

“From Zero to Something”

A Leadership Development Case Study

PACT Excellence Share!

Leadership Development: From Zero to Something

Q: How do you create a multi-part, fully-featured suite of leadership development offerings when the organization is starting with nothing?

Steve Semler

Advance to the next level in learning:

- Simulations, case studies, scenarios for learning
- Training and change management for business process transformation and new systems
- Upgrading or upskilling L&D teams
- Certified FocalPoint business and executive coach
- **Leadership Development!**

Let's Poll the Room...





Client Situation

- Regional not-for-profit health insurance company
- 1,500 employees
- Mostly remote workforce
- 250 leaders (42% new within last 2 years)
- Strong L&D team for business and job skills; nothing for leaders for 5 years
- Strong CEO and executive support

Strategy to Build Out Leadership Development

- Learner-centered, performance-focused needs assessment
- Get something useful out right away, then build out the suite across prioritized audience categories
- Balance the desire for impact with available learning time*
- A “B product” now beats an “A Product” in three months
- Blended learning with VILT and using available resources

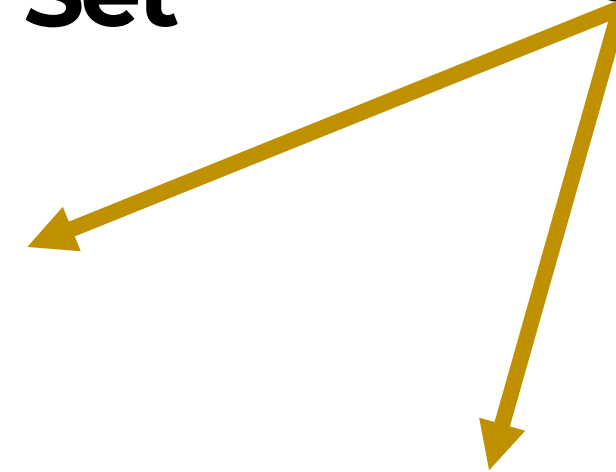
*Leaders were all “overloaded.” Strategy was to go where there was readiness, demand, and potential impact.

Rationale for this Strategy

- Investment in leadership skill development was general, and not focused on specific pain points; it was “all important”
- Demonstrating action to meet the demand (within leaders’ perceived time requirements) was important; this generated “Quick Wins”
- There was no overarching leadership definition, but the client had a solid leadership competency with behaviors to use
- Providing help for the 42% of the organization’s new or “newer” leaders was a priority
- The client truly was ready for a “Zero to Something” basic (but good) leadership development solution

Leadership Development Solution Set

- “Quick Wins”
- Introduction to Leadership Program
- Cohort Leadership Program
- Leadership Skill Series *(including DE&I lens on skills)*
- CEO Roundtable Program
- New-to-Company Leader Onboarding
- Internal Leadership Models Resource Site
- (Planned) Complex and Strategic Leader skills



Timing

3 months

6 months

7 months

7 months

(ongoing, upgraded)

10 months

12 months

15+ months

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **“Quick Wins”**
 - Weekly, curated self-paced leadership development nuggets; each at 15 minutes or less (online course microlearning and TED Talk videos)
 - Delivered as links in the weekly “Quick Win for Leadership Development” email with a brief description and promotion
 - Intended to increase the *relevant* use of what the organization had already licensed; curation was important!
 - The weekly cadence set expectations and demonstrated long-term commitment

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **Introduction to Leadership Program**
 - 3 half-days (mornings), 4 hours each, one week apart
 - VILT (through MS Teams)
 - Basic coverage of core leadership expectations and mindsets
 - Example topics: Leadership Styles, My Ideal Leader, The Leadership Pipeline, Situational Leadership, Leading a Team, Supervisor Duties & Scenarios, Planning & Execution Tools, Recognition & Feedback, Developing Employees
 - Allowed for spaced learning and reinforcement from session to session, using last week's concepts in this week's learning

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **Cohort Leadership Program**

- Open to graduates of Introduction to Leadership
- Continuing opportunity to learn together across the full cohort and in their 3-5 person learning pods
- Commit to one year, complete 10 of the monthly Leadership Skill Series modules
- Pods were given support and instruction, but were expected to manage themselves
- Beyond topic-based learning, the Cohort program was intended to help leaders build their internal network within the organization; especially important in a remote work environment

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **Leadership Skill Series**

- 3-part leadership development modules, offered 2-3x/month
- 20+ topics
- 3 Parts: (1) Online Prework, (2) “Lunch-and-Learn” style VILT session, (3) one month’s worth of on-the-job skill practice activities
- Practice activities specifically supported learning transfer; learners were told that if they wanted to benefit from building this skill, they would have to practice
- Practice activities were designed to be simple and require limited time investment (15-30 minutes per week) with spaced practice

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **CEO Roundtable Program**

- Nomination-based development program for high-potential employees
- Quarterly Lunch sessions with the CEO
- LD Consultant facilitated and prepped the CEO, provided career coaching for each participant, managed the nomination and selection process
- Also included an individualized career development investment for each participant (certificate program, major conference, leadership coaching, etc.)
- Changed this from a recognition program to a true development investment with upgraded options, instructions, and expectations

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **New to Company Leadership Onboarding**
 - Give incoming leaders what they need to get off to a fast start in the client's leadership culture
 - Speed the process of onboarding; "How we do it here"
 - Used material from the Intro to Leadership Program and a detailed onboarding checklist, plus conversations with the manager
 - Two main sessions (2+2 hours VILT) plus new leader and their manager diagnose what other training the person needs

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **Internal Leadership Models Resource Site**

- Provide a set of 20+ “standard” leadership models and tools that client L&D was prepared to recommend and support
- All in a standard format (What it is, When to use it, Description of the model/tool, Learn on Your Own Resources, Instructions, On-the-Job Practice Activities, Additional Links)
- Most relevant material from other programs and modules went into this internal SharePoint resource site; included the client competency model
- Provided easy reference to details outside of training material or the LMS

Leadership Development Solution Set

- **(Planned) Complex and Strategic Leader Skills**
 - This would be Phase 2 for strategic leaders and for skill topics that we could not effectively address with the short modular format of Phase 1 programs
 - Recommended: Leader of Leaders program, Coaching Skills, Conflict Resolution, Decision Making and Execution, Transformative Leadership, etc.
 - Also included targeted executive and strategic leader coaching
 - Proposed for when the client organization was ready to invest (for example, once its next annual budget was set, or on winning an expansion bid)



What took time...

- Involving stakeholders (strategy, then the needs assessment, then the priorities)
- Gaining agreement; especially among previously-independent “owners” of content
- Doing program design & development
- Scheduling and marketing 6-8 weeks out



What worked well...

- Involving stakeholders (including an advisory group)
- Quick Wins as a marketing and culture change vehicle
- Small, doable changes and offerings
- Monthly “Leadership Update” news (with Teams channel post on the half-month)
- Blended VILT strategy (self-paced + live session + OTJ practice applications)

Phase 1 Results

- High utilization (est. 72% of all leaders)
- Net Promoter Scores: .62+
- Requests, comments, internal referrals (“positive buzz”)
- Performance-focused smile sheets gave useful data... *(ask about these)*
- Leaders could point to learned skills they used on the job
- Development discussions were included in Talent Reviews; increased executive awareness
- Uptake in development culture noted by CEO and ELT

Learning Points:

Over 20 Key Lessons Learned...

I am happy to share these tips through conversation. Let's find time to talk.

Get a copy of this presentation plus the Top 20 "Zero to Something" Tips and a short email series with best practice advice.

"Zero to Something Tips"



<https://stevesemler.ck.page/35869dbcd0>

Thank you!

Remember to get the Top 20 Tips here:
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