Leadership Development for Global Teams

THE WHITE PAPER

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THE HIGHLIGHTS

SHORT VERSION

Leadership development is essential for teams of any shape, size or location.

The global context takes many different shapes and forms - thanks to globalization and technology.

With the importance of leadership development and the global context in mind, leaders must invest in developing their global teams to maximize their efforts.

Explore these concepts and practical insights in this white paper.

Partner with Skidmore Consulting to design a leadership development program that meets the exact needs of your global team.

LONG VERSION

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

DEFINITION

Though the definition of leadership has evolved over the past century, contemporary scholars such as Peter Northouse hold to a four-part meaning. In *Leadership Theory and Practice*, Northouse holds that "leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal." In simplistic terms, this definition of leadership is composed of a process, influence, group, and common goals.

DISTINCTION

There is a crucial distinction between the term leader and leadership that often gets overseen or missed by many. *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* written by Velsor, McCauley & Ruderman offers the nuance between mere **leader** development and **leadership** development.

- As the term leader refers to a single, individual, leader development focuses on the growth of an individual.
- Where the term leadership refers to the collective, leadership development focuses on the growth of the collective.

Understanding the distinction is essential for organizations seeking to cultivate a culture of learning, curate development programs, or establish succession plans,.

DEVELOPMENT

Development speaks to growth, flourishing, and learning. Carol Dweck, in her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, offers the contrast between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. In simplistic terms, her research holds that a fixed mindset focuses on problems while a growth mindset focuses on potential and opportunity.

Martin Seligman, the leader of the positive psychology movement, emphasizes flourishing and the value of people embraces their strengths in order to flourish in life and work. In his book, *The Hope Circuit: A Psychologist's Journey from Helplessness to Optimism*, he writes of the role of character, positivity, and experience as individuals develop.

DARING

In *Dare to Lead*, Brené Brown suggests that leaders are to be guardians of the teams and environments they cultivate. Brown's research demonstrates the need for cultures that are **vulnerable**, **connected** and **empathic** to reap the benefits of creativity and innovation. Leaders must dare to cultivate cultures that...

- Embrace Failure
- Recognize Victories
- Value Rest and Play
- Clings to Learning

In Braving the Wilderness, she writes of the criticality of belonging. And, she shares the importance of individuals embracing authenticity and their imperfections as they show up to all areas of their lives.

As practitioners create leadership development programs (LDPs), the importance of culture cannot be overstated.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

Consider the transformations of the **agricultural** revolution roughly 11,000 years ago with grain cultivation, the **industrial** revolution in the 1700s with the steam-powered engines and the even **cybernetic** revolution in the mid-1900s with the mathematical calculator. Edward Cornish offers this timeline in the book *Futuring: The Exploration of the Future*.

With the increase in globalization, expansion of multi-national corporations (MNCs), and continual advances in technology, the connectedness of the world is irrefutable. Working within a global context is no longer limited to a few elite businesses, working on teams with global representation is commonplace. A global context is a reality whether individuals are

- Traveling Globally
- Holding Virtual Meetings with Teams in Other Countries
- Working with International Non-profits
- Working Domestically with Diverse Individuals

ENGAGING INDIVIDUALS

Essential to leading within a global context is the **appreciation** of the strengths each brings to the work environment. *Profit from the Positive,* by Greenberg and Maymin, highlights the importance of a strengths-based approach for organizations. Leaders must engage individuals from their areas of strength and shift away from focusing on merely overcoming weaknesses and identifying problems.

Consider the vast and differing strengths that are afforded to global teams. Velsor, McCauley & Ruderman demonstrate the value of an individual's **social identity** in the contributions they offer a team as well. They stress that one's social identity should not be removed from an individual, but rather consider critical to an individual bringing their authentic self to work.

Further, their research specifics severe **consequences** for organizations that seek to separate an individual's social identity from their development within the organization. These consequences include "loss of human capital, loss of identity capital, loss of diversity capital, and loss of social capital."

CREATING A POSITIVE CULTURE

Marcella Bremer writes in *Developing a Positive Culture Where People and Performance Thrive* that "culture happens when people get together." Culture is present whether organizations invest in improving and aligning it or not. In her book *Organizational Culture Change*, she suggests that culture is formed and maintained by individuals who **copy, coach, and correct** each other. Bremer mentions several ways to develop a positive culture.

- Change Circles
- Feedback Programs
- Appreciative Interviews
- Random Acts of Kindness
- Positive Coaching

HONORING THE TEAM

Organizations seeking to honor the global context, diverse background, and varying strengths of the team must create an inclusive culture. They must also ensure the systems, structures, and strategies are appropriate.

- *How does your organization recognize the strengths of individuals?*
- *How does your organization seek to enhance the strengths of individuals?*
- *Does your organization have a diversity scorecard?*
- *How does your organization celebrate the diversity across individuals?*
- *How are diversity and inclusion integrated into the organization's strategy?*

GLOBAL TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Development within the global context is about **learning**. It is that simple. Senge writes of the concept perfectly in T*he Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization:*

"Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning we reperceived the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create."

ADULT LEARNING THEORY

In the 1970s Malcolm Knowles began work conceptualizing andragogy. Andragogy is a model of adult learning that fits within the framework of humanism. In *The Adult Learner*, Knowles, Holton and Swanson outline the principles of this andragogy. These principles include

- The learner needs to know and benefits from the information,
- The individual holds a self-concept of being a learner and is self-directed,
- The learner has related prior experiences,
- The individual is ready to learn,
- The individual is oriented toward learning,
- The individual is motivated the learn.

With Knowles' perspective of adult learning, the facilitator or teacher is considered a **partner** or travel mate on the learner's **journey** of discovery. Andragogy calls for the learner to be fully engaged and take ownership of their learning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Certainly, LDPs on the global scale – as with all programs – must consider the objectives before scheduling any formal experiential opportunities for participants.

Keep in mind there research shows that **90%** of learning takes place in **informal** settings (hence the importance of culture!). But, for those formally arranged experiences within a program, objectives are essential.

Consider the overall objectives and identify how that experience may help with achievement. Phillips and Stone offer five levels of objectives to consider when writing programs in *How to Measure Training Results.*

- Level 1 focuses on participant feedback and satisfaction.
- Level 2 focuses on the knowledge acquisition of the participants.
- Level 3 focuses on the applied behaviors of the participants.
- Level 4 focuses on the improvement to and impact on the business.
- Level 5 focuses on the return on investment (ROI) to the business.

LEARNING FORMATS

"They" always say that experience is the best teacher. This sentiment is true, too, in the world of leadership development. Consider the vast types of learning events possible for organizations to leverage. Velsor, McCauley & Ruderman offer five **experiential** learning categories.

- Challenging Assignments
- Developmental Relationships
- Adverse Situations
- Course Work and Training
- Personal Experiences

When considering a global team, there are vast configurations whether a strictly virtual team, multi-locational team, domestic team with global players, etc.

Learning continues to take new forms as technology and globalization allow for greater **possibilities**.

- Active Learning
- Writing to Learn
- Small-Group Learning
- Service Learning
- Reflection

These are some of the newer learning formats outlined by Fink in *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*.

- *How are the teams structured within your organization?*
- *What learning experiences are available to your global team?*

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES

Each work environment is different. However, there are competencies essential to success in a global environment. In the book, *HRD in the Age of Globalization*, Marquardt, Berger and Loan outline a few of these global competencies. Consider the importance of self-awareness, cultural appreciation, global perspective, cross-cultural communication skills, empathy, patience, learning commitment. When designing LDPs for global teams, focus on these competency to provide a **powerful impact** to the organization.

The authors note that crucial to this work, of growing the global competencies in leaders, is motivation. Important motivations include bettering the global community and improving the lives of others – not merely increasing the wealth of certain stakeholders. This speaks to the importance of sustainable development, environmental shifts, and safety and security.

Consider the role of LDPs in advocating for the importance of ethics, women, work-life balance, and spirituality.

LET'S CREATE A PROGRAM FOR YOUR TEAM.

Partner with Skidmore Consulting to develop a leadership development program that fits the **unique** needs of your global team. Skidmore Consulting provides innovation + leadership + marketing services to organizations and leaders in for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Skidmore, MA incites the **creative** application of strengths-based leadership theory & strategy development. She partners with teams and organizations that seek to maximize their **potential**, bolster their impact, and cultivate a positive human experience in their work.

She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Strategic Leadership from Regent University (May 2020) where she provides consulting services centered on innovative-thinking and future-focused **strategy**.

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