DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP FROM WITHIN

INDUSTRY
Retail Pharmaceutical

LOCATION(S)
Australia

DDI PRODUCT USED
Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders . . . Extraordinary Results® (IM: EX®)

BUSINESS NEED
UFS Dispensaries (UFS) is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation that provides its members with benefits and services, such as discounts and modern facilities. Throughout Western Victoria, UFS runs nineteen pharmacies, two pharmacy depots, three medical centres, a gift shop, a well-being centre, and a Pilates and yoga studio. UFS is run by an elected Board of Directors and owned by its members.

After conducting an internal organisational survey in 2011, a number of critical development gaps were identified. These key gap areas included communication, interpersonal and interaction skills, coaching, performance feedback, resolving internal conflict, and building effective working relationships.

UFS believed developing these critical leadership skills was essential if it wanted to cultivate and promote effective leadership from within the business.

SOLUTION
UFS partnered with Development Dimensions International (DDI) in 2012 to develop a leadership development program aimed at increasing its internal leadership capability whilst supporting a change in culture.

The CEO and board supported the UFS Leadership Program to ensure a strategic and integrated approach for the program. This support was enhanced with the CEO deciding to be a participant of the program. Other program participants included pharmacy managers, retail coordinators, and others responsible for staff management and engagement.

REALISATION RESULTS:
Trainees reported that their highest level of improvement and areas of most development occurred in Coaching for Improvement and Developing Others. After the training, they reported an impressive 147 and 131 per cent change in behaviour, respectively.

Eighty-four per cent of trainees increased their confidence in applying what they had learnt through the training and were personally motivated to apply the skills on the job. Since participating in the training, almost 90 per cent of trainees have had the opportunity to use the skills developed through the program.

RESEARCH RESULTS BY:
SAMANTHA YORK MARKETING ASSOCIATE
Each participant of the UFS Leadership Program attended four workshops covering the following modules from DDI’s Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders . . . Extraordinary Results® (IM: EX®) series:

- Essentials of Leadership
- Coaching for Success
- Coaching for Improvement
- Managing Performance Problems
- Resolving Conflict
- Influential Leadership
- Delegating for Results
- Developing Others

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

DDI’s Training QuickCheck® tool was used to determine the extent to which UFS’s leaders changed their behaviours after the training and the impact of the program on the organisation. Training QuickCheck® is an online survey focused on the specific goals of the program and the behaviours addressed in the training.

Participants (that is, supervisors and managers) and their observers received the survey more than three months after completing the program to give trainees enough opportunities to practice implementing what they learned. The majority of participants completed the survey three to six months after attending the UFS Leadership Program. Participants and their observers (that is, their managers, colleagues, or direct reports) were asked to rate the extent to which the trainees displayed these desired behaviours both before and after attending the program. The survey also gathered viewpoints on the work environment at UFS and the impact of the program on other organisational outcomes. Respondents for this evaluation included 37 participants (mostly first-level and middle-management leaders) and 51 of their observers (the majority was a mix of managers and coworkers / colleagues). (See Figures 1 and 2.)

**Figure 1: Management Levels of Participants**

![Management Levels of Participants](image)
RESULTS

Overall Results

Prior to the training, only 40 per cent of trainees displayed positive leadership behaviours related to the UFS leadership development program. Afterward, trainees reported a great increase in the use of these skills, rising to 79 per cent. This equates to trainees using these leadership skills twice as much, or a 96 per cent improvement in behaviour change.

Observers reported a 56 per cent increase in behaviour change after the training. While observers rated trainees slightly higher on their leadership behaviours before the training, their percentage ratings were similar to that of trainees after the training (around 80 per cent). This indicates both trainees and observers are effectively implementing a consistently high level of leadership behaviours as a result of the program. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 2: Relationships of Observers to Participants

Figure 3: Overall Behaviour Change
Results by Course

Compared with the key development gaps from the 2011 internal survey, trainees identified the greatest improvements in behaviour change as a result of the training in coaching, performance feedback, and communication. For example, trainees shared that their highest level of improvement and areas of greatest development occurred in Coaching for Improvement and Developing Others. After the training, they reported an impressive 147 and 131 per cent change in behaviour, respectively.

The development of other key gap areas of resolving internal conflict and building effective working relationships is apparent. Trainees rated themselves as changing their behaviour over 100 per cent after completing the courses Resolving Conflict (104 per cent) and Delegating for Results (103 per cent). (See Figure 4.)

Specific examples from trainees during the survey of how the training has changed their behaviour on the job reinforce these results. Numerous trainees stated they now prepare for upcoming discussions and feedback, think before reacting, provide more feedback to influence performance, are more assertive delegating tasks and responsibilities, and are more confident leading others using tools acquired throughout the training (e.g., Key Principles, STAR, discussion planner). One trainee mentioned, “The team environment has improved; everyone seems to be more involved and things get done fast and correctly.”

Figure 4: Overall Behaviour Change by Course (Trainees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>After Training</th>
<th>Before Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching for Improvement</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Others</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving Conflict</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating for Results</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching for Success</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Performance Problems</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essentials of Leadership</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential Leadership</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The largest post-training improvements in behaviour identified by observers is also in skills learned in Developing Others and Coaching for Improvement, respectively a 73 and 64 per cent increase in behaviour change. (See Figure 5.) Similar to trainees, coaching others and providing feedback to impact performance were observed as key improvements to development gaps that the training was designed to overcome.

Observers rated trainees as significantly increasing their ability to help team members assess their strengths and weaknesses for development and provide ongoing coaching and support to help others overcome performance problems.

While observers didn’t rate trainees’ delegating abilities as low as other areas before training, they do identify the course Delegating for Results as triggering one of the greatest increases in behaviour change by trainees at 70 per cent after training. Specifically, observers rated trainees as providing support when delegating high, at 92 percentage points after the training.

**Figure 5: Overall Behaviour Change by Course (Observers)**
UFS’s leadership development program was aimed at increasing its leadership capability, which is evident in trainees’ ratings of factors that affect training effectiveness. Almost all trainees (97 per cent) agreed the skills and concepts addressed in the training are important for their jobs. Eighty-four per cent of trainees increased their confidence in applying what they had learnt through the training and were personally motivated to apply the skills on the job. Since participating in the training, almost 90 per cent of trainees have had the opportunity to use the skills developed through the program.

With strong senior management involvement and support from the program’s inception, over two-thirds (69 per cent) of trainees feel their manager supports and holds them accountable for the skills and concepts they have learnt. Considering the CEO was also involved in the program suggests reinforcement will continue to ensure application of the skills post-training. Another positive result for post-training reinforcement is that more than 97 per cent of trainees believe the training aligns with UFS’s values and ways of doing business. This high percentage suggests realization of the leadership development program’s strategic intention and that integration has occurred. Trainees see the program as not only an event but can link what they’ve learned to business practice.

CONCLUSIONS
This study suggests a true change in culture at UFS as a result of its leadership development efforts. The leadership development program had a great impact on the ability of leaders to provide feedback, coach and develop others, resolve internal conflict by having more effective and prepared discussions, and delegate more confidently and assertively to others.

The critical leadership skills developed in this program have had such a positive impact within UFS that it plans to implement a second leadership development program this year. This shows UFS’ continued commitment to investing in its internal leadership capability.