



Global Learning Initiative Drives 57% Promotion of Senior Women at Lenovo

The Need

[Lenovo](#), a global technology leader, knows the importance of diversity in creating more innovative products, driving more efficient operations and better serving its customers. The HR Leadership team wanted to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions to keep the talent pipeline strong and reduce turnover.

The Challenge

Lenovo partnered with Linkage to design a nine-month leadership development solution targeted to “Band 10” women (the level just below executive). Since launching in 2014, this global initiative has surpassed expectations—management promoted 57 percent of the participants from the first cohort to the executive level, and the CEO, Yang Yuanqing, has doubled his number of female direct reports. Also, women now represent 20.5 percent of all individuals promoted to the executive ranks.

“ I feel more confident to guide and coach instead of manage and control. Giving my team more responsibility is a great way to develop them and allow them to grow and thrive. I also serve as a mentor to younger managers (female and male) and in doing so, I keep developing myself.



ELIZABETH MORENO
General Manager, France

The Process

IMMERSIVE LEARNING, GLOBAL IMPACT

From its inception, the program has focused on advancing high-potential women who were considered promotable to the executive ranks within two to three years. In order to achieve this, the Linkage team designed and delivered a comprehensive journey focused on the six competencies critical to leadership advancement and the seven hurdles that women leaders face in the workforce.

In the first year, 21 leaders from various business groups and functions completed the customized *Women's Leadership Development Program*. First they took Linkage's *Women in Leadership Assessment™* — a multi-rater tool that measures skills and competencies necessary for ascension in leadership. Each participant then took part in a one-on-one coaching session focused on interpreting her assessment results and processing the feedback. The group came together before Linkage's *Women in Leadership Institute™* to participate in a series of exercises focused on networking, best-practice sharing, and setting expectations for the learning experience.

“ Since being nominated to this program and getting promoted, I have made an intentional effort to give back. I try to help people in the organization, whether they are part of the program or not. Lenovo invested in me, for which I am grateful, and I owe it back to the company.

VIVIAN YOUNG
Executive Director,
Global Digital Marketing



At the Institute, participants spent four days focused on the critical competencies known to help women advance into more senior leadership positions: Aware, Bold, Clear, Connected, Influential, and Inspiring. They attended keynote sessions and workshops, in addition to daily team discussions on how to apply the key concepts presented in the general sessions.

Following the Institute, participants focused on their individual development plans and took part in two coaching sessions. They then met for a three-day workshop focused on strategic thinking and presentation skills. They were given the opportunity to submit questions to a panel of female Executive Directors who engaged in a dialogue about succeeding at the executive level. The cohorts also worked on their action learning projects.

EXECUTIVE VISIBILITY

These projects were designed to give participants experience increasing their brand awareness with senior leaders from a variety of business groups within Lenovo. Members of the first cohort were paired with various teams to tackle everything from researching the market viability of a children's wearable device to making system-wide changes to how Lenovo recruits, retains and promotes women. Teams in the second cohort created pitches for the next-generation product or service and the next merger or acquisition for the organization. Projects included using artificial intelligence in healthcare and creating an ecosystem around Lenovo gaming products.

At the end of the program, each team presented its action learning project in front of a panel of executive judges. Lenovo executives judged the women primarily on their ability to effectively communicate their message. The winning team then presented to the CEO and Executive Committee, giving participants maximum exposure within the organization.

The Results

TURNOVER AT AN ALL-TIME LOW

After introducing the program to 21 leaders in 2014, the company selected 23 participants for the second year, and 20 leaders are currently participating in the third year. This initiative has helped to create a pipeline of women in senior leadership roles:



Participants Promoted
from the program's first cohort



Overall Promotion Rate
for both groups



Participant Attrition
is at an all-time low compared to...



Global Average Attrition
for high-potential female directors

Participants have the tools, insights and framework to help accelerate their own careers and are empowering their teams for success. They are contributing positively to the business in forward-thinking ways. They have had exposure at the senior-most levels of the organization and have built their brands as global leaders capable of driving the business forward.

Participants have also formed a powerful network with one another and now communicate routinely to exchange new ideas, resulting in exciting opportunities for themselves, their team members and the organization.

“ I'm now able to better identify and develop the high-potential women on my team. I have a better understanding of the value of diversity, which has enabled me to encourage my team members to leverage their experiences for better cooperation, as well as seek their own opportunities for growth.



WU TONG
*Executive Director,
Global HR Operations*



Become a leader worth following.
***Create lasting
leadership impact.***

About Linkage

For 30 years, Linkage has impacted global leaders worldwide with our leadership development insights, education, strategy and solutions. We partner with organizations looking to accelerate the impact of their leaders, more effectively engage teams, and build inclusive cultures of employee engagement and performance.

At Linkage, we are passionate about developing leaders who can create lasting impact. Get in touch with us today to learn more.