

Leadership Initiative Advances Bench Strength at Toyota Financial Services

CHALLENGE

Toyota Financial Services (TFS), which provides financing plans and vehicle and payment protection products to Toyota customers and dealers in the U.S., had a good problem. It had grown from a small company with eight associates, to a robust organization with about 3,000 employees and managed assets above \$81 billion. But in light of this growth, the senior leadership team recognized the need for a long-term solution to build their leadership bench strength by identifying their high-potential leaders and accelerating their development.

SOLUTION

Linkage worked with TFS to develop the *Accelerated Leadership Development Program (ALDP)*, a yearlong curriculum designed to provide an opportunity for high-potential leaders to learn and apply critical leadership concepts—strategic thinking, change leadership, coaching, and cross functional collaboration and influence—while also addressing key business initiatives in real time.

ALDP was launched at Linkage's 2010 *Global Institute for Leadership Development™*, a five-day immersion learning experience. At the Institute, Linkage provided a customized curriculum, including individual coaching sessions designed to meet the needs of the high-potential leaders as well as TFS' business needs. Following the event, participants attended leadership development workshops held on-site at TFS, and participated in Linkage's *Thought Leader Series*, which features live video broadcasts with today's top business thinkers.

ALDP participants were also divided into two action learning teams. Each team was asked to address a critical organizational challenge. Topics included conducting a five-year market assessment, analyzing critical customer and dealer touch points, and recommending alternative work-style approaches for associates. After months of facilitated team meetings and interaction with key stakeholders, the participants presented their findings and recommendations to the company's senior leadership.

RESULTS

Many of the action learning team's recommendations have already been implemented including the institution of a more flexible work week. The flexible work week has measurably increased Associate opinion scores. And the increasing Associate opinion scores have enhanced the company's organizational culture and reputation as a preferred employer. In addition, recommendations for streamlining communication to dealers, and for identifying new and innovative products and services are currently in feasibility testing.

Significant and positive behavioral changes in TFS' participating leaders had already been identified when Linkage's competency-based *Leadership Assessment Instrument™* was re-administered at the end of the first year. Two additional coaching sessions followed, which resulted in a renewed development plan to reset individual goals for the future. TFS is entering its third year of ALDP and the program continues to be a strategic initiative in the development and acceleration of leaders within the business.