

A Program for High Potential Leaders in a Services Company Experiencing Difficult Times

The Challenge

A multi-billion-dollar HR services company had a rapid reversal in performance. The recovery strategy needed to include accelerating the development of high potential talent.

After many years of profitable growth, a \$7 billion human resources company suffered a rapid reversal in business performance. The firm responded with a multi-faceted recovery strategy that included reducing costs, leveraging a successful but aging line of products, growing the R&D product pipeline, and strengthening brand loyalty. Senior management quickly and correctly realized that accelerating the development of high potential talent was essential to all of this—and the full-scale business transformation that needed to take place.

Linkage Solution

Leadership Academy: A customized program for high potential leaders.

To help the company effect its business transformation, Linkage consultants developed a three-year Leadership Academy, which the company called **Leadership Enhancement and Assessment Program (LEAP)** specifically for leaders at the VP level with potential for GM and officer positions. For one, the program enhanced the knowledge and skills that leaders needed to contribute to the strategic objectives of the company. At the same time, LEAP also provided experiences in action learning that focused on real business issues, with senior leaders participating by selecting business projects and serving as team sponsors and subject matter experts. The three-tiered curriculum for LEAP involved the following:

- **Year 1** focused on leadership self-awareness, team leadership, and change leadership skills. Through assessment and feedback, participants clarified their strengths and development areas. Through action learning teams, they developed their team and leadership skills. And participants received and began to employ practical tools for self-development, coaching others, leading teams, and driving change.
- **Year 2** focused on strategic thinking for organizational influence. Participants sharpened their strategic thinking while working on more substantive projects requiring greater interface with key stakeholders.





With concrete tools to help increase their effectiveness along the way, participants formulated and then presented their business case to senior-level executives.

- **Year 3** focused on systems thinking for strategy formulation and execution. Participants were tasked with a critical project related to a priority initiative with both cross-organizational and cross-cultural reach. The net result? Participants forging real solutions to real challenges faced by the company that they are helping lead now—and into the future.

Results

As a result of LEAP, the company has experienced a number of positive business outcomes, including the following:

- Leaders have learned to work across organizational structures and to break down barriers to solve problems.
- Senior management has adopted and implemented the many creative measures and solutions that the LEAP action learning teams identified to strengthen the company.
- The company now possesses an identifiable, growing population of leaders that have the skills and tools to effectively lead the changes needed for the company to regain its competitive standing.

Linkage Products and Services used in this Case Study

Leadership Academy: Customized Leadership Development Program for High Potentials

Linkage Leadership Academy is a customized leadership development program, typically delivered to high potentials ranging from director-level to executives over several months in chunks of 3- to 4-day sessions. The program is designed via interviews with key stakeholders, enabling identification of the specific leadership competencies that need special attention.

Program Components

Key program components can include:

- A self-awareness component, such as individual 360° feedback
- Individual behavioral change
- Management and leadership skills and competencies training
- One-on-one coaching
- Action learning teams focused on current business challenges/issues
- Organization-specific case studies
- Team-building
- Online reference and development tools

For more information on our Customized Consulting Services contact us at 781.402.5555.