



Building Operational Leadership Capability

Challenge

Senior management and L&D professionals perceived a lack of leadership and accountability across the middle management tiers of the bank at Director and Associate Director level. The objectives of the 'Towards Leadership Excellence' (TLE) programme were to:

- Improve leadership effectiveness within the bank
- Identify and develop talent that could take the bank in new directions.
- Encourage people to put their ideas into practice.

Method

Sykes Fairbairn designed a series of linked leadership workshops, each for 10-15 participants and delivered over a 6 month period. The programme was centred on fast paced interactive interventions of short duration using accelerated learning techniques.

The programme kick-off used our unique 'Climate Laboratory' session which allowed participants to experience different leadership styles, consider the climates they created and the resulting team performance. This session used actors hidden in the audience and psychometric profiles.

The core TLE programme consisted of 3 modules linked with individual coaching:

- Individual Leadership. Self awareness and meeting the challenge of delivering leadership to the upper range of an individual's talent, no matter what the circumstances or pressures.
- Team Leadership. Getting the best out of others through effective leadership, including stakeholder and relationship management.
- Performance Leadership. Direction and alignment including our Effects Based Leadership tools and performance review.

Learning was delivered in short interventions (bite-sized chunks) to minimise impact on trading. This approach was highly effective supported by the 1 to1 coaching element which personalised the learning as well as creating time to focus on individual client development.

Individual managers were subsequently grouped into teams for action learning projects on specific issues identified by senior management. Each issue had a nominated executive sponsor and solutions were presented to a senior executive panel after 3 months project work.

Result

- The TLE programme was highly successful in bringing good quality people to the attention of senior management.
- A number of important business projects that had stalled were reinvigorated and finished by the action learning project teams.
- Direct comparison with a 'control' group showed higher retention amongst the leadership programme cohort.
- Two tangible behaviour changes were reported by senior managers: specifically that programme delegates were better engaged in challenging inconsistencies in the bank's strategy and were able to assume greater levels of accountability.
- Individuals commented that they better understood what leadership in the bank was about and felt

better equipped to deal with the challenges ahead.

- One important by-product was some focused feedback for senior management about leadership visibility, lack of goal alignment and poor communication which the bank was subsequently able to address.
- All delegate feedback indicated that they thought the programme was great!
- The TLE programme made a major contribution towards creating a more creative and positive culture in the middle-management as well as reducing cultural tensions by bringing groups together from across the bank's European regions.
- As a direct result of the TLE programme we were asked to work with the Managing Director level to teach them about strategy execution.

For more information

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