



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Center for Human Capital Innovation
44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite G1, Alexandria, VA 22314



Why Does Leadership Matter?

The Society for Human Resources Management defines leadership “as the process by which an individual determines direction, influences a group, and directs the group toward a specific goal or mission.”¹ These tasks are distinct from management, which, according to Nayar with the *Harvard Business Review*, “consists of controlling a group or a set of entities to accomplish a goal.”² Effective management is about using tactical skills to drive day-to-day operations. Leadership is distinct from management, in that leaders support their organizations, and the people that comprise them, to greatness by using their vision to drive organizational strategy. Although intentions are good, “leaders” who do not have leadership qualities can actually negatively affect team performance by micromanaging tasks, restricting creativity, and failing to clearly explain expectations. That is, they hamper performance by acting as ineffective managers. Effective leadership is an integral component of organizational success and team performance.

However, few of us are natural leaders, just as few of us are natural salespeople, engineers, artists, singers, or athletes. The good news is that individuals can learn leadership skills that may seem unnatural at first, with the right development tools. In fact, the people we know as leaders today oftentimes began their careers as something else; meaning, they had to learn how to become leaders. They may have had all the traits of an effective manager, rather than the qualities of an inspirational leader. One way that interested employees and managers can be taught to become leaders is through a professional leadership development program (LDP).

How Do Leadership Development Programs Work?

LDPs are commonly used programs, but program effectiveness varies widely. Surprisingly, only 7% of participants in a recent *Harvard Business* study felt their organization’s LDP was “best in class,” and 43% felt their LDPs were “inconsistent” or “underperforming.”³ High-quality LDPs work by addressing an organization’s leadership development needs and providing measurable evidence of program success. There is no one-size-fits-all package of leadership development, but most LDPs address some combination of coaching (both coaching for the participant and training on how to be an effective coach) and practical instruction on leadership skills. Ideally, LDPs are tailored to the individual organization’s needs, so participants are empowered to be effective leaders in *their* organization, noting its culture, challenges, and unique traits. LDPs that fail to 1) consider organizational context, 2) integrate learning outside the classroom, 3) measure

¹ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/developingorganizationalleaders.aspx>

² <https://hbr.org/2013/08/tests-of-a-leadership-transiti>

³ https://www.harvardbusiness.org/sites/default/files/19770_CL_StateOfLeadership_Report_July2016.pdf



outcomes, 4) push learners to solve real problems, and 5) communicate the real reason for the program, are unlikely to be successful.⁴ The best LDPs are those 1) that arise out of “what is actually happening in an organization, not on a standard framework,” 2) where the ultimate goal is to equip leaders to achieve better business outcomes, and 3) which provide real guidance to future leaders.⁵ An informed, guided strategy is a necessary precursor to having a successful LDP.

CHCI offers *Performance Leadership Programs* (PLPs), which are LDPs focused on improving organizational performance through effective leadership. Our PLPs take a cohort of select individuals from a single organization through a six-month practical program with in-person learning, pre- and post-work practical assignments between sessions, and a capstone exercise that is developed in consultation with the organization to get the future-leaders solving a current organizational issue. The PLP’s lens moves from the individual in the first month, to the team in the second and third months, and finally, the organization in the final three months, to ensure a fully functional organizational system. The PLP takes the best components of effective LDPs to help organizations build an effective leadership talent pool from within to solve real problems.



Figure 1: CHCI PLP Summary

About CHCI

CHCI provides business solutions through “best and next” practices in strategic human capital management. CHCI provides measurable, real-world strategies that support your organization to attract and retain high-performing people, build a diverse and inclusive workplace, and leverage individual and team performance throughout the enterprise. For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Anne Loehr, Executive Vice President: anneloehr@centerforhci.org or (571) 970-4250, Ext. 113.

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/work-in-progress/2014/09/23/if-you-think-leadership-development-is-a-waste-of-time-you-may-be-right/#6a1e71105bf4>

⁵ <https://www.inc.com/chris-mcgooff/why-leadership-development-programs-dont-work-what-does.html>