

CASE STUDY:

Creating a Culture of Leadership at Goldcorp

Companies approach building a leadership culture in a number of ways. Some focus on their high potentials, while others build programs for their management and executives. While we see the value of developing senior leaders, we also know that to make real cultural changes you need to go deeper. That means developing not just executives, managers and supervisors, but also—and perhaps more importantly—the people on your business’s frontlines. After all, in most companies the frontline represents the majority of employees.

Goldcorp is one organization that has taken this truth to heart. “Growing people” is a core part of this resource giant’s overall corporate strategy, and they’ve translated that commitment into a comprehensive and highly successful approach to building a leadership culture that will endure.



The Challenge & The Opportunity: 7000 Frontline Employees Across the Americas

Goldcorp began its leadership development activities in 2007 with a program targeted at its supervisors, a group of managers with the most direct reports. Goldcorp believed that if the supervisors took to the program, they would create a tipping point of cultural change. Workshop- and cohort-based, the resulting Supervisor Leadership Development Program (SLDP) introduced supervisors from across the company to leadership and management fundamentals while challenging them to grow as leaders. With the success of the first SLDP cohorts, the company then shifted focus to frontline employees - no small task considering that Goldcorp has 7,000 frontline employees throughout the Americas. And while this group has unique development needs, because Goldcorp was doing groundbreaking work, there were few precedents for designing a suitable program. On the other hand, this group presented the greatest opportunity to make a dramatic impact on culture. It was also Goldcorp's chance to demonstrate unequivocally that they were willing to pay more than lip service to their commitment to "growing people."

The Solution: Dare to Grow

The new program targeted US and Canadian operations, with plans to deliver a similar program for Spanish-speaking employees the following year. Named "Dare to Grow," it incorporated key themes from other Goldcorp development programming, delivered in a way that was appropriate and meaningful to the frontline.

The program was comprised of four core modules. "Understanding Goldcorp" included orientation-style information on company operations, introductory messages from management, and an overview of leadership. "Understanding Myself" helped participants gain a better awareness of self as a critical component of leadership. "Understanding My Team" focused on working successfully with others. Finally, "Understanding my Organization" helped participants navigate their career and understand how corporate strategy relates to their role.

The Delivery: Internal Facilitators

While Refinery consultants delivered the management program, it made more sense for someone internal to lead the frontline workshops. We knew the message would be better sent through supervisors and management who could put program content in context through firsthand experience on the frontline. This also gave facilitators, who were all SLDP participants, the opportunity to share their excitement for the program with their reports and keep the momentum going.

We provided Goldcorp with a program design, a train-the-trainer workshop, and a support system to ensure facilitator success. Each participant received 24 hours of total training. To fit with the schedules of frontline employees, these 24 hours were broken up into four general modules, divided into three two-hour sessions, and ready to be deployed when appropriate. This design gave the program the flexibility to take any shape it needed. One rollout could be three sessions in one week, while another could be one session per month.



The Results: Communication, Collaboration, Commitment

Goldcorp's chief operating officer Steve Reid said the Vancouver-based gold producer ranks leadership first on its list of six "defining strategies" and the company is committed to a corporate culture that "grows people" as well as it expands its gold reserves. Goldcorp is only a year and a half into this journey, but it's already clear that the company's comprehensive approach is making a positive difference in the day-to-day working lives of its employees. Even in these early stages we've seen the Goldcorp culture starting to change, and conversations with company managers reveal some significant shifts. People throughout the organization are beginning to share a common vocabulary, and employees and managers are communicating more authentically. As one participant told us, "The various departments discuss issues more openly than they used to. There is more collaboration and teamwork. The silo mentality is slowly coming down." Program participants also tell us time and again how grateful they are that their company has invested in them this way.

What's Next? Continued Investment in People

With the supervisors and frontline employees enrolled in leadership development programs, Goldcorp has turned its attention on management and executives, creating the Art of Leadership – Science of Management program. The Art & Science program shares many similar themes with the SLDP and Dare to Grow programs, but focuses more on organizational leadership issues. Still Goldcorp recognizes that this and its other programs are only the beginning. The company is committed to growing its people as an ongoing effort. If part of creating a leadership culture is embedding the idea of continuous organizational and self development, Goldcorp is well on its way.

