

Best Practice #108

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Title: Developing Every Leader at Every Level

Facility: Y-12 National Security Complex

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Brief description of best practice: Y-12 Senior Leadership Team identified “The Leadership Challenge” (TLC) as the platform on which to build the organization’s leadership skills, and contracted Diversity Leadership Consultants (DLC), Certified Master Facilitators of TLC, recommended by Wiley Publishers, to facilitate 15 two-day, off-site workshops for approximately 460 Y-12 leaders, from the senior level to first-line supervisors.

Why the best practice was used: Nearly twenty years had passed since Y-12 embarked upon an effort to establish a leadership development platform and educate all leaders on a common leadership philosophy and desired leadership behaviors. To establish and maintain consistency of leadership principles and practices throughout all management levels, Y-12 Senior Leadership Team adopted The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®:

- **Model the Way**
Leaders establish principles concerning the way people (constituents, peers, colleagues, and customers alike) should be treated and the way goals should be pursued. They create standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow. Because the prospect of complex change can overwhelm people and stifle action, they set interim goals so that people can achieve small wins as they work toward larger objectives. They unravel bureaucracy when it impedes action; they put up signposts when people are unsure of where to go or how to get there; and they create opportunities for victory.
- **Inspire a Shared Vision**
Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.
- **Challenge the Process**
Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they experiment and take risks. And because leaders know that risk taking involves mistakes and failures, they accept the inevitable disappointments as learning opportunities.
- **Enable Others to Act**
Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.
- **Encourage the Heart**
Accomplishing extraordinary things in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize contributions that individuals make. In every

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winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts, so leaders celebrate accomplishments. They make people feel like heroes.

As part of their pre-work for The Leadership Challenge® Workshop, each leader completed The *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI), a 360-degree assessment instrument which participants take as. The LPI provides a tool that helps leaders assess the extent to which they actually use those practices so that they can make plans for improvement. It is a questionnaire with thirty behavioral statements—six for each of The Five Practices—that takes 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Leaders complete the LPI-Self, rating themselves on the frequency with which they think they engage in each of the thirty behaviors. Five to ten other people—typically selected by the leaders—complete the LPI-Observer questionnaire, rating the leaders on the frequency with which they think they engage in each behavior. Respondents can indicate their relationship to the leader—manager, co-worker or peer, direct report, or other observer—but, with the exception of the leader's manager, all the observers' feedback is anonymous.

Benefits of the best practice: Leaders develop the ability to:

- Identify their leadership strengths and weaknesses
- Communicate their fundamental values and beliefs
- Set the example for others by aligning their actions with their shared values
- Express their image of the future
- Inspire others to share a common vision
- Search for opportunities to take the risks needed for growth
- Build collaboration, teamwork, and trust
- Strengthen the ability of others to excel
- Recognize the accomplishments of others
- Apply The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® to current business challenges

People working with leaders who demonstrate The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® are significantly more satisfied with the actions and strategies of their leaders, and they feel more committed, excited, energized, influential, and powerful. In other words, the more people engage in the practices of exemplary leaders, the more likely it is that they'll have a positive influence on others in the organization.

Problems/issues associated with the best practice: Logistical challenges associated with scheduling and coordination of the following implementation strategy:

- Fifteen (15) two-day, offsite workshops with 30-35 leaders in each session
- Senior Leader Champion full participation for each two-day workshop
- General Manager provide keynote speech and networking at lunchtime for each workshop
- Two (2) Certified Master Facilitators for each workshop
- Administration of Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), a 360° survey for each leader participant, requiring five to ten Observer (including the leaders' immediate manager) responses per participant

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How the success of the best practice was measured:

- ~460 leaders completed the workshops in a short, one-year timeframe.
- There was above average Observer response to LPI, with response rate increasing over time, indicating trust in the process
- Participants completed evaluations for each workshop, with the following results:
 - 96% of participants responding agreed or strongly agreed they would recommend this program to others.
 - 97% of participants responding agreed or strongly agreed they can be a more effective leader as a result of this program
 - 96% of participants responding agreed or strongly agreed the workshop fulfilled their goals and expectations.
 - Written comments from participants included:
 - “Very much worth the time and money to develop more effective leaders. Excellent.”
 - “Inspiring and eye opening.”
 - Provides a toolbox for the manager to be more effective and to excel at making a difference in their organization.”
- Subsequent to the training, Y-12 published internally a series of articles highlighting leaders who consistently demonstrated the behaviors defined in each of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®
- Senior Leadership formed a team of a cross-representation of Y-12 leaders and chartered the team to develop and implement strategies to sustain the momentum of the “The Leadership Challenge.”