



AUTHOR  
Ashish Arora

TUESDAY

09

SEP 2014

97

VIEWS

Share

Email

Print

#Leadership

# Leadership development is not a quick fix solution

Leadership development should be a sustained long-term effort instead of short-term training interventions



**Ashish Arora**

**Leadership development requires dedicated learning, graded reinforcements and practical exposure**



Leadership development is not a one-off affair or a quick fix. Although many people are impatient for results to materialize, quick-fix solutions put unrealistic expectations on everyone. Programmes promising supposedly instant results are not what leadership development is all about. In our experience, such programs rarely produce lasting results. Like it or not, developing leaders takes time—it can't be done overnight. Ironically, although leadership problems may take time to emerge, when it comes to

finding solutions many people in the talent development business lose patience. They prefer instant answers and instant change and get into the trap of tagging leadership development components to an overloaded sales or business planning meet. But knowing what we know about human behavior and development, we should understand that people need time to evolve. Educating leaders is not something that can be achieved by a single event. It is a process.

## Sustained through multifaceted efforts

Investing in development opportunities for leaders is what differentiates great businesses from the mediocre. High-impact leadership programmes today are necessarily multi-faceted. These include peer and executive coaching, online personality and behavioural assessments, style and culture inventories, feedbacks, a wide range of mentoring strategies, extensive use of real life simulations in addition to action learning like live project assignments and corporate task forces. It is imperative to ensure the design provides the time to drive individual reflection of personal values and taps into the motivation of the person behind the title.

One of our key beliefs to effective leadership development is to help the senior team practice discussing 'undiscussables' — the issues that no one wants to talk and are impeding the team's effectiveness — and guide agreement on how the leaders will hold each other accountable for productive behaviour in the future. It is important to also understand the challenges leaders at all levels face in staying true to their personal convictions, acting swiftly in times of uncertainty, being accountable for the business – and all the while inspiring others to greatness. Although traditional management skills and business competence get executives promoted, research indicates that being trustworthy, showing empathy and creating meaning are the characteristics that differentiate truly exceptional leaders. Therefore, any leadership development needs unconditional commitment to providing practical leadership knowledge and tools for not only managing employees' unique talents but also propel business forward. Therefore, leadership development requires dedicated learning, graded reinforcements and practical exposure – by default mandating a planned strategic approach over 12 to 18 months.

## Driving Leadership Development

It represents an investment in the organization's legacy. More firms have realized that leadership development programmes represent their business's future. Therefore, those driving leadership development must have a deep understanding of the organization's processes, strategies, culture and practices and proceed to weave together an instructional design that is not ephemeral and safe but one that is bold enough to make a difference!

It's not that difficult to get leaders to intellectually agree with and understand what they need to do to be more successful. The challenge is getting them to personally engage and wrestle with the changes that they need to make to become better leaders. While everyone may nod in agreement, they may not walk away caring enough to overcome the discomfort of trying something new.

The development design must therefore take into consideration that the leadership journeys begin with self-awareness; a road to inner growth that helps leaders recognize their own unique capabilities and passions which are an essential part of responding to the call of leadership! As the journey gathers momentum, leaders are skilled on mission critical aspects of driving engagement for teams, coaching for performance, managing managers and outperforming competition.

While doing this one must keep in mind that even the best leadership development programmes will fail to have an impact if the organization culture is not receptive to change. We have often seen senior management attempt to train away their problems or use development initiatives to raise the bar of leadership behavior. But if the culture punishes risk-taking, or worse, rewards the same behaviors that need changing, then training and development are of no merit — a focus on culture change on a priority.

**Topics:** Leadership, Best Practices

Did you find this story helpful?

Yes

No

[Jump to Comments](#)



**Ashish Arora**

Ashish Arora is the Founder and Managing Director of HR Anexi Pvt. Ltd [More](#)