

Linking LD and Bottom-Line Results-ROI for a Flagship Program

The Challenge

A leading financial services firm launched their flagship leadership development (LD) program with 30+ associates. The firm was looking to run the program for continuous years with multiple associates and wanted to ensure that the program had clear return on investment (ROI) metrics.

The first effort of focus was on their LD program for top talents. The six-month long program experience combined multiple aspects including:

- formal classroom training
- one-on-one coaching; and
- stretch assignments

The firm had a strong belief in continuous improvement and rapid prototyping as methods to ensure changes were made effectively. Also, in order to get the senior leaders engaged they needed to see hard data as well as qualitative theories.

In short, it was felt that the answers to the following questions were crucial:

- *Overall LD approach* – What issues should we address and how?
- *Benchmarking* – What can we learn from what other leading companies do?
- *Cost*–How do we maximize time and financial investment in this particular program?

Linkage Solution

Linkage assigned a consultant who specializes in measurement, assessment and LD. The approach taken consisted in leveraging Linkage's Return On Leadership Development (ROLD) assessment as the platform; and customized the product for the company's needs.

The company's flagship LD program was discussed to surface the following:

- construct and content
- target participants
- impact expected
- purpose of each method utilized
- future improvement ideas

A communication plan was put in place and target leaders/managers were identified to join the team. All were informed that they had been hand-picked with the purpose to help the company create a best-in-class LD system. The participants were extremely responsive and the completion rates for the assessment tools exceeded 85%.

Once the data was collected, through 15-20 minute online assessments, it was analyzed using data triangulation to reach actionable conclusions. The analysis was then benchmarked with other leading companies and a full recommendation plan with practical simple steps was outlined.

The company received this report and attended a group session. They met other leading companies, learned more about their best practices, and spent more time with an expert LD consultant diving deeper into the action plan.





Results

- The flagship program was found to have a positive ROI of 130%. This ROI was calculated very conservatively using the following rule: when in doubt about a benefit leave it out, when in doubt about a cost throw it in.
- Clear opportunities were identified to increase the program's ROI to 250% by changing around elements of the program that were yielding a lower ROI
- The company was able to realize cost savings and recoup the ROLD expense within the next cohort of the program. Since the company was planning for 10 more associates they looked to get 10 fold back on their investment
- The company was able to leverage the results from the ROLD assessment and their flagship program to create a business case for LD. This business case along with an action plan was presented to senior management and a leadership budget for the following year was secured
- The company created a measurement system for the flagship program. Through the full transfer of learning that occurs when such an ROLD assessment is applied, the company now owns a toolkit for measuring best practices that they will be able to leverage whenever future initiatives are put in place.

Linkage now has the ability to further help the company design this system with a proven *Leaders Developing Leaders* methodology that focuses on the most important collection of LD, on-the-job advancements. This design approach is unique as it enables the company to create a self sustaining system that does not rely on outside help.

Linkage Products and Services used in this Case Study

The Return on Leadership Development Assessment

With the Return on Leadership Development Assessment, an in-depth diagnostic process offered in exclusive partnership with leading authority on leadership development, Professor Noel M. Tichy, Linkage helps organizations link leadership development to business results.

Linkage helps leaders and organizations:

- Learn how to hardwire leadership development to business results and innovation
- Become teaching organizations distinguished by their ability to grow leadership at every level
- Nurture a formidable pool of home grown talent that can be drawn on whenever top management positions need to be filled.

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