

ESSENTIAL components of a leader development program

DEFINITION of leadership and leader development

Leadership is defined as “the process by which an individual determines direction, influences a group and directs it toward a specific goal or organizational mission.”ⁱ Leader development is broadly defined as “formal and informal training and professional development designed for all management and executive-level employees to assist them in development of the leadership skills and styles required to deal with a variety of situations.”ⁱⁱ

WHO should be developed as leaders?

In order to optimize the employee value proposition directly for leaders and indirectly for followers, savvy organizations foster a performance culture through strategically linked leader development processes. An effective leader development effort typically provides programs and services specifically targeted to leaders at each of the following levels:

1. Front-Line Employees with High Potential for Leadership: High potentials are typically defined as those demonstrating high-level contributions, organizational values, potential to move up to an identified position within a given timeframe, and potential to assume greater responsibility.ⁱⁱⁱ
2. New Supervisors: Individuals who serve as lead workers or who supervise front-line employees, and who have little or no prior supervisory training or experience.
3. Experienced Supervisors: Individuals who serve as lead workers or who supervise front-line employees, and who have 40+ hours of competency-based supervisory training and three or more years of direct supervisory experience.
4. New Mid-Level Managers: Individuals who manage other supervisors or broad-scale project teams, and who have little or no prior management training or experience.
5. Experienced Mid-Level Managers: Individuals who manage other supervisors or broad-scale project teams, and who have 40+ hours of competency-based management training and three or more years of direct management experience.
6. Executives: Individuals who lead governmental agencies (Cabinet Secretary, Council of State members, and their deputy-level leaders), with primary responsibility for policy creation and implementation to realize core business missions, and who have varied educational backgrounds and experience levels with NC state government.

KEY criteria for effective leader development at all levels

The following criteria should be applied when adopting a competency-based leader development strategy for any of the six audiences previously described:

1. Application of best practices based upon both cutting-edge leadership research and a thorough analysis of NC state government realities;
2. Specific written performance feedback for each participant from their immediate supervisor, peers, direct reports, and other key customers/stakeholders through the use of a 360° instrument;
3. Mentoring, networking and/or professional coaching resources for each participant as they create and implement individual leader development plans; and
4. Cost-beneficial design, implementation and evaluation of effective instruction by acknowledged experts in the field.

NC OSP'S leader development services

The NC Office of State Personnel (OSP) is committed to supporting state government agencies in their development of leaders at all levels through the provision of:

1. Tools, models and “best practices” in leader development;
2. Consultation to facilitate in-house program delivery, including support for competency identification, program design, instructional materials development/access, and evaluation methods. This may also include creation of partnerships across NC state government agencies, as well as links with external providers of leadership education.
3. Direct provision of leader development through the following programs:
 - Frontline Leadership for supervisors
 - Managing Effective Performance for mid-level managers
 - NC Certified Public Manager® Program
 - NCLEAD
 - Special Emphasis Project Programs, including LIFE
 - Related courses from the university and community college system and/or private industry.

THE leader development process

1. Review the organization's primary performance requirements
 - Mission, vision and values
 - Strategic initiatives
 - Key roles & competencies required (prerequisite & fully developed)
2. Determine projected human resources availability
 - Projected turnover for key roles (retirement and otherwise)
 - Identify high-potential employees (high performers with prerequisites and as many fully developed competencies as possible)
3. Identify leadership "gaps"
 - List required roles/competencies for which organization has less than fully developed internal core of high-potential employees
 - Group competencies by type, level and number of participants requiring development
 - Prioritize/sequence competency groups for development
4. Generate possible development strategies for high-priority competencies
 - Identify developmental program design/delivery resources: internal to agency, OSP and/or external provider
 - Evaluate each developmental program design/delivery resource on key criteria of customization, feedback (360°) component, systems support (e.g., mentoring, networking, coaching) and cost-effectiveness
 - Choose strategies that best meet key developmental program design/delivery criteria
5. Implement development strategy
 - Design program, including instructional materials and evaluation strategies
 - Enroll participants
 - Conduct pilot version of program for a selected group of targeted participants

6. Evaluate development strategy

KEY question #1

Who's participating in the program? Are we getting the "right" people in the program and are they completing program requirements in a timely manner?

KEY question #2

Did participants enjoy the program? What are participants' reactions to the format/content of the control and of the pilot program designs?

KEY question #3

Were participants able to demonstrate key competencies during the program delivery period? Which program design, control or pilot, best facilitates demonstration of key competencies during the delivery period?

KEY question #4

Are participants able to apply program skills on their job? Which design, pilot or control, best facilitates on-the-job application?

KEY question #5

What difference does leader participation in the program make to the efficient, effective functioning of state government organizations?

KEY question #6

What are the costs, and the return-on-investment for the leader development programs? Are there any differences between the control and the pilot formats?

7. Follow Up:

- Revise program components as needed
- Disseminate to target group
- Standardize program components via policy, procedure and ongoing resourcing

- Conduct ongoing evaluation for key metrics to ensure program continues to meet and exceed organizational performance requirements.

ⁱ Nancy Lockwood, "The Changing Nature of Leadership," *Society for Human Resources Management Briefly Stated*, April 30, 2007, http://www.shrm.org/research/briefly_published/LeadershipSeries.

ⁱⁱ Nancy Lockwood, "The Changing Nature of Leadership," *Society for Human Resources Management Briefly Stated*, April 30, 2007, http://www.shrm.org/research/briefly_published/LeadershipSeries.

ⁱⁱⁱ Corporate Leadership Council, "Guidelines for Using a Nine-Box Matrix," Washington: Corporate Executive Board, July 2005.