The results indicated that the lack of clarity around several elements of the program discussed above, especially regarding the link to company success, led to a decreased buy-in to the program for some participants. This is again especially important given the population of Company XYZ. According to participants, their natural thought process is linear in progression, making the ongoing process of development somewhat foreign to them. Further, they stated that they think in more concrete terms and focus on technical skills. Given this, ensuring participants are clear on why the program was implemented (the ultimate goal of company success), how it will achieve that (illustrated in Figure 6), and how each of the components of the program fit into the process is extremely important.

The need for clarity is explained in part by Knowles' (1980) concept of andragogy, which assumes that adults have the need to know why they are learning something. For adults, the meaning and motivation is derived from understanding why

they are doing what they are doing, specifically how it fits into their ultimate goals. If a participant does not see a clear link between the overall success of the company and the program or a particular activity of the program, there is little - if any - incentive for buying in to the program. As one participants stated, “I don’t know how this is going to fix things in the company.”

Figure 7 illustrates the linkage between leadership development, the Leadership Development Program, and Company XYZ overall success. There are several points in this “map” where participants were unclear, as evidenced by the three questions that participants had regarding the program:

- What is leadership development?
- How does it lead to Company XYZ success?
- How does the leadership development program make us better leaders?

As illustrated in Figure 7, in order to develop leadership skills, those skills must first be defined. In this case, XYZ Company’s Core Competencies provide a comprehensive outline of the skills for success at Company XYZ. Those skills are then targeted for development.

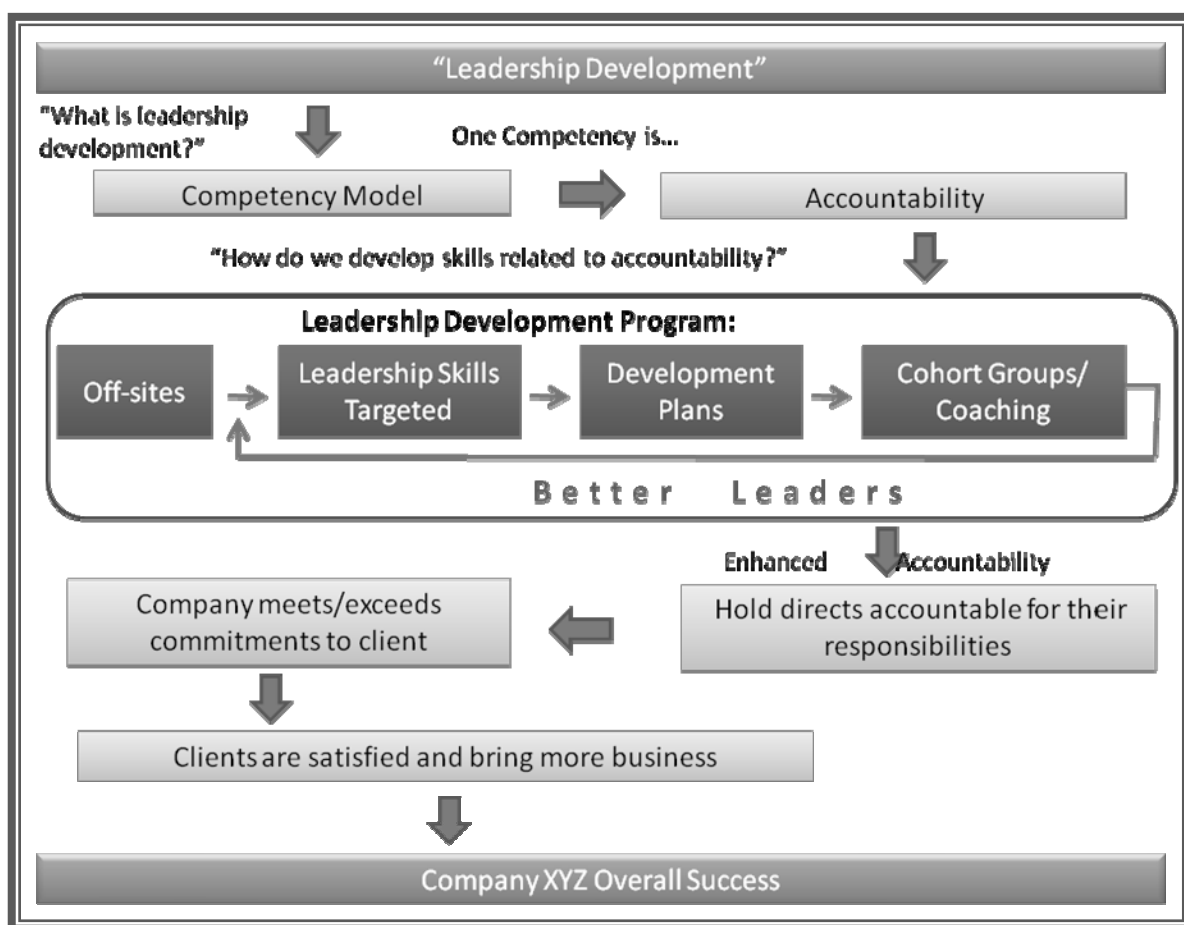


Figure 7. A summary of the linkage between leadership development and Company XYZ overall business success.

For example, one competency is Accountability. The Leadership Development Program provides opportunities to develop this competency by holding off-site workshops to educate participants on the knowledge and skills associated with effective leadership and providing them with an assessment of their current competence. Participants then use that knowledge to identify development areas to target, in this example accountability. They then create a 360 feedback development plan outlining the key behaviors they will modify to increase their ability in the competency. Participants would then work on that plan with the support of ongoing coaching sessions and Cohort Groups. One result of enhanced abilities related to accountability would be that

participants hold their direct reports accountable for their responsibilities. This then leads to Company XYZ meeting, if not exceeding, commitments to clients. That of course in turn leads to satisfied clients who bring in additional business, which results in company success.

Results indicated that some participants were not clear on this progression. In addition, the link to company success is more apparent for certain areas than others. For example, Figure 5 illustrates the link between accountability and the end result of company success. There is a very clear and compelling link because accountability directly impacts client satisfaction by ensuring deadlines and commitments to clients are met. In contrast, increased empathy for example, has a less direct influence on the bottom line. It would be even more important to clearly articulate the linkage between empathy, and other “softer” skills, to company success.

Again, the context of the organization becomes important. The population in this study consists mainly of architects and engineers, who repeatedly discussed the difficulty they had with recognizing the value of leadership development. Because they focus on the technical skills of their trades, they described the soft skills associated with leadership development as less important. As one participant explained, “You know...I’m an engineer. When I hear leadership development, it makes me roll my eyes.” Results indicate that clearly linking the program to business success and the process for reaching that end goal is particularly important for gaining buy-in for this population.

In addition to clarity regarding what leadership development means and how it relates to business success, the program’s process for reaching that end was also unclear to many participants. Participants discussed confusion regarding the purpose and/or

value of certain Cohort Group activities. Again, the purpose of activities focusing on softer skills was less readily understood than those directly related to the business or technical skills.

For example, one participant stated that his reaction to others discussing their personal life was, “I’m not a social worker!” The rationale for sharing personal information during the Cohort Group meeting was not clear. As illustrated in left-hand side of the Figure 8, one possible explanation might be that sharing personal information begins the process of forming trust and cohesion among the group, which establishes the foundation for the future activities the group will undertake. These activities might include sharing EQi action plan successes and failures. The foundation of trust would also be important for creating an environment in which open and honest feedback can be given and received. By creating the foundation for the group, members are able to help one another develop skills related to the Core Competencies, which ultimately leads to company success. However, because some participants did not have a clear understanding of how a particular Cohort Group activity – in this example sharing personal information – fits into the larger picture including Company XYZ overall success, the purpose and value of the activity are unclear.

Participants also discussed the need for directly tying Cohort Group activities to their day-to-day roles. The right-hand side of the Figure 8 illustrates an example of the linkage from a Cohort Group activity to Company XYZ overall success. By discussing how a particular chapter topic specifically relates to group members’ day-to-day roles, they are better able to apply the skill(s). To ensure that the lessons are consistently being applied, and subsequently increases group members’ leadership skills, Cohort Groups

would then follow up on how each member did or did not apply the information, much like the process related to EQi action plans. As group members continue this process and develop their skills, they become more effective in their roles, which ultimately leads to company success. Again, this illustrates the importance of follow-up and accountability. To ensure application of knowledge and skills obtained during the Cohort Group meetings, each subsequent meeting requires accountability regarding progress since the previous meeting.

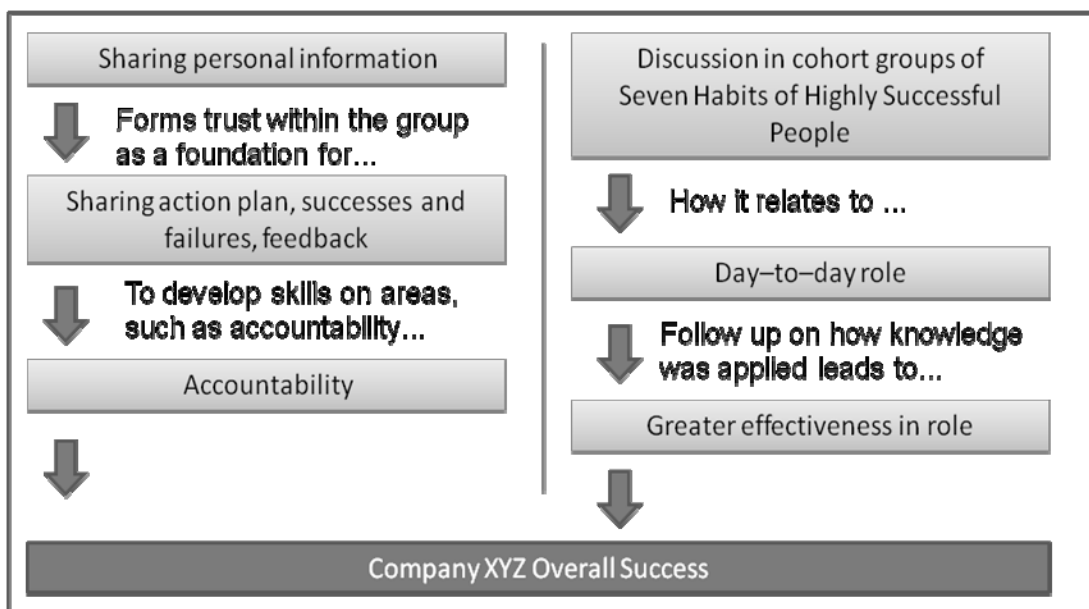


Figure 8. Illustration of how Cohort Group activities are tied to company success

Summary of Key Factors Affecting Success

Given the success of the Leadership Development Program in providing a positive experience for those in the program, affecting change in a large percentage of participants, and initiating organization-wide changes, the program clearly provided a benefit to the organization. Findings indicate ways in which Company XYZ can enhance the Leadership Development Program, which also provides guidance for those interested in implementing a similar program. The following summarizes the critical elements:

- *Ensure follow-up and accountability:* As discussed, results indicated that follow-up was critical to success. However, the follow-up varied by Cohort Group and coach. By creating a structure that ensures all Cohort Groups and coaches hold members accountable for progression in the program, organizations can greatly increase the likelihood of success.
- *Establish buy-in:* Prior to the implementation of the program, it is critical to ensure buy-in of all participants, especially leadership teams members. It may be necessary to allow members of the leadership team to abstain from participating in the program. Of course, this would raise questions about what messages are sent to the organization when certain members of the leadership choose to opt out of participation. This may be mediated by framing the situation positively (i.e. X, Y, Z members of the leadership team will be taking a lead on this programs rather than “A,B,C members of the leadership team have decided not to take part...”). Though this may been interpreted by members of the company as the same, it is still more conducive to program success than a program led by individuals who are not committed to the program. As findings indicated, lack of buy-in can have a significant negative impact on those who participate at the lower levels of the organization with this type of program structure.
- *Articulate program goals and process, and tie in of program components:* Part of gaining buy-in to the program involves clearly articulating the business case for the program as well as the process and tie in, illustrated in Figures 7 and 8. If this is done at the start of the program, periodic repetition of this may be necessary.

Again, this is particularly true for this population because these individuals inherently place less value on leadership skills.

- *Provide a structure/curriculum for Cohort Groups and ongoing resources for leaders:* An effective program with this structure requires leaders both committed to and able to lead the groups. This is of particular concern for this population, given the lack of experience they had with leadership development. Results indicated some groups were less successful because leaders of those groups were unclear about what activities to engage in. Therefore, outlining a structure for the Cohort Group meetings would help prevent this problem. By ensuring leaders of the program have the necessary resources to lead these groups effectively, organizations can maximize the benefit of this program structure without being impacted negatively by the possible pitfalls.

Limitations of the Present Study

A major limitation of the study is the weakness many evaluations of this nature share. A random assignment control group design was not used. Pre-tests and post-tests were not possible given the financial and time constraints on the organization. Interviews were instead conducted to assess this, which required individuals to recall pre-program states and compare them to present states. Though the interview protocol was designed to maximize the accuracy of data gathered, this remains a weakness of the study.

In addition to non-SLT members not being randomly selected, the Cohort Group interviews were voluntary. Therefore, only those who attended the meeting provided data. This may have resulted in more positive responses because presumably individuals who attended see some value in the program. Individuals who do not value the program

may not have been motivated to attend the interview, and therefore their perspectives were not captured. However, interviews did include one individual who dropped out of the program because he did not see the value in it. His responses were included in the results.

Data may also have been positively skewed due to the data collection method. Interviews were conducted rather than collecting data via paper questionnaires or surveys to gather more in-depth information and provide a deeper understanding of the program. However, interviews remove the anonymity of the interviewee. Group interviews required interviewees to provide their responses in front of the rest of the group. This likely had some censoring effect. Even individual interviews with the interviewer – while information was kept confidential – were not anonymous. Precautions were taken to ensure confidentiality, such as conducting interviews in a remote office without windows and restricting information regarding who participated in interviews. In addition, interviewees were given the option of not tape recording the colleague interviews. (Interestingly, almost all interviewees agreed to be recorded.) However, the impact of sitting face-to-face with someone to provide feedback on a program that is endorsed and led by the leadership cannot be overlooked. In colleague interviews, interviewees may have felt pressure to rate others more positively because the data were collected via interviews rather than anonymous surveys.

Further, the interviewer was brought in by the leaders of the organization. Thus, it is likely that interviewees may have felt pressure to censor their answers. Again, attempts were made by the interviewer to stress confidentiality and minimize the perception of connection to the higher ups. However, it is likely that these attempts were

not effective in completely reducing the bias. The result may have been that data were skewed somewhat more positively.

The extent to which the findings of this study can be generalized to other organizations is unclear. This case study focused on a single program within a relatively small firm. Questions exist regarding the viability of this program structure in a larger organization, although it could be argued that the benefits of increased cross-departmental communication reaped in this program would be even more helpful in a larger organization where the size inhibits communication.

Finally, another limitation of the study was the lack of analysis at the results level, Kirkpatrick's (1994) fourth and final level of analysis. While data regarding the benefits of the program were collected, a formal analysis of the program's impact on the organization, including financial measures of company performance, was not conducted. It is not unusual for evaluations to avoid this level because organization constraints limit the opportunities for collecting data at the Results level (Shelton & Alliger, 1993; Tannenbaum & Woods, 1992). Further, most training efforts are not capable of directly impacting Level 4 measures (Alliger, Tannenbaum & Bennett, 1997).

Data collected indicated that some benefit at the organizational level may have been realized; however, these are perceptions of interviewees, which were not validated by external measures. Further, not all of the benefits cited by participants were at the organization-wide level. Only a select number of participants described benefits on this level. Therefore, assessing the true impact of the program in terms of results was not possible.

The limitations of the present study suggest areas for future research. Given the scarcity of literature on the effectiveness of these types of development programs, more evaluation is needed, especially as programs vary not only with content, but with the method of delivery. Stronger evaluation designs should be used, where possible, to provide an elucidated view of the effectiveness of such programs. Further, future evaluations might also target the Results level of Kirkpatrick's framework to provide assessments of the ultimate value of programs implemented.

Future research might also examine the impact of dissimilar organizational contexts. This study focused on an architecture and engineering firm, which presented unique opportunities and challenges for this type of program. The organizational context was a significant variable in this program, and results would likely vary in other settings.

In conclusion, the present study revealed that the Leadership Development Program at Company XYZ was effective in achieving its intended goals. The program's somewhat unique structure provides benefits, but also presents challenges. Findings indicated that leadership development programs targeting similar populations should consider the factors discussed herein when implementing such a program to maximize the benefit to the organization.

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APPENDICES

Individual Interview Protocol

Introduction: As you know, you have been asked to participate in this interview in order to provide information about your experience with the Leadership Development Program. The purpose of this interview is to learn about what your experience was before the program began as well as your experience throughout the program to date. In addition to this interview with you, I will also be interviewing the rest of the SLT members and select members of the Cohort Groups to understand what the impact the Leadership Development Program has had, what has worked well with the program, and what can be improved moving forward. Company XYZ is interested in using this information to ensure that positive things about the program are continued in the future, and that any changes needed to improve the program are made.

In addition to providing an evaluation of the Leadership Development Program to the leadership team, I will also be working on a research study as part of my education in a doctoral program at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. The purpose of my dissertation is to gain an understanding of the impact of the Leadership Development Program, including how participants felt about the program, in what ways -if any- they changed as a result of the program, and what impact the program has had overall on Company XYZ. Further, I'll be looking at what factors were particularly important to making the program successful and what things might have hindered or prevented some positive outcomes of the program. Do you have any questions about this?

Because this interview is part of the data collection process for my dissertation, I will ask for your written consent. [Review consent form, confidentiality, what will be done with data, etc.]

Now that we've covered the background of this evaluation, do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

Let's start off by discussing your view of the program before you actually participated in it. What were your thoughts on the program prior to initiating it (Were you enthusiastic, skeptical, etc.)?

1. The Leadership Development Program has had many components to date. Let's discuss your experience with each of these phases of the program.
 - a. Prompt as needed (e.g. "Tell me about your experience taking the EQi....receiving your results...participating in the off-site meeting, etc.")
 - b. Example questions/follow-up:
 - i. Please describe your experience.
 - ii. Please discuss the specific things you learned.
 - iii. What was especially useful (At least 2 specific examples)?
 - iv. What obstacles did you face (At least 2 specific examples)?

Action/Development Plan Questions:

For your action plan and your development plan:

2. Specifically what does it consist of? May I have a copy of it?
3. How did you decide what behaviors to target in your action plan? Did creating your EQi action plan impact how you approached creating your development plan?

4. Would you have set your individual goals and worked toward them if you had not been involved in the Leadership Development Program? Why/why not?
5. How has working on these goals stretched your capabilities or enhanced your learning (specific examples)?
6. Has this work required that you change your behavior? If so, how (specific examples)?
7. What factors have facilitated your working toward these goals and implementing your plan (provide specific examples)?
8. What, if anything, has gotten in the way of your working toward these goals or implementing your plan (provide specific examples)?
9. In retrospect, were these the most appropriate goals to set? Why/Why not (specific examples)?
10. Please take a moment to reflect on your skill level regarding [X behavior/competency] 18 months ago.
 - a. Overall, how would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-6, with 6 being outstanding?
 - b. What specifically makes you say this? Please give at least two specific examples of how you did or did not display this behavior/competency.
11. Now please take a moment to think about how you presently rate on this behavior/competency.
 - a. Overall, how would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-6, with 6 being outstanding? Is this now strength/weakness?

- b. What specifically makes you say this? Please give specific examples of how you do or do not display this behavior/competency.

Competency Model Questions:

12. Do you know what the Core Competencies are?
13. Please list all of them, if you can.
14. Do you think they are most appropriate/helpful? How might you change them?
15. To what extent have you applied these behaviors to your role?
16. Do you think people at Company XYZ are aware of core values? What makes you say this? Can you give me specific examples?
17. Do they discuss them? Can you give me at least 2 specific examples of times when the Core Competencies were discussed? Outside of the Leadership Development Program?
18. Do you see people applying these behaviors to their roles? Can you give me at least 2 specific examples of when you've seen individuals applying these behaviors to their roles?

Cohort Group Questions:

19. What's your understanding of the purpose of the Cohort Groups? What were the goals of the group? What did the group focus on?
20. Overall, how do you feel about your Cohort Group experience? What makes you feel this way?
21. How often have you attended the Cohort Group meetings? How many meetings have you made? How many have you missed? Why did you miss these?

22. How actively do you feel you have participated in the Cohort Group meetings on a scale of 1-6, with 6 being actively and enthusiastically participating in every meeting?
23. How would you describe the atmosphere or tone of the meetings?
24. How openly have people communicated? Please provide at least 2 specific examples of how people did/did not communicate openly.
25. Did everyone participate actively? Did members participate relatively equally?
Did some people dominate?
26. Was there much sharing and support? Did it feel like a safe environment? Please give at least 2 specific examples of what makes you feel this way.
27. Were there any problems in the Cohort Group (such as conflict or competition)?
28. What was the effect of having the group led by SLT members (provide specific examples)?
29. In what ways has the Cohort Group meetings facilitated your success towards your goals?
30. What has been the highlight of the Cohort Group meetings? The lowlight?
(provide specific examples)
31. (SLT Members only) How effective do you feel you were as the group leader?
32. (Cohort Group Members only) How effective do you feel your group leaders were in leading this group?
33. What obstacles did you face? How did you overcome them?
34. How did your participation in the Cohort Group impact your personal action/development plan?

Overall Program:

35. Please describe the specific ways in which you have applied what you learned through the program to your current role. If I asked those who work with you what you were doing differently compared to 18 months ago, what would they say? (At least 2 specific examples)
36. How much would you attribute these differences to the Leadership Development Program?
37. To what extent have you used the learning from the Leadership Development Program in a way that you believe has made a significant difference to the business? Please describe specific examples.
38. To what extent has the program impacted Company XYZ as a whole (provide at least two specific examples)? What changes have you seen in the culture of the organization (provide at least two specific examples)?
39. (Leadership team members only) How do you think your participation as an SLT member in the program and leading groups has impacted the program (provide specific examples)?
40. (Leadership team members only) How has your participation as an SLT member in the program and leading groups impacted your own experience (provide specific examples)? Your interactions with your team?
41. Has any aspect of the Leadership Development Program helped you bring about change in your team (provide specific examples)?
42. What are the two or three most important ways the Leadership Development Program has had an impact on you (specific examples)?

43. What has been the highlight of Leadership Development Program (at least 2 specific examples)?
44. What has been the lowlight (at least 2 specific examples)? Is there any way that the Leadership Development Program could be improved (at least 2 specific examples)?

For participants who had coaches:

45. How much and what kinds of interaction have you had with your coach?
46. What benefits have you derived from that relationship (at least 2 specific examples)?
47. How have you applied your learning to your current role (at least 2 specific examples)?
48. Was there anything that got in the way of that relationship being successful (at least 2 specific examples)?

Closing: Those are all the questions I have for you. Do you have anything you would like to me know?

Thank you for participating in this interview. The information you've give me has been very helpful and provides me with a better understanding of the impact of the Leadership Development Program. I will be interviewing other members of the SLT and colleagues over the next few weeks. Once I've completed all the interviews, I will compile the information gathered into a comprehensive feedback report to the leadership team. You will also receive a summary of the information I've gathered.

If you think of anything else you would like to discuss with me or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at the phone number or email address listed on the consent form you have. Again, I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me.

Colleague Interview Protocol

Introduction: As you know, you have been asked to participate in this interview in order to provide information about your experience with [name of participant(s) here], who have been participating in the Leadership Development Program. The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding of the impact of the program. In order to understand the impact of the Leadership Development Program on participants, those whom they work with, and Company XYZ overall, I need to understand your experience with [name of participant(s)] prior to the beginning of the Leadership Development Program through to today. Because you work with [name of participant(s)], you are in a unique position to offer insight into how, if at all, the Leadership Development Program has influenced [name of participant'(s)] behavior.

In addition to this interview with you, I have interviewed SLT members and select members of the Cohort Groups to understand what the impact the Leadership Development Program has had, what has worked well with the program, and what can be improved moving forward. Company XYZ is interested in using this information to ensure that positive things about the program are continued in the future, and that any changes needed to improve the program are made.

In addition to providing an evaluation of the Leadership Development Program to the leadership team, I will also be working on a research study as part of my education in a doctoral program at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. The purpose of my dissertation is to gain an understanding of the impact of the Leadership Development Program, including how participants felt about the program, in what ways -if any- they changed as a result of the program, and what impact

the program has had overall on Company XYZ. Further, I'll be looking at what factors were particularly important to making the program successful and what things might have hindered or prevented some positive outcomes of the program. Do you have any questions about this?

Because this interview is part of the data collection process for my dissertation, I will ask for your written consent. [Review consent form, confidentiality, what will be done with data, etc.]

Now that we've covered the background of this evaluation, do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

1. To start off, please tell me about your interactions with [name of participant].
 - a. How do you work with him/her? How long have you known/worked with him/her?
 - b. How often do you interact? In what context?
 - c. How would you describe your relationship in general (provide specific examples)?
2. Based on your experience of working with him/her, what would you say have been his/her strengths? What makes you say this (provide at least 2 specific examples)?
3. What would you say have been some areas that you think he/she has room for development/improvement? What makes you say this (provide at least 2 specific examples)?
4. Do you have an understanding of what specifically [name of participant] has been focusing on through the Leadership Development Program?

5. Overall, have you seen a difference in [name of participant] as compared to 18 months ago (before the Leadership Development Program began)? Please provide specific examples.
6. What is your general feeling regarding the Leadership Development Plan? How do you think people generally feel about the program?

Now I'm going to ask you about [name of participant]'s skill level on some specific behaviors/competencies. *(Based on specific competencies/behaviors [name of participant] has targeted in his/her development plan and those which he/she discussed improvement during individual interview):*

7. Please take a moment to reflect on [name of participant]'s skill level regarding [X behavior/competency] 18 months ago.
 - a. Overall, was he/she competent (on a scale of 1-6, with 6 being outstanding)? Was this a strength/weakness?
 - b. What specifically makes you say this? Please give at least two specific examples of how he/she did or did not display this behavior/competency.
8. Now please take a moment to think about how [name of participant] presently rates on this behavior/competency.
 - a. Overall, is he/she competent (on a scale of 1-6, with 6 being outstanding)? Is this now strength/weakness?
 - b. What specifically makes you say this? Please give specific examples of how he/she does or does not display this behavior/competency.
 - c. Have you noticed a change in this area over the past year? Please describe this, using specific examples.

- i. What impact has this change had on you? Your team? The organization?
 - d. In what ways does [name of participant] have the opportunity to improve on this behavior/competency?
9. To what extent have you noticed a change in the organization as a whole as compared to prior to the implementation of this program (provide at least two specific examples)? How you would say the culture has been impacted (provide at least two specific examples)?

Closing: Those are all the questions I have for you. Do you have anything you would like to me know?

Thank you for participating in this interview. The information you've give me has been very helpful and provides me with a better understanding of the impact of the Leadership Development Program. I will be continuing interviews over the next few weeks. Once I've completed all the interviews, I will compile the information gathered into a comprehensive feedback report to the leadership team. You will also receive a summary of the information I've gathered.

If you think of anything else you would like to discuss with me or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at the phone number or email address listed on the consent form you have. Again, I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me.

Company XYZ Core Competencies

Competencies		Behaviors Reflecting Competence
1	Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Takes responsibility for one's own success 2. Takes responsibility for the success of the team 3. Takes responsibility for the decisions and success of the organization as a whole 4. Makes timely decisions with best available knowledge 5. Drives plans to closure 6. Holds direct reports accountable for their responsibilities 7. Holds cross-functional team members accountable for their responsibilities
2	Teamwork	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creates an atmosphere of shared purpose and shared accountability within the work team 2. Creates an atmosphere of shared purpose and shared accountability across disciplines 3. Promotes mutual understanding, mutual respect, enthusiasm and performance within the work team 4. Promotes mutual understanding, mutual respect, enthusiasm and performance across disciplines 5. Affirms the value of each team member 6. Affirms the value of the whole team 7. Affirms the value of leadership 8. Initiates and embraces partnerships across the company and with clients to generate improved business outcomes 9. Looks for true win-win solutions 10. Promotes culture of shared ownership and shared rewards
3	Developing Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands where direct reports are in their professional development 2. Works closely with direct reports to create realistic professional development plans 3. Takes action to facilitate direct reports' professional development 4. Promotes continuous improvement of the individual and the team by creating an environment that encourages taking on new challenges 5. Sets high standards 6. Creates a climate that helps bring about the best in others 7. Communicates expected outcomes clearly and then lets people figure out how to get there 8. Provides useful feedback 9. Celebrates the successes of others 10. Treats others' mistakes as learning opportunities 11. Sets a good example for others to follow.
4	Relationship Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invests the time to actively pursue and maintain relationships with employees to gain and maintain their trust and respect 2. Invests the time to actively pursue and maintain relationships with clients to gain and maintain their trust and respect 3. Invests the time to actively pursue and maintain relationships with external business partners (vendors, developers, brokers, agencies, etc.) to gain and maintain their trust and respect 4. Shows consistency among principles, practices and behavior 5. Understands and responds to the core goals, needs, and drivers of employees 6. Understands and responds to the core goals, needs, and drivers of external business partners (vendors, developers, brokers, agencies, etc.) 7. Follows through on commitments

		8. Treats everyone respectfully, regardless of position or role
5	Client Focus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates an understanding that "clients" include not only paying customers but also regulators, internal clients, and external business partners (vendors, developers, brokers, agencies, etc.) 2. Identifies and understands clients' goals, needs, drivers and constraints 3. Demonstrates an understanding that Company XYZ's success can only be achieved through superior client service 4. Embraces quality as an essential attribute of all deliverables 5. Develops individual and team expertise necessary to succeed in a chosen marketplace 6. Projects value, knowledge and expertise in the marketplace 7. Develops and shares client relationships and leads to expand Company XYZ's network of connections and opportunities
6	Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listens, asks questions, pays close attention, and seeks to understand others' verbal and non-verbal communications 2. Tailors communications to the appropriate audience and the goal 3. Expresses ideas clearly, concisely and with impact 4. Ensures all critical data, decisions and commitments are appropriately documented 5. Demonstrates confidence, "presence" and expertise in public speaking and other presentations 6. Shares information appropriately among stakeholders
7	Strategic Thinking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifies and prioritizes critical issues 2. Establishes a clear vision of an outcome, then defines and acts upon tasks to achieve the outcome 3. Considers financial impacts and implications when approaching challenges, opportunities or issues 4. Identifies, prioritizes and acts on strategic issues while maintaining day-to-day responsibilities 5. Understands and communicates how individual tasks and/or projects fit into the strategic direction of the firm 6. Recognizes and drives innovations and/or technologies that will achieve competitive breakthroughs 7. Understands the strengths and weaknesses of Company XYZ's competitors and positions Company XYZ accordingly with clients, prospects and employees
8	Leading and Managing Change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands and provides a clear rationale and context regarding the need for change 2. Provides a direction/vision that generates people's commitment 3. Provides a clear sense of what needs to be done to move from the current reality to the future vision 4. Teaches and models new behaviors by example 5. Uses participative processes to gain people's buy-in to and ownership of change 6. Empowers others to act by removing obstacles and resistance to change