The Clear & Complete Guide to

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Clear & Complete Guide to

LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Great managers make companies. Bad managers break them.

There's no other way about it. We can cite statistics about manager impact on profitability[1], engagement[2], retention[3], and so on.

But does anyone really need convincing?

At one point or another in our careers, most of us have had a manager who made us feel like hitting "snooze" on our alarm a few dozen times. And some of us have been lucky enough to have a leader who trusted us, supported us, and enabled us to do great work.

Managers (a.k.a. formal leaders) get a bad rep. Many companies see them as an artifact of the past, as something that needs to be deprecated and put to rest alongside with cubicles, fax machines, and those damned red staplers.

It seems like every year a new company declares its intentions to go manager-free, and every year we read stories of their attempts going awry.

Zappos embraced holacracy and saw 18% of its staff leave[4]. Google got rid of managers and then not only reversed its decision but became a thought leader on Manager Success[5]. There are many more stories like these.

1   http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ojs/index.php/joscm/article/viewFile/11629/10565
2   http://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/182792/managers-account-variance-employee-engagement.aspx
3   https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2015/07/26/new-management-research-analyzes-how-recognition-affects-retention/#4d0ef3174d15
4   https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2016/01/14/zappos-says-18-percent-of-the-company-has-left-following-its-radical-no-bosses-approach/
5   https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-google-sold-its-engineers-on-management

Yes, it could be that businesses should wave goodbye to the sheer idea of formal leadership. But perhaps — *and this is gonna sound crazy so just bear with us for a moment* — companies need to get better at developing their leaders and setting them up for success.

If you subscribe to the former school of thought, we won't try to change your mind over the course of this guide; there are other resources out there that you might find helpful.

But if you recognize the value leadership development and are looking to either implement your first ever program or augment an existing one, you are in the right place.

When to focus on Leadership Development

This guide isn't for everyone.

Its primary objective is to help *People Ops (HR) and L&D leaders at midsized knowledge worker companies* either implement their first ever Leadership Development

program or level up the one they have currently in place today.

If your company has less than 100 employees, Leadership Development might not be your top priority. Most organizations of this size we've interviewed say it's too early.

On the other hand, if you have tens of thousands of people, the L&D resources available to you are drastically different from those of mid-sized enterprises. And while you'll likely find the insights and strategies in this guide to be entirely applicable, the scale and complexity of their implementation might be drastically different.

Finally, this guide is tailored to "knowledge worker" companies, as the research and studies we draw from were largely conducted at this kind of organizations. Again, we believe that the methodology is applicable everywhere, but the specific applications might vary.

And with these caveats out of the way, it's time to dig in.

1

Leadership Development as Part of Manager Success

When thinking about how you can support managers at your company, it's important to recognize that Leadership Development is just one piece of the pie.

It's a critical one, no doubt. But there's more than good training that goes into setting managers up for success.

Think about it this way: You can do a lot to develop your writing skills — go through courses, read books, get an English degree. But there are also things like a spell-check or thesaurus to make every piece of your writing better.

In that context, when it comes to supporting your managers, **Manager Success** is the emerging umbrella term that houses **Leadership Development** and **Manager Enablement** as its two core components.

Let's do some defining, shall we?

> ***Manager Success*** *is the sum of all organizational practices aimed at helping people managers/leaders reach and sustain a high level of performance, engagement, and fulfillment in their roles.*

There are two parts to Manager Success:

1. ***Leadership Development*** *includes all organizational efforts to help current and aspiring managers to assess and improve relevant people leadership and management skills.*

2. ***Manager Enablement*** *includes all the ways in which an organization supports managers with tools, data, insights, and*

processes for the ongoing management of their teams.

In this guide, as its title suggests, we'll focus on the Development aspect of Manager Success. But as HR technology becomes smarter and more woven into the work we all do, Enablement is too worth your investment or, at the very least, attentive exploration.

What makes an exceptional Leadership Development program

This year, many companies will be looking to implement their first Leadership Development program or level up what they currently have in place. In fact, 90%+ of 200+ HR leaders we've talked to have this among their Top 5 priorities in the next 12 months.

But what makes an exceptional Leadership Development program? What components, principles, and considerations do you need to keep in mind when attacking this challenge?

At the highest level, exceptional Leadership Development is:

- Personalized

- Ongoing, and

- Engaging

First, it's Personalized. Say, you have two leaders. One has just been promoted into a first-time management position, and the other is a VP with ten years of management experience. One struggles with delegating tasks to their team; the other needs to fine-tune their career development skills.

It's easy to see that what these two managers need is a very different kind of help and a different kind of approach.

Yet so many companies ignore these distinctions and do one of two things:

- Roll out a training program that covers the entirety of leadership.

- Train people on a single skill chosen either "by popular demand" or through pure guesswork — most often it's "Giving Feedback" — and hope it's useful to everyone.
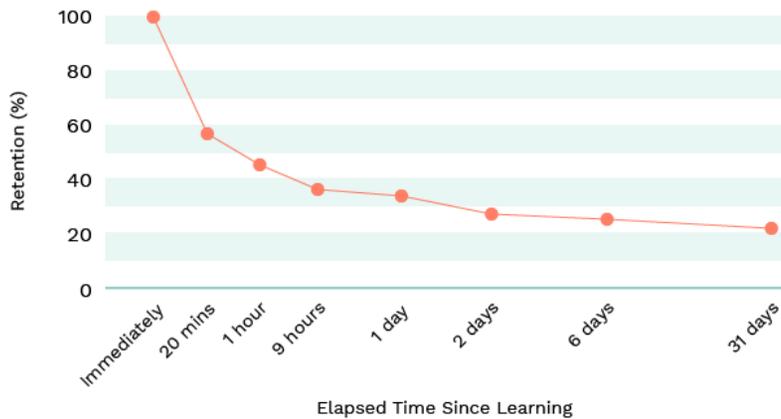
As a result, none of the managers get what they truly need, and yet this low-ROI initiative gets repeated next quarter, year, etc...

It doesn't have to be this way. In the age where everything — from your Amazon recommendations to your Coke bottle — is personalized, Leadership Development should not be an exception.

Second, exceptional Leadership Development is Ongoing. It's not one-and-done. No single seminar, conference, or Udemy course is going turn a newbie manager into a pro.

In fact, scientific research shows **as much as 70% of employee training is forgotten within a day**.

Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve

Retention (%)

100
80
60
40
20
0

Immediately | 20 mins | 1 hour | 9 hours | 1 day | 2 days | 6 days | 31 days

Elapsed Time Since Learning

This phenomenon is called Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve, named after its author:

> *"The forgetting curve is in fact the human inability to successfully retain information in our brain for more than several hours. It sounds ludicrous, but the fact is that 20 minutes after learning a new thing, our brains lose 42 percent of it, and after six days, you retain approximately 25 percent of the information. Come to think of*

> *it, it's a wonder anyone graduated elementary school at all, ever."*

— TRAININGINDUSTRY.COM[1]

That's why, instead of one-off courses or workshops, or lunch-and-learns, or whatever, you need to give your managers access to ongoing resources and applicable learnings and activities to help them improve over time.

Think about it as going to the gym, not getting a massage.

Finally, exceptional Leadership Development is Engaging. We live in a fast-paced world. Not only are our attention spans shrinking, but also the time available to us for professional development is limited by the demands of our jobs and personal commitments.

---

1   https://www.trainingindustry.com/articles/content-development/hacking-the-forgetting-curve/

In fact, **an average knowledge worker only has 4.8 minutes a day**[2] **to dedicate to professional development**. The question to ask yourself:

How will our program compete for this time?

And while "*we'll make it mandatory*" isn't necessarily the wrong answer, forcing your managers to engage with stuffy, boring content is the dictionary example of going against the grain.

Would a better approach be to find ways to make your program so fun, so useful, and so captivating that it win your managers' attention? *How would that make them feel about going through your program? And how would that make you feel about the work you do?*

Next up, we'll look at how you can achieve this and otherwise make your Leadership Development exceptional with the help of **The Measure-Learn-Apply Loop**.

But before we move on, note that Personalization, Continuity, and Engagement reinforce each other. We're more likely to engage with things that feel personal, and we're more likely to continue using things we engage with deeply. You get it.

---

2   https://www.slideshare.net/jbersin/the-disruptive-nature-of-digital-learning-ten-things-weve-learned/22-Source_Meet_the_Modern_Learner

The Measure-Learn-Apply Loop

2

*The most effective Leadership Development programs follow what we call **The Measure-Learn-Apply Loop**.*

Here's how it works:

1. Under **Measure**, companies uncover the unique strengths and areas of improvement for each of their leaders.

2. Under **Learn**, companies connect the managers with engaging content personalized based on the unique needs of those leaders.

3. Under **Apply**, companies create opportunities for leaders to practice their skills in their ongoing work with their teams.

And, because it's a loop, companies **return to Measure** to understand the evolution of their managers and their needs over time as well as measure the ROI of Leadership Development.

Let's explore each step of The Measure-Learn-Apply Loop in a bit (*ok, maybe a lot!*) more detail.

Step 1: Measure

> To measure is to know —
> if you cannot measure it,
> you cannot improve it.
>
> **LORD KELVIN**

Great Leadership Development programs always begin with an assessment of the current skill set and effectiveness of your managers.

Doing so will produce many benefits:

1. Clarity on where the gaps are and who needs the most help.

2. Ability to personalize the Learn and Apply steps.

3. Evidence you can use in requesting or retaining budget.

4. Ability to measure and prove ROI of your initiatives.

Measurement is often the step companies either skip or simply don't consider. That is a mistake, as it handicaps your efforts before you even get started.

Luckily, measuring Manager Success is reasonably easy as you can stand on the shoulders of giants... or at least one G-iant in particular.

The industry-standard methodology for measuring manager effectiveness is Google's Project Oxygen survey.

As Laszlo Bock, who is the former VP of People at Google, writes in his best-selling book Work Rules:

> "Project Oxygen has had the most profound impact on Google. The name comes from a question Michelle [Donovan] once asked:
>
> "What if everyone at Google had an amazing manager? Not a fine one or a good one, but one that really understood them and made them excited to come to work each day. What would Google feel like then?" Neal [Patel] was in the habit of naming his projects after elements from the periodic table, so Michelle proposed Project Oxygen, because "having a good manager is essential, like breathing. And if we make managers better, it would be like a breath of fresh air. [...]"

> "The research showed eight common attributes shared by highscoring managers and not exhibited by low-scoring managers.
>
> 1. *Be a good coach.*
> 2. *Empower the team and do not micromanage.*
> 3. *Express interest/concern for team members' success and personal well-being.*
> 4. *Be very productive/results-oriented.*
> 5. *Be a good communicator—listen and share information.*
> 6. *Help the team with career development.*
> 7. *Have a clear vision/strategy for the team.*
> 8. *Have important technical skills that help advise the team.*

"[...] So [we] created a system of reinforcing signals to improve the quality of management at Google. The most visible, a semiannual Upward Feedback Survey, asks teams to give anonymous feedback on their managers.

"The survey itself is the checklist. If you perform every behavior on the list, you'll be an amazing manager."

Google's Upwards Feedback Survey is anonymous; it consists of 13 questions and takes an average six minutes to complete.

Here are the questions:

1. My manager gives me actionable feedback that helps me improve my performance. (1-5, from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

2. My manager does not "micromanage" (i.e., get involved in details that should be handled at other levels). (1-5)

3. My manager shows consideration for me as a person. (1-5)

4. The actions of my manager show that he/she values the perspective I bring to the team, even if it is different from his/her own. (1-5)

5. My manager keeps the team focused on our priority results/deliverables. (1-5)

6. My manager regularly shares relevant information from his/her manager and senior leaders. (1-5)

7. My manager has had a meaningful discussion with me about career development in the past six months. (1-5)

8. My manager communicates clear goals for our team. (1-5)

9. My manager has the subject matter expertise (e.g., coding in Tech, selling in Sales, accounting in Finance) required to effectively manage me.

10. I would recommend my manager to others in the organization. (1-5)

11. I am satisfied with my manager's overall performance as a manager. (1-5)

12. What would you recommend your manager keep doing? (free form)

13. What would you have your manager change? (free form)

The insights from this survey can give you an incredible level of visibility into how specific leaders are doing as well as the health of different departments and your org as a whole.

And for the managers themselves, this feedback can be career-changing. The data-driven insights provided by their team — based on the areas that decades of research have identified as most important to manager's success — give them the clarity to know exactly where to focus their time. With that, they'll see a real and noticeable change in their performance quicker, which creates a positive feedback loop that is both engaging and motivating, and of course benefits their team, as well.

Sample Upward Feedback Survey Results, as displayed in Hazel

Moreover, the first eight questions tie in nicely with the Eight Core Management Skills[1] you can help your leaders develop.

---

1   https://www.slideshare.net/hazelhq/8-skills-every-manager-needs-to-succeed-89117956

Now, when you run a Upward Feedback Survey, keep the following things in mind:

1. Set the scene. Your goal should be to frame the survey around professional development and not performance evaluation. You want your employees to feel safe enough to give candid feedback to their managers, so emphasize anonymity. And you want your leaders to feel secure that the findings in the UFS are there to help them grow, not criticize them or leave them feeling like their position is threatened.

2. Be annoying. To get genuinely impactful results, you should be aiming for 75%+ completion rate on the survey. You want to get at least three responses per manager for the individual results to be both balanced and anonymous.

This means that you'll need to nudge team members to complete the survey, sometimes numerous times. You can use surveying tech to automate many of these nudges, but in the end, you'll still likely have to go to people directly and nudge them personally. Unfortunately, there's no way around it, so we might as well say it like it is.

3. Share results in a constructive way. There are People Analytics technologies out there that will help you automate this kind of survey. The challenge is that often these tools are built with the HR leadership in mind and aren't manager-friendly enough.

For example, scores of any kind — and especially Favorability Scores, which are core to the UFS methodology — aren't helpful in focusing professional development efforts because they often create fear and anxiety among the managers; they feel too much like a school report card.

Instead, "lower the resolution" of the results by highlighting the approximate split of positive, neutral, and negative feedback (without any numbers) and guiding the managers' attention towards the qualitative insights and priority skill gaps.

Remember, your objective in sharing the results with the managers is to encourage self-awareness, guide their learnings, and increase their commitment to growth.

Step 2: Learn

The second step on the Measure-Learn-Apply Loop is all about giving your leaders access to personalized, ongoing, and engaging development resources.

By this point, you'll already know what your different managers need based on the insights from Upward Feedback Survey, but acting on these insights can be a tall order.

Essential questions we'll want to answer are:

- How do you personalize learning at scale?

- How do you ensure both rapid skill acquisition and a high level of retention?

- How do you track progress and drive engagement over time?

To answer these questions, let's look at a few common approaches to Leadership Development, their upsides and downsides.

Pros: Low effort; Allowing of remote/distributed teams
Cons: Generic advice; High abandonment rates

In this approach, you either purchase access to online training resources, using something like Lynda.com, or allocate a development budget to your managers which they are then required to spend on things like books or events, or what have you.

This approach requires the least amount of effort from your HR / L&D team, but it assumes a certain level of internal drive and commitment from your leaders to take advantage of the resources. Unfortunately, the majority of your managers are likely to struggle with this.

For context, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses[2]), a popular format for online learning (e.g., Lynda.com), see an average completion rate of as low as ~5.5%[3]. Ouch.

---

2   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massive_open_online_course
3   https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2889436

Subscription Learning (e.g., Duolingo) has recently been gaining attention as a more effective alternative to MOOCs. But it's not a silver bullet.

Furthermore, while you can guide your managers to pick resources that correspond with the areas of improvement you'd identified earlier, it's hard to guarantee a tight match between the content and the skill gaps.

APPROACH B: SKILL-BASED INSTRUCTOR-LED TRAINING

Pros: High engagement; Good degree of personalization
Cons: One-and-done; Medium-to-High cost; Prohibitive for remote/distributed teams

Instructor-led training has historically been the most popular approach to Leadership Development, in part because of its benefit and somewhat in spite of its drawbacks.

There's something magical about having an engaging, personable trainer in the room, connecting with managers on an emotional level. Assuming, of course, the trainer you get is not of the monotone, powerpoint-regurgitating variety.

Unfortunately, instructor-led training isn't without shortcomings. The main one is that it aims to condense a large amount of content into a short amount of time. This, unfortunately, can lead to less-than-stellar retention, similar to how a single intense run won't make you marathon-ready.

If we were to get academic for a second, ILT fails to take advantage of the "spacing effect" to make sure the concepts stick in people's memory and are applied later, when a relevant situation arises.

> *"The spacing effect is the research finding that repetitions of concepts spaced over time are a more potent way to support longterm memory than repetitions that are not spaced over time (or are not spaced as widely in time). Interestingly,*

while the spacing effect is one of the most
studied learning factors it is also one of the most
underutilized in training and education."

— WILL THALHEIMER, WORK-LEARNING.COM[4]

Like with all the other approaches, companies see best results when they match in-person training with the areas of improvement identified earlier.

For example, it's better to send the managers who need help Giving Actionable Feedback to a feedback workshop than it is to have them do a generic Manager 101 course.

However, the more personalized you aim to make this experience the smaller the training groups get and the more cost prohibitive the whole endeavor becomes.

As we've established early on in this guide, Leadership Development needs to be ongoing, and instructor-led training can't do that in isolation.

---

4   https://www.worklearning.com/2013/10/25/what-is-it/

APPROACH C: MENTORSHIP

Pros: Medium-to-High Engagement; High Personalization
Cons: Limited availability

There are two kinds of mentorship initiatives:

1. **Internal pairings**. Matching developing leaders with experienced ones within the organization. This is especially powerful if you use the insights from the Upward Feedback Survey to do the matching.

2. **External pairings**. Helping managers connect with experienced leaders outside of the organization. You can help facilitate this by making introductions and giving your managers templates to reach out to mentor.

The shortcoming of this approach is that people who can be mentors tend to be busy themselves, so they may not always be available to support your managers. Plus, finding chemistry between a mentor and a mentee can be as challenging as finding that with a partner or a friend. Good

mentors are not as easy to come by as you might think, and both parties need to be committed to building and nurturing the relationship.

**APPROACH D: ONE-ON-ONE COACHING AND COACHING+**

Pros: High engagement; High degree of personalization
Cons: High cost; Often limited to upper echelons of leaders

Finally, there's coaching. It is one of the most effective ways to develop leaders as it combines a personalized one-on-one approach of mentorship with the in-depth expertise of instructors and online resources.

While the traditional approach to Coaching is grounded in smart questioning and a more Socratic method, it can be augmented into what we call "Coaching+": a powerful combination of Socratic questioning and more direct guidance.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Google has some excellent definitions to offer:
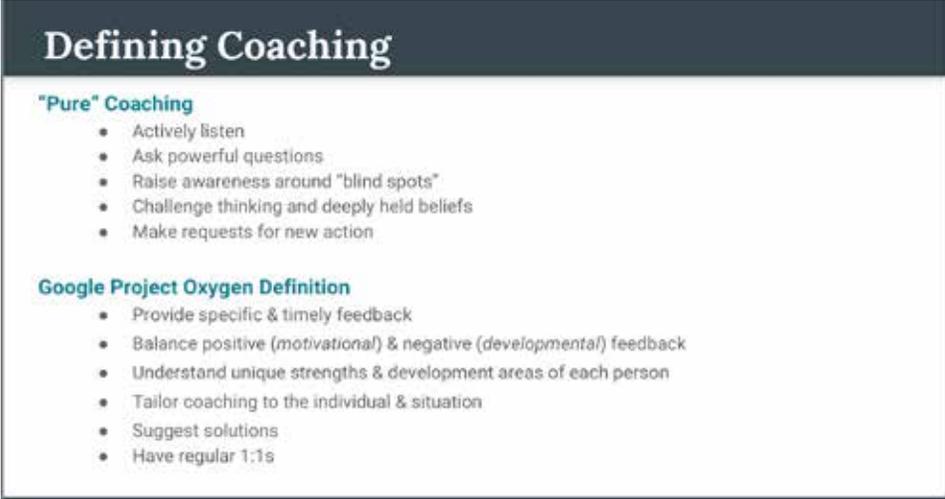
Defining Coaching

"Pure" Coaching
- Actively listen
- Ask powerful questions
- Raise awareness around "blind spots"
- Challenge thinking and deeply held beliefs
- Make requests for new action

Google Project Oxygen Definition
- Provide specific & timely feedback
- Balance positive (*motivational*) & negative (*developmental*) feedback
- Understand unique strengths & development areas of each person
- Tailor coaching to the individual & situation
- Suggest solutions
- Have regular 1:1s

Illustration: Google's Definition of Coaching

Considering all the strengths and benefits of coaching, it's no wonder that it's also by far the most expensive and hardest to scale approach to Leadership Development. That's why people mostly refer to it as *Executive Coaching* — meaning that it's limited to the upper echelons of people managers.

Of course, there are more than four ways to empower your managers with access to comprehensive learning. And most companies find success in mixing and matching different approaches into their own unique Leadership Development cocktail.

Additionally, a new generation of Manager Success solutions is emerging to address the shortcomings of the aforementioned solutions and deliver personalized, ongoing, and engaging learning at scale.

Hazel is one of such products, and that's all we're going say about that :). If you feel like checking us out, you can learn more about Hazel on our website[5].

---

5 http://hazelhq.com/

Step 3: Apply

The last step of the Measure-Learn-Apply Loop is Apply.

Management is a practice and getting better at it requires not only theoretical learning but practical application of those teachings.

The best courses, mentors, and coaches in the world won't make any difference if your managers don't apply the newly acquired insights.

Therefore, it is vital that in addition to providing access to learning, you provide the managers with activities they can try and apply. Sometimes these will be offered by the learning vendor you work with. Other times you might need to develop these yourself.

As always, focusing on specific core skills will drive the best results.

For best results, you should start with simple, easy to complete activities. This will make your managers feel successful right away and will keep them motivated to keep

going. Once they complete the easier tasks and go through more learning, give them advanced activities to do.

For instance, when learning how to give actionable feedback, leaders might start with something as easy as giving positive recognition or asking their team members how they prefer to receive feedback. Managers can then progress to giving more constructive project-based feedback, and eventually practice sharing more challenging feedback, like when someone's employment is at stake.

Returning to Measure

And just like that, we're back where we started. Only this time, your managers have an enhanced sense of self-awareness. They have had the support and the resources to level up. And they've had ample time to practice and apply their newly acquired skills.

In other words, they've completed one full rotation through the Measure-Learn-Apply loop.

Next, it's time to Measure again and to evaluate the results of your program. By running the Upward Feedback Survey the second time, you'll be able to see which skill gaps got closed and which ones remain. Then you can jump into the next cycle of learning, for both the first cohort of leaders and any new ones that are ready to grow.

As you'll discover as you and your managers embark on this journey of development, there's always room to get better.

In the remaining parts of this guide, we'll explore how you can customize your development programs based on Manager Seniority, how you can drive engagement and participation in your initiative, and how to put all elements of this methodology together.

3

Customizing Development Based on Manager Seniority

If there's one thing you walk away with from reading this guide, it's that every manager's needs are unique.

One way they differ is based on the amount of experience and seniority a manager has both within your organization and in their career in general.

For example, when you promote someone from an individual contributor (IC) role into their first-time leadership position, you need to ensure they approach their new assignment with the right mindset and that they

can evolve their work relationships based on the newly established "chain of command."

On the other hand, a seasoned executive hired from the outside of the organization likely has the basics covered, but they might need help tweaking their approach to fit the company's unique culture and otherwise polishing their skill set to reach peak performance.

To figure out how to customize your manager development based on leadership seniority, see the following table.

Note that these are broad categories and don't reflect the actual job titles you might have at your organization. Use this to inform your own brackets.

	Experience Managing People	Measure	Learn	Apply
Aspiring Manager	n/a	Evaluate management potential	Management 101	Experiment with leading group projects and initiatives
New Manager	Roughly 0-6 months	Self-assessment; Downward & Peer Feedback	Management 101 from day one; make part of onboarding	Building habits for regular check-ins and effective 1:1s
Junior Manager	Roughly 6 months - 3 years	Upward Feedback Survey	Skill-specific based on feedback	Proactive skill-specific + Reactive to team needs
Experienced Manager	Roughly 3-7 years	Upward Feedback Survey	Skill-specific based on feedback; *advanced learnings*	Proactive skill-specific + Reactive to team needs
Seasoned Manager	Roughly 7+ years	Upward Feedback Survey	Skill-specific based on feedback; *executive coaching*	Focus on optimizing efficiency and "impact per work hour"

4

Driving Engagement and Participation

Now that we've covered the common ways to enable manager learning at your organization, let's look at how you can make sure engagement and participation are high throughout the process.

Step 1: Use the methodology

The Measure-Learn-Apply loop itself is an effective driver of participation. The self-awareness gained through upward feedback leads to higher motivation to learn. Personalized growth plans support that. And the ongoing nature of this framework creates a virtuous cycle of growth.

Step 2: Add rewards and incentives

In our experience, **the most effective incentives are meaningful, relevant, and — here's that word again — personalized.**

A poor example: An iPhone awarded to a random manager among the cohort. This reward doesn't seem at all related to Leadership Development; the random draw doesn't incentivize participation, and this will do nothing for the managers who prefer Android.

A good example: A ticket to a conference awarded to the leader who's shown most improvement between two

Upward Feedback Surveys. The wish-list conference is picked at the beginning of the process. This reward is decidedly tied to the idea of professional development; it incentivizes growth, and it's personalized to each leader.

Side note #1: Don't overdo it. Learning should be, for the most part, its own reward. Incentives help keep things moving, but add too many and you'll have a game show on your hands.

Side note #2: Incentivize the right things. Focus on improvement over pure engagement as the latter can be faked by some particularly inventive participants.

Step 3: Leverage social dynamics in the workplace to facilitate accountability

Accountability can be a powerful driver of engagement. Four kinds of accountability are worth exploring:

    A. Self-accountability

    B. Lateral accountability

    C. Downward accountability

    D. Upward accountability

Let's look at each one and see how you can leverage them in your quest to drive engagement.

3A: SELF-ACCOUNTABILITY

We all want to be consistent with ourselves. Meaning that we're more likely to do something if we commit to it ourselves. An easy way to tap into this dynamic is by asking managers to set a goal for their own learning for a quarter and to write it down.

3B: LATERAL ACCOUNTABILITY

If we're learning together with others, we feel accountable to the dynamics of the group. Nobody wants to look like they're doing poorly compared to others or holding the group behind.

Take advantage of this by setting up manager round-tables, a recurring monthly (or fortnightly) meeting among leaders on the same level, going through the same kind of training. You or someone on your team should facilitate these by asking questions that spark discussion. For example:

- What's one thing you learned this month that surprised you?

- What's one thing you're struggling with right now?

- Can you share one management win from this month?

- Where do you feel stuck?

- What are you committed to getting better at next month?

Create a safe space for managers to share their challenges and experiences openly and without judgment. And please, bring food.

3C: DOWNWARD ACCOUNTABILITY

Great leaders are accountable to their teams. Might as well weave this practice into the fabric of your Manager Success initiative.

Two quick wins here:

- Ask managers to summarize the feedback they got from the Upward Feedback Survey and communicate it back to their team.

- Ask leaders to declare their intentions to their team once they pick a skill they're going to work on.

Side note: Doing this will also partially address the issue of survey fatigue. As James Pratt, VP People at Socrata says, "People get survey fatigue not because there are too many surveys but because they don't see their feedback being acknowledged or acted on."

3D: UPWARD ACCOUNTABILITY

The fourth way to drive participation is having the managers' managers play a part.

Ask higher-level leaders to communicate to the lower-level ones that Manager Success isn't just important but an expectation. Moreover, have managers add learning and development to their list of OKRs / Goals with specific results tied to their unique skill gaps.
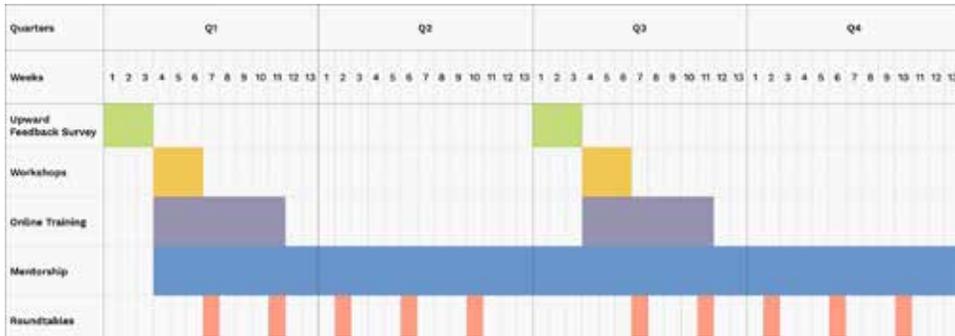
5

Putting It All Together and Next Steps

That was a lot, we know.

Designing an effective Leadership Development program can be a difficult task. There are lots of moving parts and many stakeholders to involve.

But as a vegan friend of ours says: *"How do you eat a watermelon? One slice at a time!"*

So in the final part of this guide, let's take a pragmatic look at how you can put all this together and get started.

Thinking holistically, let's look at what a year-long Leadership Development Calendar could look like at your company:

Quarters	Q1													Q2													Q3													Q4												
Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

In this example, you would kick off a new Leadership Development initiative by running a Upward Feedback Survey with all or some managers at the company (2 weeks), then analyzing and sharing the results with them (1 week). You would also set up a few incentives, rewards, and accountability mechanics discussed in Part 4 of this guide.

Next, you would transition into an intensive period of 3-8 weeks of learning and development, combining any internal and external resources you have available. This should be informed and personalized based on the insights from the MFS.

As the managers learn, you'd monitor engagement and participation and don't hesitate to jump in where you're needed.

And you might also implement Manager Roundtables as a way to keep people accountable and offer peer mentorship opportunities throughout the program.

Every six months, you would repeat the Upward Feedback Survey and the Measure-Learn-Apply loop would start again.

This would also be an ideal cadence for reporting on results and ROI to the relevant stakeholders so you can to retain your budget, gain bragging rights, and get the well-deserved recognition.

Of course, this template is just a starting point, and you need to consider your organization's unique needs, timelines, resources, and rhythms as you approach mapping our a Leadership Development Calendar of your own.

Partnering with External Vendors

As you work on crafting your perfect Leadership Development initiative, it is important to consider which parts you'll develop internally and which you can Delegate, Eliminate, or Automate by partnering up with external technology and content vendors.

Here's how to approach it best:

1. Based on the approaches we've discussed in "Step 2: Learn," build a shortlist of different vendors and technologies that might be helpful in this endeavor. Reach out to them to learn more about their offerings and pricing.

2. Set up decision criteria that will help you in evaluating solutions, considering how personalized, ongoing, and engaging they are, and taking into account things like cost and scalability.

3. Have internal conversations about Leadership Development. Look for people who will join you in championing the cause, as well that those whose buy-in you'll need to move forward.

4. Secure budget and select vendors and technologies you'll work with and/or get started on internal curriculum development. *If you need extra ammunition to secure budget, consider running a Upward Feedback Survey earlier and leaning on its insights ;).*
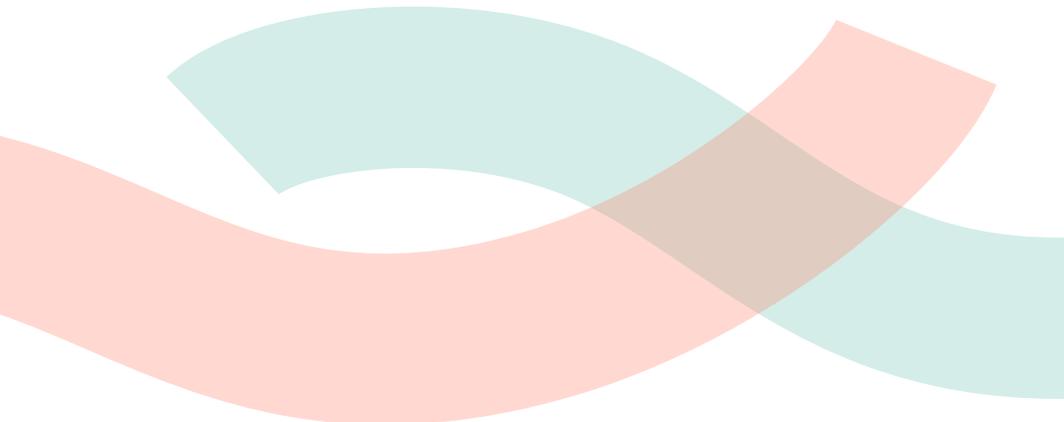
As we've tried to make clear over the course of this guide, Leadership Development isn't a one-time endeavor.

It's an ongoing practice that takes commitment, effort, and smart thinking from everyone involved.

It is a core component of a robust Manager Success methodology. And, when executed well, Leadership Development can be genuinely transformative for your managers, their teams, and your organization as a whole.

It can also feel remarkably rewarding to witness a profound improvement among your managers and know it is a result of the work you're doing.

It is our sincere hope in writing this guide is that you, the reader, shall experience this feeling for yourself, like many People Ops and L&D leaders have before you. ౮