



Leadership Development

Creating Hard Facts

The added value of leadership training is not easy to prove. The Leadership Development Process Inventory (LDPI) - a holistic evaluation model creates hard facts and shows where in Leadership development specific interventions are needed.

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(translated by Donna Hemsley)

Leadership Development suffers from an image that is distinguished through luxury hotels, great food, and expensive wine with endless rounds at the bar. It is not easy to refute this image. Especially when one regularly experiences how corporations in a crisis cut budgets in this area of development. Even though a crisis is exactly the time when able leaders are needed.

Leadership development seems to have a motivational aspect in many companies: It is not primarily about the acquisition of knowledge, but a reward in the form of a welcome change in the hard daily life of a manager. As long as there is no real proven sustainability and no hard facts, leadership development will continue to struggle with this image.

In contrast to LDPI, most of the evaluation models that are based on Kirkpatrick's model only look at the output. This however is not enough for the scientific analysis of developmental measures. The evaluation has to take place throughout the whole educational process and at different levels. By using purely output-centered models nobody knows 'how' a result was achieved. This question is crucial because only then can the things that are successful be recorded and then priority be given to those things which need to be improved. The LDPI delivers information on how the relevant influencing factors, in relation to learning and the transfer of knowledge, can be improved in leadership development.

A complete evaluation comprises:

- Concept Evaluation (Suitability)
- Input Evaluation (Preparation)
- Process Evaluation (Process)
- Output Evaluation (Results)

Integration and Sustainability

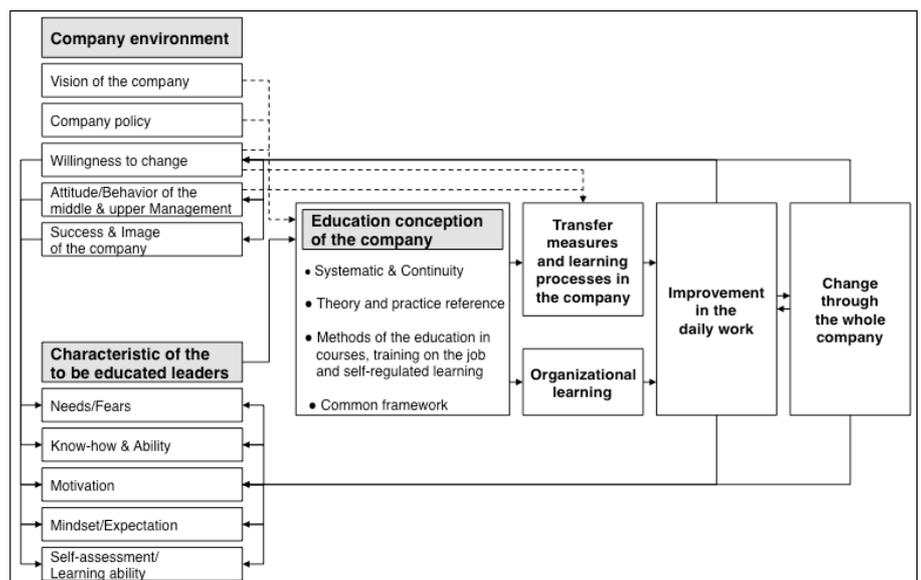
On the basis of a complete evaluation a Return on Expectation (ROE) can be measured and then from this a Return on Investment (ROI) calculation can be derived. Various studies have proven influencing factors and then assigned these to the areas of participant characteristics, training characteristics and working environment. The LDPI is based on the results of these studies and can create hard facts to counteract the criticism mentioned at the beginning of this article.

Critical situation: Leadership development, which in fact is not able to show benefits and added value, has an image and acceptance issue and cannot be disclosed from further deletion.

Solution: Leadership development has to provide clear facts to demonstrate sustainability!

Innovative evaluation model

As part of his Master thesis at the FHNW Polytechnic for applied Psychology Ivan Studer developed an inventory that fills the gap between investment and return in leadership development. The Leadership Development Process Inventory (LDPI) makes it possible to observe which things along the process chain of leadership development are successful and where specific measures are needed to make the process more sustainable.



The LDPI orienteds onself on the holistic transfer model of Dubs (Source: Dubs 1990, p 156)



Leadership development can be sustainably designed through the coordinated and interdisciplinary management of learning and the transfer of knowledge, and therefore lead to a return on Investment!

The LDPI was devised so that individual elements can be represented and investigated as in the holistic transfer model from Dubs (see graphic). This makes a ROE and ROI Analysis possible. A qualitative and quantitative study was carried out with three multinational companies from various industries to develop and test the LDPI.

Identifying Transfer Problems

To solve the problems with the transfer of learning and knowledge in leadership development, you have to first identify where, and what form, they appear. The results of the research with LDPI clearly show that substantial improvements are possible and necessary. Starting in the concept phase, the long-term perspective of top management needs to be united with the middle and short-term operational perspectives of line management who have the resources at their disposal. Personnel and leadership development contributes the conceptual knowledge and the network of experts.

This is an iterative process that has no finish date, because leadership development is a tool that needs to be used continuously to develop the organization.

To make matters worse there are also the culturally related constraints that the research illustrates:

- Leadership development is not clearly positioned in the minds of leaders and managers. When managers think of trainings they often don't see the causal relationship to the performance improvement of a company.
- Measures such as coaching are not used specifically as an important means of transferring knowledge to achieve excellent performance as in professional sports. It is used to get rid of deficits and faults.
- Trust is not given up front through the various tasks, interests and goals of the stakeholders. Therefore this creates a huge challenge for the manager: To achieve a real ability to perform and be innovative, the managers have to develop their employees so that they become, when required, even better than the managers themselves.

Conclusion of the study: Leadership development is not just training, but a hybrid of knowledge input, supportive measures and practical applications.

The responsibility stays with the leaders itself and can't be delegated to the HR.

Leadership development is the mirror of the lived leadership!

Applying the results: Leadership development must be included in the corporate strategy, which has to be exemplified and felt. They must not gather dust in theoretical management principles or described in glossy brochures or in the intranet.

Creating Sustainable Learning Process

This and other things may significantly contribute to the critical situation that only 10 to 15 percent of training content is ever put to use. This is not rumor. It is scientifically proven. From the results of Ivan Studer's study, measures can be derived for how the transfer of learning and knowledge can be designed sustainably and profitably in the future (see insert box). No symptoms should be dealt with, only the actual causes. There is a need for new knowledge in the area of monitoring and the creation of learning processes, as Prof. Dr. W.J. Eberling, who accompanied the Master thesis, knows through his experience with the development and implementation of leadership development programs in leading.

Authors



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7 Suggestions for Leadership Development

1. The leadership competencies which need to be developed have to be synchronized with the long and mid term company goals and derived from these.
2. Top management and its subordinate cadre must be systematically involved in management development (e.g. as sponsors, project mentors, assessors in AC and DC, Feedback givers, dialogue partners in discussions, coaches and mentors, sparring partners in transfer projects).
3. The competency development must be founded in well-defined development profiles and evaluated through transfer projects during the training (e.g. through monitoring systems like SNS from Schiepek and the tool SAG for team monitoring from Elling & Relich). The regular realization of leadership audits and leadership days as well as the creation of succession training for managers complement these.
4. Learning and transfer projects which accompany trainings must be focused on actual tasks and strategic direction. They should also enable a model like way of working for the stakeholders from different departments of the organization.
5. The learning and transfer projects are implemented with the active involvement of sponsors (e.g. regular presentations and feedback during the project). The results of these projects should always be implemented into the daily business of the organization or lead to further projects.
6. The results of the transfer projects which accompany the trainings and the increase of competency of the managers should be made available to all employees (e.g. Presentations and Information events, connected trainings, requirements to create new projects with inclusion of the latest knowledge and abilities, cultivation of Communities of Practice, Establishment of circles for peer consulting)
7. Inclusion of the developments in the appraisal interviews and career planning with the respective boss.