CA TECHNOLOGIES:

Using Evaluation to Regularly Improve a Global Leadership Development Program

The Situation

CA Technologies creates software that fuels transformation for companies and enables them to seize the opportunities of the new application economy. As innovative leaders in the software industry, they are committed to developing a strategic leadership bench to help them achieve their business goals.

Their leadership development program (LDP), established in 2008, is a yearlong experience that helps future leaders around the world (the company maintains offices in more than 40 countries and employs more than 10,000 employees) develop the leadership and business skills needed to succeed. Because business needs and leadership gaps change from year to year, a program that was current one year may seem out of date the next.

To offer a comprehensive, up-to-date learning experience for their emerging leaders, Lynne Iati, senior director, human resources talent development, works within the

talent development center of expertise to conduct regular evaluations of the program. This information is used to adjust the LDP on an annual basis. In 2015, Iati and her team noticed two opportunities for improvement to increase participants' engagement and introduce modern technology you would expect at a software company. Iati and the talent development team set out to improve the program by changing their selection process and adding a mobile component.

The Leadership Development Program

The LDP blends traditional classroom methods with online learning to provide a comprehensive experience over the course of a year. During the program, participants attend several virtual sessions led by senior leaders as well as two three-day, in-person sessions. They also read books, complete peer group and individual assignments, participate in a business simulation, and engage in many other experiential activities.

The program begins with a few virtual sessions led by senior leaders to welcome participants and cover key topics such as leadership at CA, branding, and corporate strategy. During these sessions, senior leaders act in a leaders-as-teachers capacity, sharing information in their area of expertise to improve attendees' business acumen. Participants then spend the first two months of the program working on reading assignments, attending peer advisory group meetings, and completing self-paced assignments, all of which serve as preparation for their first in-person session.

At the in-person session, facilitators put participants in unfamiliar situations (simulations) and ask them to solve problems and perform tasks in a real-world context. This experiential learning approach allows them to demonstrate what they learned from their reading and self-paced assignments, as well as apply other concepts from these live sessions. Throughout the year, participants attend several more senior leader virtual sessions, and attend a second in-person session to close out the program.

Over the years, the talent development team has partnered with several suppliers to create additional elements to enhance the program, such as 360-degree assessments, neuroscience, and interactive workshops.

The Evaluation Process

The LDP measurement strategy is determined at the beginning of each program year and executed throughout the program. The talent development team's evaluation process looks at four measurements:

- participants' reaction during the program, or the degree to which initial expectations are met
- participants' perception of being able to directly apply what they learned to their job

- return on investment (ROI) of participants' time, energy, and resources
- net promoter score (NPS), which surveys participants and asks how likely a participant is to recommend the program to a friend or colleague.

Because the LDP consists of a variety of components, there are several stages during which the talent development team gathers evaluation data:

- **During program kickoff:** The team sends a survey to LDP participants to learn their expectations for the program. The survey also asks participants to assess their readiness to engage in the program. Participants also complete a 360-degree feedback survey to gain insights on how they are perceived by peers, directs reports, managers, and other raters they may identify. This increases participants' self-awareness and helps the team identify what areas to focus on during the year.
- **After Senior Leader Virtual Sessions:** The team sends a survey to LDP participants to learn whether participants' expectations have been met, their ability to apply their learning on the job, behavior change, and business impact. Participants also provide testimonials at this stage.
- **During In-Person Sessions:** At the end of each session, participants complete a survey to share their feedback on topics of discussion, such as enterprise leadership, trust, coaching, self-awareness, and accountability.
- **After In-Person Sessions:** The team sends a survey to gather feedback on what resonated the most and the least with participants, as well as participants' satisfaction with facilitators. The survey also measures ROI, NPS, and participants' intent to apply the skills they learned to their jobs. Additionally, the team conducts virtual retrospectives with all regional facilitators after the first two in-person sessions to learn what worked well, what didn't, and what the team can do differently.

After the data are collected, the results are shared with participants, stakeholders, and CA Technologies' executive leadership team. The data are then shared with the organization through infographics, videos, and executive summaries, keeping all employees informed of the organization's talent development efforts. Based on this feedback, the talent development team considers what changes or enhancements to make to the program.

Updating the Program

New components are incorporated at the beginning of each program year, based on data gathered from participants and facilitators as well as external research, business needs, the changing business environment, and alignment with CA Technologies' corporate mission.

Expanding Accessibility

To increase engagement and application of learned skills, an open application process was implemented in 2015. Employees interested in developing their leadership skills could now apply, rather than wait to be selected.

To increase content accessibility on a global level, regional facilitators had the flexibility to integrate local examples into their training.

Adding a Mobile App

While attending a conference, Iati noticed a trend: Attendees were relying on their mobile phones to take notes, take pictures, and record videos. Recognizing that the world had entered the mobile era, Iati decided to introduce a mobile app into the LDP in 2015. This app gave participants anytime, anywhere access to schedules, program content, social media, alerts, surveys, photos, and learning resources.

The app also gave the talent development team another way to gather evaluation data. During in-person sessions, participants and facilitators could use the app to share their opinions and reactions. Employees who might be hesitant to raise their hand or share feedback verbally used the app to submit their feedback in a simple way.

The Results

After the mobile app was introduced in 2015, 98 percent of the LDP's 425 participants adopted it.

Efforts to expand program accessibility also proved successful: in 2016, the LDP had 768 participants, an 80 percent increase from 2015.

The program has also won seven industry awards in a span of six months, including Best Advance in Measuring Impact of Leadership Development (Brandon Hall HCM Excellence Award, 2016, Gold) and Best Use of Mobile Technology (HR.com LEAD Award, Second Place, 2017).

In the coming year, Iati and her team plan to add new content in several different areas, including updates to the mobile app to provide more interactivity; incorporating content on mindfulness, curiosity, fixed vs. growth mindset, and learning agility; adding a virtual session on sales strategy; and improving their focus on alumni to increase engagement and career development opportunities. Evaluation data helped inform the decision to make these additions.

Lessons Learned

- Evaluate your program at several stages, not just at the end. By gathering data throughout their leadership development program (for example, before, during, and after individual sessions), CA Technologies was able to gauge participants' engagement throughout the entire program and make targeted improvements to specific parts of the program.

- Give employees the opportunity to apply for enrollment in a leadership development program. Selecting employees based on their job level alone or their performance in their current job (rather than an application) can result in program participants who are not fully engaged with the program's mission or are not motivated to take on more leadership responsibilities.

Additional ATD Resources

- *Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation*
- Evaluating Learning Impact Certificate
- *Evaluation Basics*, 2nd Edition
- 10 Tactics for a Sustainable Evaluation Process
- Creating Leadership Development Programs Certificate
- *Evaluating Learning: Getting to Measurements That Matter*

Submit Your Story

Can you tell us about a challenge your talent development function faced, a solution your team implemented, a program your team created, and the results your organization has seen? Organizations of all sizes are encouraged to apply. Submit your story today!

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