

CREATING A SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR BUCKMAN DIRECT DIVERSION

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The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) and the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation (WE&RF) commissioned a review of future skills needed for the water sector. The aim was to build an understanding of the key workforce trends driving change and what will enable success in the water sector over a long-term horizon to the year 2040.

A survey was conducted to collect information and key insights and themes were explored further during a two-day industry workshop where 8 key skill and capability enablers were identified.

The 2 most urgent and important foundational programs recommended to survive and thrive in the future were BOTH derived from what they called, the “Leadership Enabler; encompassing change management, strategic planning, learning mindset, communication, and culture.”

If you’ve been following our work at TAP Resource, this “Recommendation” may sound very familiar. Reinforcing the belief that creating a sustainable supervisory and leadership development program is a must.

When should you invest? Yesterday. The next best time is today. Victor Lipman stated this very clearly in his 2016 Harvard Business Review article.

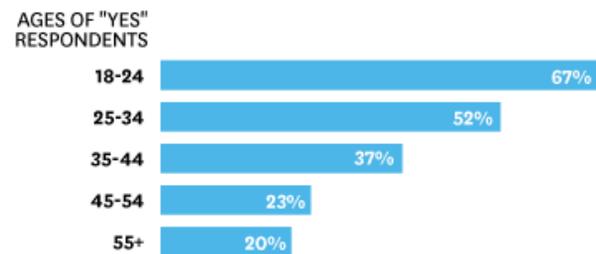
I know talent development budgets are perpetually tight, but we can’t afford to overlook the junior managers who would most benefit from management knowledge. I’m not arguing that senior leadership development doesn’t have value — of course it does — but our proportions seem out of balance. We may be unconsciously harming our organizations by giving short shrift to those at lower levels.

At the other end of the spectrum, however, the new managers (who of course are the organization’s future leaders) are a blank slate, just finding their own leadership styles. They’re sponges soaking up data, minds full of problems that need be solved, and they’re eager for thoughtful guidance to help resolve them.

A 2017 Gallup study (State of the American Workplace 2017 Gallup, Inc.) found that:

- Millennials will make up 50% of the workforce by 2020,
- Millennials place greater emphasis on finding meaning in their work and personal development, and
- Millennials are more interested in being in a leadership position.

DO YOU ASPIRE TO BE IN A LEADERSHIP POSITION AT A COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION?



SOURCE CAREERBUILDER

HBR.ORG

(Most People Don’t Want to Be Managers by Nicole Torres HBR SEPTEMBER 18, 2014)

BUCKMAN DIRECT DIVERSION (BDD) TAKES ACTION

As a result of these industry trends, BDD selected TAP Resource to provide both introductory and advanced two-day intensive programs which cover the essential skills and knowledge necessary for first-line supervisors and managers.

“Tap Resource was selected to provide Leadership Training as part of the BDD’s “Grow Your Own” value system. Tap was selected based on excellent references and all the participants were impressed and pleased with the high level of training.”

– Charles Vokes, BDD Facilities Manager.

BDD is committed to providing a safe, reliable and sustainable source of quality drinking water to residential and business customers in the city and county of Santa Fe. They are dedicated to the improvement of the regional water supply under drought conditions, replacing current groundwater pumping that cannot be sustained, and making a drought reserve possible. Underpinning what they do are three defining principles: collaboration, stewardship and transparency.



TAP Resource fits into their broader strategy because *“BDD encourages leadership training for all staff as they advance, gain more responsibilities, and move up the career ladder,”* says Bernadine Padilla, PR Coordinator at the facility. They strive to *“improve communication skills in order to interact more with the public or other departments. It’s helpful for all levels of staff to learn new skills, or even be reminded of supervisory skills they’ve been trained on in the past.”* TAP Resource had provided the intro level training 2 years ago, so this engagement revisited and advanced the idea of a sustainable program to reinforce knowledge along an employee’s journey with the company.

Because experiential learning has proven to be most effective, our training program enlisted the help of Karen Main with Innovations in Training to facilitate a highly interactive five-component program

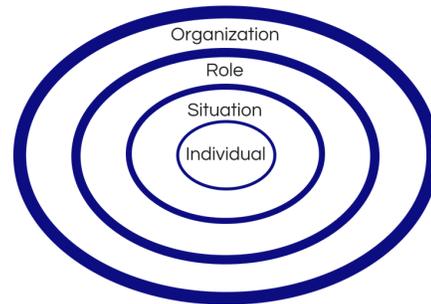
that required the focused attention of the 16 participants.

The program components included:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Core responsibilities and roles of a supervisor
3. The Employee Cycle
4. When things go South (dealing with conflict)
5. Organizational Culture and Leadership Styles

1. SELF-AWARENESS

At the center of the Management Research Group’s (MRG) four filters that define effective leadership is the Individual. TAP Resource agrees that in order to affect the organization as leader, we need to start with the Individual and then work our way out to Situational awareness, the Role they play, and eventually the impact that they have with and on the Organization.



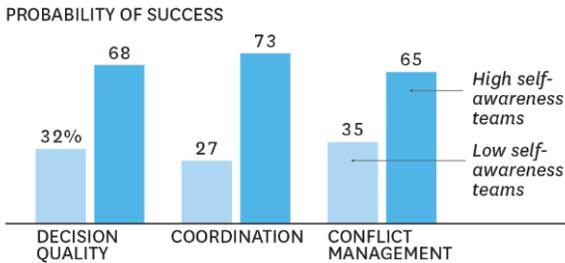
The Organization filter describes an organization's attempt to identify the leadership culture that supports its objectives. This is where a major portion of most leadership development programs are focused. However, that approach fails to determine whether an individual is ready and willing to do what is necessary to become an effective leader. In beginning with the Individual, the participants at BDD could see the importance of knowing one’s self, as connected to their situation, and role, are crucial in determining organizational effectiveness. While the importance of the Role and Situation filters are reasonably understandable, the demands of the Individual filter are often ignored.

BDD’s supervisory training began with developing an understanding of self-awareness; a clear understanding of ourselves and the different ways that people behave. There are a number of instruments used to assist with this understanding, at BDD we used the Keirseley Temperament Sorter. Our facilitated process helps develop and clarify the information

that is gathered and then relate it to the different filters, which is crucial for a comprehensive understanding.

HIGH SELF-AWARENESS LEADS TO BETTER TEAM PERFORMANCE

A simulation shows that it affects decision-making, coordination, and conflict management.



SOURCE ERICH C. DIERDORFF AND ROBERT S. RUBIN HBR.ORG

2. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SUPERVISOR

When an employee at BDD moves into a supervisory position, their responsibilities change from being responsible for themselves and their technical work to representing the interests of the organization. The BDD supervisor must ensure that work is accomplished by other people rather than by themselves. This is a key transition that must be recognized and it's often one of the most difficult.

BDD recognized that this transition from a focus on the work or task to getting work done through others needed to be addressed. Through our workshops, we addressed the foundation of the issues such as communication, delegation, feedback, follow-up, performance management, coaching, and recognizing and rewarding. In addition, we covered how supervisors must ensure that their employees have the information and resources needed to be successful.

3. THE EMPLOYEE CYCLE

Supervisory training at BDD also included a discussion of the various components that make up the Employee Cycle. This cycle, our journey, begins with the development of the job or position description and includes selection. But it also includes the employee's development through the entire time they are part of a supervisor work group, and perhaps beyond. This requires on-boarding, coaching, training, guiding, rewarding and helping them achieve their individual goals.

Managing people can be tricky, primarily because people have moods and opinions; they are motivated differently and have different goals. For many new to supervision, it's the people side of things that is the most challenging to contend with. New supervisors at BDD are provided ongoing support to effectively manage the people side of the equation. The program reinforced the broadly held belief that once BDD supervisors learn how to manage the diverse needs of their work team, it often becomes the most rewarding part of the job!

As one of the participants of the BDD training noted, "This will help me be more supportive of my team." And another noted, "Enjoyed the class - learned quite a bit about different styles of people and how to deal with them, everyone's perspective matters."

4. WHEN THINGS GO SOUTH

No matter how effective a supervisor is, or how hard they work, there will be times when things don't go as planned, work doesn't get done, or employees don't get along with each other. Many of us see conflict as a negative, as something to avoid. However, if we understand conflict and the various ways that people address conflict, it can actually be a positive. In any case, BDD supervisors needed to understand conflict and the various ways that people deal with it.



This involved showing BDD supervisors that first understanding their own preferences as a supervisor, and then learning how to handle conflict in different ways. One of the most valuable skills we emphasize is the ability to understand when you, as the supervisor, are experiencing performance problems. These problems often happen because employees are not clear on "what they are supposed to do," "how well

they are supposed to do it,” and “how well they are doing.”

A core part of the BDD supervisor curriculum focused on resolving and managing workplace conflict. The goal being to increase a supervisor’s tolerance for conflict and ability to weather different types of conflict.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

Lastly, to be effective, a supervisor must understand BDD as an organization; and what makes it tick. The true nature of the organization is a pattern of dynamic relationships. This pattern at the organizational level describes BDD’s culture.

A management idea, no matter how good, will not work in practice (implementation) if it does not fit the culture of the organization. We reinforced the importance for BDD supervisors to understand the connection between BDD's culture and leadership and how it relates to any management program. Understanding their culture will help leaders to develop change programs that are consistent with their mission and vision.

As stated in a Harvard Business Review article from earlier this year, The Leader’s Guide to Corporate Culture:

Unfortunately, in our experience it is far more common for leaders seeking to build high-performing organizations to be confounded by culture. Indeed, many either let it go unmanaged or relegate it to the HR function, where it becomes a secondary concern for the business. They may lay out detailed, thoughtful plans for strategy and execution, but because they don’t understand culture’s power and dynamics, their plans go off the rails. As someone once said, culture eats strategy for breakfast.

Part of the problem is the assumption that there is only one right way to lead. If that's the case, why are there dozens and dozens of books on leadership in your local book store, let alone the massive listing on Amazon (100 pages long)? Compare Andrew Grove's, former CEO of Intel, book High Output Management, Joseph Franklin's Building Leaders the West Point Way, and Max Depew's Leadership is an Art. Each of these authors may be effec-

tive leaders in their organizations, but each of these organizations vary significantly from each other, as would the type of leadership style needed to successfully lead the organization. There are at least 4 different leadership styles; Participative, Directive, Standard Setter, and Charismatic. Our program with BDD examined the different styles and their relationship to the four leadership filters.

CONCLUSION

BDD has recognized that leadership development is a journey that must begin at or near the beginning of an employee's experience with an organization. By implementing the supervisory/leadership program outlined above, BDD is endeavoring to begin the leadership continuum early to ensure the greatest likelihood of success. Such a program, combined with the advanced leadership development program, will assist BDD in aligning its leadership performance, build meaning and satisfaction among employees, as well as insulate against the inevitable threats to the organization’s success.

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to make your organization more effective.