

THE CHANGE CHAMPION'S *Fieldguide*

**STRATEGIES AND
TOOLS FOR LEADING
CHANGE IN YOUR
ORGANIZATION**



FOREWORD BY
W. Warner Burke

CO-EDITORS:
Dave Ulrich
Marshall Goldsmith
Louis Carter
Jim Bolt
Norm Smallwood

**Do Leader's Have Tools and a Common Language to Work
Together for Sustainable Change?
By: Ralph Jacobson**

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction to the Leader's Toolbox Approach</i>	<i>1</i>
Context.....	1
Leader's Toolbox Approach	2
The Leader's Map™ as a tool.....	4
Leadership Tools.....	6
<i>Implementation of the Leader's Toolbox at Finance International</i>	<i>9</i>
Impetus for action.....	9
Implementation	9
Results	10
Next phase of implementation.....	12
Summary of learning from the Finance International Implementation.....	12
<i>Implementation of the Leader's Toolbox at Harris Companies</i> ...	<i>12</i>
Impetus for Action	12
Implementation	13
Results	14
Learning from the Harris implementation.....	14
<i>Summary of the Leader's Toolbox Approach</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Biography</i>	<i>15</i>

Do Leader's Have Tools and a Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

Ralph Jacobson

The majority of leadership development activities fail to significantly improve organization performance. This article reveals that it may be highly beneficial to shift the emphasis from developing individual leaders' skills to developing shared organization leadership deliverables, by providing a common leadership language, a common leadership process, and the tools to accomplish them. This article describes a number of useful tools for leadership development and the outcomes of a leadership development approach that was implemented in a Fortune 100 financial organization and in a mid-sized construction company. The approach taken in these two companies is applicable to a broad range of organization challenges and cultures.

Introduction to the Leader's Toolbox Approach

Context

It is clear that the costs of weak leadership are high. Witness the latest spate of leader malfeasance, which is costing the affected organizations, their shareholders, and the national economy billions of dollars. Many corporations exist in industries so highly competitive that a single misstep risks their very survival. It is also clear that the leaders in those organizations destined to thrive in the long term have learned how to leverage their human, financial, and technical resources to greatest advantage.

If you are looking to improve the performance of your organization's leaders, you will find no shortage of advice. Type the word *leadership* in Amazon.com's search engine, and 11,835 book titles appear. Billions of dollars are spent every year in thousands of attempts to find the holy grail of leadership development. And yet, in most organizations there appears to be less and less correspondence between what we know leaders should do and what leaders actually do. The reasons are three-fold:

First, much of the training that purports to develop leaders could more appropriately be considered management training. Management training focuses on such subjects as dealing with difficult people, providing one-on-one job coaching, conducting performance appraisals, and comprehending finance for non-financial managers. Management training typically addresses immediate needs for enhancing managers' interactions between their peers, upper managers, and individual employees.

But the practice of leadership is significantly more complex. Leadership requires anticipating future events and building organizational environments to encourage collaboration between stakeholders who must forego their immediate self-interests to gain long-term organizational benefit.

Second, most leadership development approaches focus on assessing the leadership competencies of individual leaders and providing specific training to moderate their

Do Leader's Have the Tools and Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

weaknesses. Although some individual leaders are interested in determining how to utilize their strengths and moderate their weaknesses, others are not. And some leaders are capable of making significant change. Others are not. Thus, leadership development is often confined to developing the skills of individual leaders, who must strive to learn in situations where they are isolated from their peers.

Third, most leadership development approaches assume that individual leaders are responsible for the success of business units. Such approaches are based on the notion that organizational health and achievement are best attained when individual leaders, work independently to achieve organizational goals. But the complexities of modern organizations require that human, financial, and intellectual assets be fluidly combined and applied. Individual leaders working independently cannot provide sufficient power to sustain long-term organizational health. Therefore, it is critical that leaders learn how to lead together. To do this, leaders need a common understanding of the deliverables expected of them in their leadership roles and how they must work together to create them. Collaborative leadership is tied to the use of a common language and common processes and to the establishment of mutual accountabilities for performance.

Leader's Toolbox Approach

The Leader's Toolbox approach, rather than focusing on individual leadership capabilities, provides a common understanding of what all leaders must do. It defines what the organization must improve, not what individual leaders must improve. After working through the Toolbox together, leaders focus on a shared agenda for organizational improvement. They don't focus on their individual development plans. A comparison of the traditional competency approach and the Leader's Toolbox approach appears in Figure 1. A comparison of the traditional training approach and the Leader's Toolbox approach appears in Table 1. We do not suggest that one approach is better than the other, but rather that some combination of approaches will more significantly accelerate leader performance.

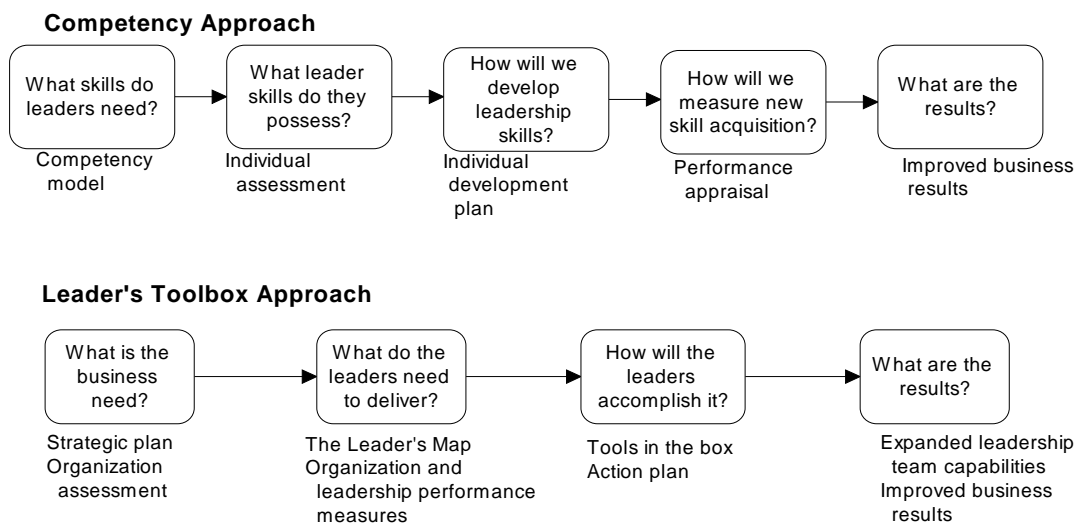


Figure 1. A comparison of the competency approach and the Leader's Toolbox approach

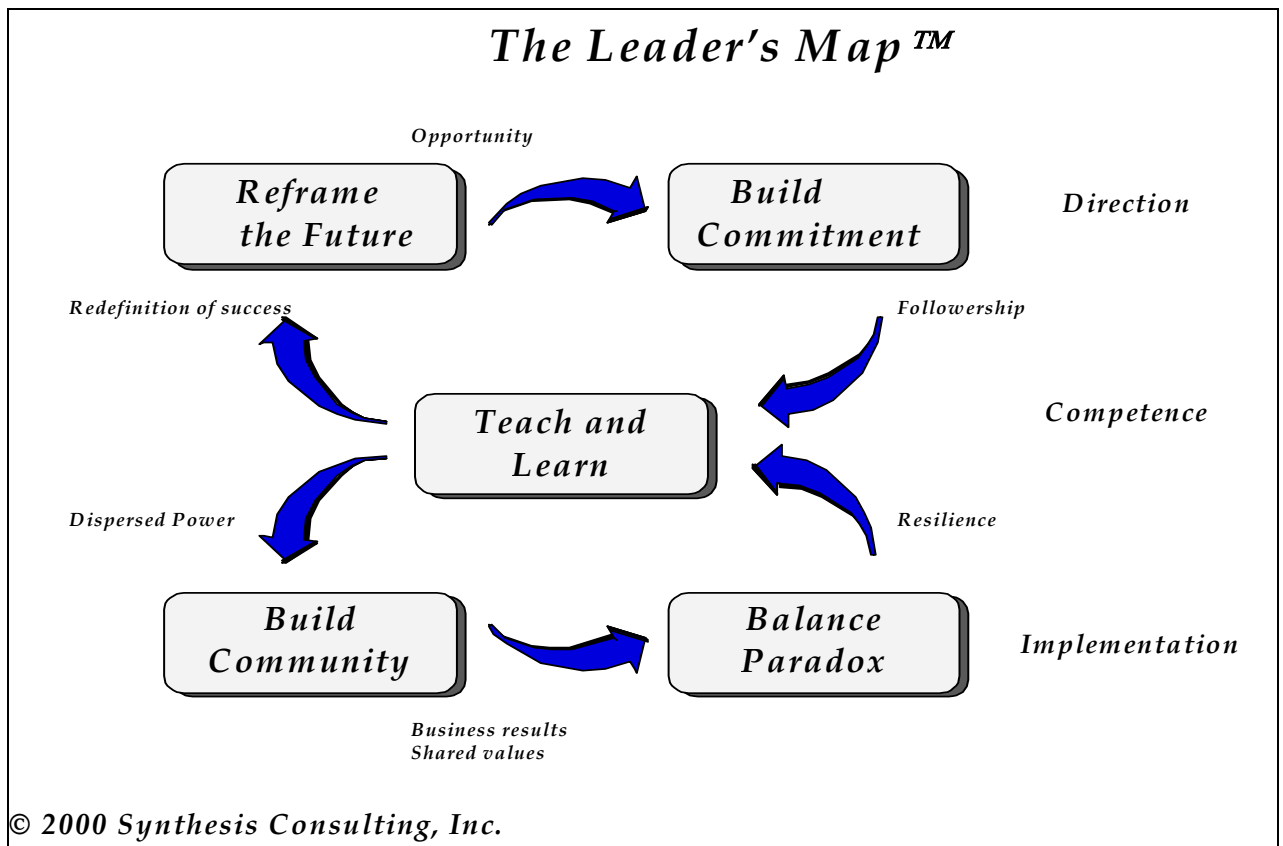
Table 1. A comparison of the traditional training approach and the Leader's Toolbox approach

Traditional approach	Leader's Toolbox Approach	Rationale
Defines set of leadership competencies	Define the deliverables of shared leadership and the processes used to create them	Rather than perceive leadership as a set of skills, view it as a process. Processes can be defined, learned, measured and improved.
Assess each leader's skills	Measure the level of organizational leadership	Create a common ground for action, and avoid individual assessments that cause shame and fear
Improve individual leader's skills/competencies	Focus on common language and tools and total leadership team competence	Build a foundation for work in overcoming common leadership challenges. Build a climate for team learning and action.
Each leader focuses on her objectives	Create opportunities for leaders to work together to resolve complex organizational issues	Focus on the development needs of the organization. Encourage leaders to work together and experiment in a productive manner. Free individuals from a sense of being judged. In the long term, promotes faster paced individual leadership growth.
Objectives are defined as meeting financial targets and/or accomplishing specific tasks	In addition to meeting standard business objectives, seek progress in meeting broad leadership objectives	Encourage leaders to pay attention to both short term and long-term business performance.

The Leader's Map™ as a tool

The Leader's Map is the foundation for the Leader's Toolbox. It

- Defines what leaders can be expected to deliver to their organizations: direction, competence, and implementation. The degree of leadership in an organization can be evaluated and improved by measuring these three deliverables.
- Defines and creates the five universally experienced leadership challenges leaders encounter in delivering direction, competence and implementation
- Provides a universal leadership language and demonstrates the major steps in the leadership process



Source: *Leading for a Change: How to Master the Five Challenges Faced by Every Leader* by Ralph Jacobson

Figure 2. The Leader's Map

Table 2. Overview of the Leadership Challenges

Challenge	Purpose
Reframe the Future	Establish a strategy that repositions the company to take advantage of its strengths, redefine relationships with key partners, revolutionize how the product is produced or delivered to customers, and create new products and services.
Build Commitment	Develop a critical mass of supporters who understand the strategy and will do what is necessary to achieve it.
Teach and Learn	Develop the leadership skills needed to move the organization forward. Build competence in people throughout the organization. Establish learning processes that encourage undertaking new challenges now and into the future.
Build Community	Create the infrastructure that enables people to work together effectively and accomplish the expected results.
Balance Paradox	Build in the mechanisms to manage the conflicts that naturally occur when reality collides with expectations.

When to use the Leader's Map

The Leader's Map provides a path to help you develop an agenda and implement change.

Use this tool when you

- Want leaders to work together to lead change
- Want to determine where to put forth your leadership efforts
- Prepare for a major organizational challenge
- Diagnose situations that may not be going as planned
- Establish a leadership agenda
- Develop colleagues into better leaders

How to use the Leader's Map

To use the Leader's Map, follow these steps:

Step 1. Gather the leaders or form the appropriate group

1. Determine the purpose for meeting together.
2. Determine who the appropriate people are.
3. Tell those assembled that the purpose of this exercise is not to evaluate the capabilities or contributions of each individual, but to assess the overall effectiveness of the contribution made by the whole group of leaders.

4. Provide an overview of the Leader's Map to the group.

Step 2. Determine where you are on the Leader's Map

You can now use the Leader's Map to measure the strengths and weaknesses of your organization's leadership group as a whole. You can decide not only to assess your group's strengths and weaknesses, but to also determine which of the five challenges is the most critical. You can use three methods to determine where your group is functioning on the Leader's Map™: opinion, dialog, and survey:

- **Opinion.** Ask the members of the group first to describe the activities and outcomes for each of the five challenges and then to reach consensus what they believe their leadership agenda should be.
- **Dialogue.** Ask the members of the group to determine the most important issues that must be addressed by the organization. The group should focus on defining the broad-based issues that are fundamental to the long-term success of the organization. Ask them to avoid focusing on short-term issues. The senior leader of the group creates an atmosphere for open and honest communication.
- **Survey.** Appendix A of *Leading for a Change: How to Master the Five Challenges Faced by Every Leader* contains a survey and a scoring key to use in evaluating organization leadership and how leaders are meeting the five challenges. The members of the group can limit who takes the survey to their own group or they can expand the survey to other organizational members.

Step 3. Develop the leadership agenda

Establish the leadership agenda based on the findings of your evaluation. The leadership tools that will be of special interest to you appear in Table 3.

Leadership Tools

Once the leaders understand and accept the challenges described in the Leader's Map as their leadership work, they can begin to use the appropriate tools to address them. These tools, which are based on the wisdom of the best organizational thinkers, are presented in such a manner that their theoretical foundations are transparent to the users. An individual leader, a small or large group, can use the tools. The tools offer leaders and their followers sets of options for addressing each challenge. As leaders from different parts of the organization come together to address organizational issues, they will be more productive whenever they use the same tools and the same terminology to address them.

Table 3. Example Leader's Toolbox Tools

Challenge	Example of tools
Reframe the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Relationship Map • Scenario Planning • S curve • Appreciative Inquiry
Build Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment Wheel • Stakeholder analysis • Stories
Teach and Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Organization Competencies • Type I and Type II learning • After Action Review • Situational leadership
Build Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team formation and functioning tools • Alternate leadership structures for different kinds of leadership work • Internal contracting • Seeing organization processes
Balance Paradox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polarity Map • Organization, role, and individual paradoxes • Conflict management approaches

Example Tool: The four Cs (Communication + Commitment + Consequences = Contract)

Projects often require people from different departments or functions to work together. Coordinating work across the organization can be difficult when people have different agendas and perspectives around what is important. Use this tool to

Do Leader's Have the Tools and Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

- Determine the specific work and timetable to accomplished cross-functional/department projects
- Determine how the parties will work together
- Establish the communications process

Step 1: Communicate

Before meeting with an individual leader, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is the important background/context of the situation?
2. What do I need the other person/department to do?
3. How will the output of their work be measured?
4. When do I need it to be accomplished? Why?
5. Why is the completion of this work important? To me? The organization?
6. What is the best way to communicate my expectations?

During your meeting, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What additional information do I need in order to understand what this leader should be delivering?
2. Are there better ways of getting my expectations met?
3. What concerns do I have about this leader delivering what I expect?

Requestor	Provider

Step 2: Commitment

1. What will each of us do?
2. Do we agree?
3. If we don't agree, what will I do?
4. How will we communicate the progress we have made?

Requestor	Provider

Step 3: Consequences

Before the close of the commitment conversation determine the answers to the following questions:

1. What will happen if either of us fails to meet our commitments to one another?
2. In the event one of us is unhappy with the other's performance, how will we communicate our concerns?

If a commitment is not met, ask the following questions:

1. What is the business result of our inability to meet established commitments?

Do Leader's Have the Tools and Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

2. What can we learn from this experience that will help us work together in the future?
3. How has this transaction impacted our working relationship? What do we need to do about this?

Implementation of the Leader's Toolbox at Finance International

Impetus for action

In the spring of 1999, the senior leaders of Finance International (a pseudonym for a Fortune 100 Company) foresaw changes in the marketplace that would require the company to institute major innovation. Finance International had a long history of making significant investments in leadership development efforts. In addition, for many years the company had linked a percentage of merit pay to the acquisition of a core set of leadership competencies.

But the company's leaders would be required to focus their efforts beyond the boundaries of their traditional functional silos or business units. They had to work together with internal and external partners to create organizational environments where high levels of performance could be achieved and sustained. They had to focus well beyond their usual one-on-one interactions and the management of their own groups. They had to use broad, deep skills in strategy building and scenario planning. They had to engage stakeholders who had competing interests and agendas. They had to deal with complexities that would not yield to traditional problem-solving approaches.

A design team was assembled and charged with creating a new leadership development approach, one that would build on the organization's current leadership competency model and further enhance its leadership culture. The design team was given the following criteria to use in evaluating the quality of their effort:

- Incorporate the ideas of well-known organization thinkers.
- Provide well-rounded tools to help leaders focus on the whole spectrum of their leadership responsibilities.
- Apply what is learned to impact business results.
- Ensure that individual leaders grow and find value in their development effort and that the organization achieves long-term sustainability
- Provide opportunities for leaders to become actively involved in developing their colleagues and facilitate meaningful communication networks across the organization.

Implementation

The design team chose to use the Leader's Toolbox because it easily accommodated a broad range of leader responsibilities. It provided processes to guide short-term thinkers a better understanding and process for the strategic aspects of their responsibilities. The language used in the Toolbox was easily understood. Further, the examples amply demonstrated that the process of leadership could be learned, measured, and improved.

Do Leader's Have the Tools and Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

The design team reviewed the tools described in *Leading for a Change: How to Master the Five Challenges Faced by Every Leader*. They selected the following five tools for their initial development effort.

Table 4. Example leadership tools and their purpose

Tools	Based on the work of	Purpose
External Relationship Map	Michael Porter	Assess business threats and opportunities
Scenario Planning	Integration of numerous authors	Develop alternate strategies
Stakeholder Analysis	Ralph Jacobson	Build engagement with diverse stakeholders
Core Organization Competence	Gary Hamel & C.K. Prahalad	Determine, measure, and implement organization skills necessary to achieve market dominance
Polarity Map	Barry Johnson	Balance Paradox

The design team planned and implemented a two-day action-learning session, during which participants worked in small groups to address a wide variety of leadership challenges to an organizational business case. Participants then applied the tools to a personal business case (e.g., a current leadership situation).

To reinforce the learning from the group activities, the design team provided 30 minutes of individual coaching one-week and four weeks following the program. In these coaching sessions, participants further refined their leadership issues, and they developed plans and strategies for appropriately using the tools in their situations. The coaches used an evaluation template to determine if participants were using the tools correctly and whether improvements to future training sessions should be made. During the second coaching session, the coaches asked participating leaders if the tools had been useful.

Results

The initial feedback from the coaching sessions indicated that participating leaders improved the quality of their decisions and their abilities to engage greater numbers of colleagues. When participants from different parts and levels of the organization worked together, they reported they experienced greater understanding, increased performance, and more incentives for applying the tools. Several participants noted that when their traditional leadership approaches had proved to be ineffective, the tools offered workable alternatives. Most disheartening to the design team, however, was their observation that although participants found the tools quite useful, most, in the stress of completing day-to-day tasks and meeting deadlines, had retreated to their traditional ways.

Do Leader's Have the Tools and Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

The following insights were derived from this experience:

- Unless new leadership is called for in the environment, participants will revert to short-term thinking and familiar leadership behaviors, regardless of the quality of the development activity. Therefore, in the context of the daily operating environment, senior leaders should expect participating leaders to balance short-term task goals with long-term strategic leadership goals.
- For participants to risk functioning in new, perhaps higher, organizational levels, it is generally necessary to blur the boundary between learning and pursuing a strategic business objective. Rather than offering a generic training program throughout the company, it is cost effective to offer development experiences only where there is a strategic need and the presence of senior leadership to provide support.
- Future leadership development efforts should be modularized to meet specific situations. Workout sessions and coaching should be designed to deepen the learning and improve business results.
- When several levels of leaders understand the tools, greater engagement and more thorough understanding will result. Therefore, the definition of leadership development must shift from focusing on the top levels of the organization to reaching deep within the organization.

The above insights suggest the need to spend as much time considering how participants will improve organizational performance after the development experience as designing the development experience itself.

Several months after the first phase of the Leader's Toolbox, Finance International undertook an exhaustive study to evaluate every one of its leadership development programs. It identified the leadership competencies needed to move the business forward and found ways to evaluate current development offerings. It instituted new, more effective ways to equip leaders for greater diversity and reflective thinking. The team measured the effectiveness of current training/tools by using the

- Assessment data from participants (and trainers where applicable)
- Frequency and degree to which training and tools were accessed within the various divisions of the organization
- Leadership strengths and weaknesses as indicated by established organizational measurements.
- Data from interviews with leadership at all levels to determine what competencies leaders need to meet current and future organizational goals

One conclusion from the study was that the Leader's Toolbox filled a critical gap in the company's training curricula; that is, it encouraged greater strategic thinking on the part of middle management. Most surprising was the finding that the Leader's Toolbox encouraged collaborative behaviors and a greater sense of community among leaders. Dialogue about the various tools, encouraged a process of accepting differing perspectives equally.

Next phase of implementation

It is highly unlikely that the Leader's Toolbox approach will be declared a major corporate initiative in which everyone above a certain grade level must participate in two days of training. Delivery of the Leader's Toolbox will remain innovative, fresh, and flexible enough to fit a wide range of business issues and contexts. Clearly, there is a need to develop the leadership skills of a broad range of people, who will then be aware of broad market issues and strategic options. For example, leaders at all levels will understand the organizational context so that when mid-course corrections become necessary, their buy-in will already have been developed. Leaders will find it easier to lead cross-functional collaborations during periods of innovation and change.

Thus the Leader's Toolbox will more likely be implemented where

- There is a strategic need
- Building leadership for to achieve better organizational performance is highly valued
- Several levels of leaders are expected to use the tools
- Leaders are encouraged to test their new leadership behaviors and evaluate the results

It is possible to provide advanced reading and coaching to senior leaders on the use of the appropriate tools and offer the opportunity to identify the leadership issues to be addressed. Then senior leaders, in the presence of the coach, would plan to use the tools with large and small groups of critical stakeholders. They would facilitate sessions in which to address the identified issues. Performance measures of their leadership behaviors would include the quality of the session, the ideas and the sense of community that emerged, and the impact of subsequent leadership initiatives.

Summary of learning from the Finance International Implementation

The Leader's Toolbox supports the belief that leadership can be taught and that the organization will gain from investing in leadership development. When senior leaders want their people to change, they must be the first to model the new behaviors. If senior leaders do not demand change and do not model new behaviors, leaders at other organizational levels will remain focused on achieving short-term results. The risk of not using skilled leadership behaviors typically becomes obvious when it is too late and the business is forced to address significant issues that should have been dealt with earlier.

Implementation of the Leader's Toolbox at Harris Companies

Impetus for Action

Since 1947, the Harris Companies have designed, built, installed, and maintained piping, plumbing, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems for industrial and commercial customers. The organization, which is one of the largest and most successful

Do Leader's Have the Tools and Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

mechanical contractors in the upper Midwest, has experienced exponential growth. Its dedication to quality service and timely delivery, its commitment to developing long-term relationships with customers, and the continuously upgraded technical capabilities of its employees have made the organization a viable force in the marketplace. The Harris Companies organization consists of a number of completely autonomous profit centers with separate profit-and-loss accountabilities. Project managers/leaders are free to contract with internal or external vendors.

When the boom in the building industry recently weakened, the demand for Harris's services also weakened. Primary contractors appeared to be less interested in quality of service and more interested in low cost. The value of Harris's brand eroded in a tough market. The demand for lower costs took an internal toll on morale as project leaders began to treat their peers (with whom they could subcontract) less than professionally. Rather than choose internal partners, project managers began to choose outside subcontractors.

The weak external demand and the dwindling use of internal partners had a significant impact on revenues. Long-standing corporate strategies and structures no longer worked their motivational magic. The CEO recognized the need to help people several levels deep in the organization to see the broader business issues and to develop more comprehensive responses to fewer and more demanding customers. As the rules of the marketplace changed, so should the company. Leaders throughout the organization needed to become more strategically focused, their internal relationships needed to improve, and their work processes needed to be refined. None of this would happen without strong leadership throughout the organization.

Implementation

Rather than focus on developing the competencies of individual leaders, the CEO decided to build a common platform for supporting new leadership behaviors. He encouraged people to complete their current projects and then begin to focus on the long-term prosperity of the organization. He wanted leaders who could lead the performance of their profit centers and the performance of the corporation as a whole. The Leader's Toolbox offered the Harris Companies an opportunity to deal with its leadership issues.

A leadership survey was administered to all employees to measure the current quality of organizational leadership. The survey did not assess the strengths and weaknesses of individual leaders. Rather, it assessed the delivery of the five leadership challenges of the Leader's Map. Survey results indicated the organization was indeed experiencing difficulty with two of the challenges: Build Community and Balance Paradox. The tools presented in a follow-up 2-day workshop focused leaders' attention on the need to address these two leadership challenges. To demonstrate his commitment to change, the President, who had been given individual instruction, presented four of the ten tools to his colleagues in the workshop. As in Finance International, participating leaders were provided with individual coaching one week and four weeks after the program.

Results

The Harris Companies' leaders understood that unless their use of the tools became an integral part of their on-going work, their investment of time and money in training would yield little or no return. Following the workshop and the coaching sessions, the design team reviewed ways to incorporate the tools within the existing leadership processes of the organization.

In preparation for their strategic planning responsibilities the profit-center leaders were asked to use The External Relationship Map to describe their business as it is today and as they would like it to evolve in the future. They developed better means to assess their market environments and gained greater understanding about how their leadership behaviors impacted business performance. In almost all cases, the profit-center leaders gained valuable insights and greater understanding of ways to improve their businesses. The quality of their discussions at strategic planning sessions increased. They identified new opportunities to expand the business. The Harris Companies will use the External Relationship Map in evaluating future business ventures.

The Stakeholder Analysis tool helped Harris's leaders plan their approaches to peers. They became much more accomplished at selling ideas to one another. Further, they empathized more with one another. Conflict with environmental stakeholders—suppliers and customers—diminished, allowing Harris's leaders to focus on the needs of their customers and the business as a whole.

The Three Roles Leaders Play was used in discussions about career development and performance appraisal. This tool has proved particularly useful for making the role transition from individual contributor/supervisor to manager/leader. The feedback from participants suggested that they more easily understood why it was so difficult to exhibit the behaviors required of their new leadership responsibilities.

The CEO presented the Four Cs tool to project managers, who agreed to use it in all internal meetings associated with interdivisional projects, such as planning sessions and progress reviews. The Four Cs tool has been particularly successful in kick-off meetings and problem resolving sessions. It has significantly enhanced communications, reduced conflict, and reduced waste.

Learning from the Harris implementation

The impact of the Leader's Toolbox on business performance was far greater than that of Harris's previous leadership development efforts because the participants, from the very beginning, were expected to incorporate new learning in their work. The elimination of many issues during planning sessions and the reduction of internal conflicts encouraged greater collaborations between contractors and customers. The Harris Companies today operates at a higher professional plane than most of its competitors.

Summary of the Leader's Toolbox Approach

Leadership tools are a proven means to improve organizational performance. The learning and skill building primarily occur when leaders use the tools to accomplish

Do Leader's Have the Tools and Common Language to Work Together for Sustainable Change?

important leadership and organization work. Through the use of the tools common terminology and shared leadership processes emerge, allowing participant leaders to positively impact organizational performance.

Unfortunately, the leaders of most organizations have not received training to accomplish the following five challenges:

- Reframe the future
- Develop commitment
- Teach and learn
- Build community
- Balance paradox

Furthermore, most leaders' frames of reference differ when they discuss how to accomplish their leadership work. In addition, most leaders struggle to define their agenda. The Leader's Toolbox will provide these leaders with a common terminology and sound processes.

The two examples of the Leader's Toolbox presented in this chapter demonstrate that the approach can be applied to a wide range of situations. When a common language and effective processes are applied to improving business performance, informed leaders can directly impact business performance.

In the design phase, it is critical to anticipate the leadership behaviors that should be exhibited and how to shape the environment to elicit them. Rather than rolling out a general training program to all employees, we recommend using the Leader's Toolbox to enhance leader responses to specific business needs.

Biography

Ralph Jacobson

Ralph Jacobson is the Principal of Synthesis Consulting, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The firm builds companies of leaders who effectively work together to ensure their organizations thrive during times of change. Jacobson's book, *Leading for a Change: How to Master the Five Challenges Faced by Every Leader* was nominated by www.mgeneral.com as one of the top business books for the year 2000. He is a contributing author to *Best Leadership Development Champions* to be published by Josey Bass in the summer 2003. Jacobson received the American Express Quality Award for his consulting work with the company. He was appointed an examiner for the Minnesota Quality Award and was an adjunct faculty member at the University of St. Thomas, Executive MBA program. He holds advanced degrees in city planning, psychology, and human resources from The Ohio State University and the University of Minnesota.