

Leadership Development Basics

Karen Lawson



Alexandria, Virginia

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Filling the Need: Leadership Development Programs



What's Inside This Chapter

In this chapter, you'll learn

- ▶ The definition of leadership development
- ▶ The relationship of leadership development to the strategic plan
- ▶ Objectives and benefits of a leadership development program
- ▶ Critical components of a leadership development program.

As noted in chapter 1, a gap in the leadership pipeline is a critical and growing challenge for organizations. Although the need for leadership talent is increasing, many organizations have not responded accordingly. Often the reason for inaction is not lack of desire but rather lack of understanding as to what leadership development is and how to do it. Leadership development has many definitions and can take many forms ranging from a casual ad hoc approach to a highly structured, multifaceted formal program.

Mission

A mission statement describes the purpose of an organization or a sub-group of it. It is a general description of what it is that the group is there to do. It grows out of the vision. It describes the purpose of the organization, what the organization does, for whom the organization works, and in what manner the organization works. It tends to be general, which then requires the accomplishment of many specific goals. The mission statement provides the broad framework for goals and objectives. It also provides guidance for the major decisions officers and managers need to make.

A mission statement is a concise summary of an organization's reason for existence that everyone can understand and remember. It should be a single sentence of no more than 25 to 30 words.

Values

Values are the collective set of deeply ingrained beliefs, ethics, and priorities that guide organizational and individual behavior. An organization's values should guide the identification, selection, training, and development of leaders at all levels.

Goals

Goals are more specific than the mission, may have a short or long timeframe in which they are carried out, may change over the years to reflect changes in need or demand for products or services, and provide the framework within which objectives can be set and measured.

Objectives

Objectives are most specific in scope. They are statements of outcome that describe certain conditions that must be met within a specified timeframe. Objectives may change within a short timeframe. They are measurable and expressed in quantities.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These categories of information are traditional bases for determining strategy.

Strengths—An organization's internal capabilities or resources (within and largely controlled by the organization) that are better than those of its competitors. They are areas of value in the organization and among the organization's stakeholders.

If the organization's top leaders do not want to reinvent the wheel, numerous studies have identified many examples of leadership competencies. The most common examples are listed in chapter 1. However, just identifying the desired competencies is not enough. It is critical that they be further refined by defining them in performance-based behavioral terms followed by "so that" and then stating the benefits or outcomes. Let's take a look at the following example:

Behavioral Description: The ability to lead and manage change within the organization and help others cope with and manage change (behavior) **so that** the organization can respond rapidly and effectively to a changing business environment (benefit/outcome).

Once the competencies have been determined and clearly communicated and embraced throughout the organization, the logical next step is to equip the organization's leaders with the behaviors, knowledge, and skills to be more effective in serving their clients and employees. This is accomplished by providing a comprehensive and structured leadership development program consisting of competency-based learning modules.



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human capital recognize that investing in high-potential managers is the key to maintaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace.



Noted

Issues of leadership are changing at all levels within organizations. According to the SHRM 2006 Talent Management Survey Report, talent management initiatives are a top priority in businesses.

Leadership Development Practices

“Leader Machines,” an article in *Fortune* by G. Colvin (2007), identified nine practices shared by those ranked as the “Top Companies for Leaders”:

1. *Invest time and money.* In addition to allocating the necessary financial resources, all leaders from the CEO on down must promote and participate in leadership development programs.
2. *Identify promising leaders early.* Due to increasing labor shortages, companies must assess potential leaders earlier in their careers than has been the practice in the past. There simply are not enough Gen Xers available to take the place of retiring baby boomers.
3. *Choose assignments strategically.* Effective leadership development programs must employ a variety of methods, assignments, and activities that are targeted to individual development needs and linked closely to the long-term, as well as the short-term, needs of the organization. These experiences must be chosen carefully to challenge individuals and force them out of their comfort zones so they can really stretch and grow.
4. *Develop leaders within their current jobs.* To counteract turnover and maintain stability within the department or business unit, leaders will need opportunities to take on short-term assignments and participate in activities in addition to their current job responsibilities.
5. *Be passionate about feedback and support.* Frequent, honest feedback coupled with a lot of support through coaching and mentoring must become part of everyday practice at all levels in the organization.

6. *Develop teams, not just individuals.* To support and learn from each other, leaders should be put into learning teams to attend training events and work on group assignments.
7. *Exert leadership through inspiration.* Leadership is about creating an environment in which people are not only motivated but also fully engaged in their work. Effective leaders know the difference between compliance and commitment, and they use influencing behaviors to get employees to do what the leaders want them to do because the employees genuinely want to do it.
8. *Encourage leaders to be active in their communities.* When leaders get involved in their communities they have a greater understanding of the relationship between their organizations and the communities in which they work. Progressive organizations not only encourage their leaders to be actively involved in their communities, but also give them time off to do so.
9. *Make leadership development part of the culture.* Leadership development becomes a part of all organization decisions, practices, processes, and objectives. Furthermore, learning leaders are seen as trusted advisers and strategic partners who help integrate leadership development into all aspects of the organization.



Think About This

As one who is (or will be) instrumental in driving the successful implementation of a leadership development program, you need to influence others to support the leadership development initiative and focus on building relationships throughout the organization.

Critical Components of a Leadership Development Program

A successful leadership development program doesn't just happen. It must be planned very carefully and reflect the following components:

1. The top leaders of the organization must demonstrate a strong commitment to the program.
2. The program must be linked to the vision, values, and strategies of the organization.

3. The program must be tied to succession planning.
4. The program must meet both individual and organizational needs.
5. Leadership competencies must be clearly identified, defined, and communicated throughout the organization.
6. There must be a developmental assessment related to the leadership competencies.
7. Individual development plans must be part of a leader's performance objectives.
8. Leaders at all levels must be involved in teaching and coaching.
9. Educational activities must be linked to organizational and business issues.
10. Senior management must monitor the program.



Getting It Done

To help prepare your organization for a comprehensive leadership development initiative, complete the Organizational Readiness Checklist in table 2-1 and then ask the key leaders in your organization to do the same.

Table 2-1. Organizational Readiness Checklist.

Use the following checklist to determine how ready your organization is to implement a leadership development program.		
	Yes	No
The organization truly values its employees.	☐	☐
Senior management has clearly identified and communicated the organization's vision, mission, and values to all employees.	☐	☐
Some management development or supervisory skills programs are in place.	☐	☐
The organization has a structured performance management system that focuses on pay for performance.	☐	☐
Employees are encouraged to take advantage of educational and developmental opportunities.	☐	☐

continued on next page

