

BRANCH LEADERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

MAY 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the fall of 2006, HRCM and PAMS branches of HRSDC launched the Coaching and Leadership Training Program with coaching and appreciative inquiry as the main enablers in acquiring greater personal and professional leadership. From August 2006 till May 2007, 126 branch employees and managers took part in 346 days of program workshops including coaching circles. They also participated in 229 individual coaching sessions.

In order to record the leadership progress made by both branches, two surveys were conducted: one in December 2006 to record a baseline of where the culture stood with regard to indicators of leadership, and one conducted in May 2007 to record changes and progress in the culture following the completion of the program activities.

The survey results point to two major benefits obtained from the program:

- increased leadership skills from the part of the individuals when participating on more practice sessions and
- how these skills have translated in resilience that has served the organisation and may contribute to a greater capacity to adapt to change.

Building Leadership Skills and Resilience

“Recently being nominated for a DM Wards for Excellence in Management by my team was an awesome personal honour that I can directly attribute to applying my coaching skills on a day to day basis. Another outcome has been the willingness of team members to register in an upcoming workshop.”

“Great program! Helps manage better work culture. Pressure off managers”

Our survey findings clearly show that the more employees and managers participate on workshops or in practice sessions such as the individual coaching sessions or the coaching circles, the more dramatically their capacity for personal and professional leadership increases. From December 06 to May 07 respondents indicated increases in approximately 80% of the observed individual leadership indicators covered in the questionnaire.

Return on the Investment of Re-organisation

“Do not feel the branch culture has changed for the better; if anything, is less stable. Rather, my ability to cope & remain optimistic has improved, & my ability to assist others to cope has improved, despite ongoing conditions.”

“Je crois que l'impact au niveau de la Direction générale n'est pas encore uniforme, surtout a cause de nombreuses restructurations, il y a un risque d'employés quittent. Il est important donc de poursuivre cette initiative afin d'assurer la continuité d'une nouvelle culture. ”

With regards to the impact on the work environment, findings are showing that the program has contributed to the resilience of participants in coping with organisational changes. Although participants have observed a deterioration in the work environment, they have recorded their ability to keep their personal and professional leadership active regardless of the negative impacts of organisational change.

This program could be considered an enabling tool to increase return on the investment of re-organisational change. At HRSDC, change has become the norm. The capacity to have an appreciative coaching conversation could be considered an important factor of success or resilience factor for any organisational change. The more there is practice of these skills, the greater is the return on investment.

Future Considerations

Putting to practice what was learned is the key success factor of this program. To create more opportunities to practice, participants have indicated when asked in a recent focus group: to pursue coaching circle activities and coaching sessions on a regular basis, to encourage that this program be included in the Learning Plans, to encourage the use of the appreciative coaching conversation for example in feedback \ learning plan discussions. All these suggestions are planned to happen this fall.

Other concerns may however be considered:

- How can this program ensure the sustainability into a change culture and maintain the momentum of building resilience?
- Are there other means to counteract the impact of high turnover and re-organisation?
- Participants to the program showed increased sense of resilience as they participated on more activities. What would be the cost if nothing had been done?
- If we had a stable environment what could we have build for the future?
- Should this program be connected to the strategic priorities\plan for departmental renewal?

BACKGROUND

What is leadership? The subject of leadership has inspired authors for many years. Very often, the definition of leadership refers to managerial leadership or how to inspire, motivate, energize, unite, generate loyalty and produce results in a team. **But what if the team members don't take charge of their own personal and professional lives? Is it only the challenge of the manager or is it also the responsibility of every individual to become the leader of their own lives, whether personal or professional?**

In an environment of continual change as is the case in HRSDC, can greater personal and professional leadership translate into more resilience in the organisation. Could this development be part of any re-organisational process?

The Vision and Program Components

The Coaching and Leadership Program vision is to bring all employees and managers together around the common purpose of developing and practicing their personal and professional leadership skills.

How? By inviting employees and managers to participate in an integrated program (linked to the HR plan, the branch priorities, and the individual learning plans) which contains state of the art concepts, extensive practice modules and built-in sustainability. This program focuses on building leadership abilities at all levels of the organisation. It includes the simple capacities to listen with discernment and compassion, to diminish assumptions by clarifying situations, to stop blaming others, to not judge others or self, to not feel victimized by events, to focus on strengths instead of weaknesses and to do one's best in achieving results.

The Coaching and Leadership Program was launched August 2006 for all employees and managers of the HRCM and PAMS branches of HRSDC. The Program Components are the following:

- *Art of Coaching Workshops*: 2-day, basic coaching conversation skills
- *Appreciative Leadership Pilot Workshops*: 2-day, Appreciative Inquiry skills
- *Auto-Coaching Workshops*: 0.5-day, using state of the art Mind Kinetics tools
- *Coaching Circles*: 1-day, to practice peer coaching
- *Individual Coaching Sessions*: 1 hour\session, with professional coaches
- *Coach Assisted 360 Feedback Exercise*: for all executive managers

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire Interviews

The data collected for this report came from questionnaire interviews administered by telephone or questionnaires answered by email. A survey was done in December 2006 and another in May 2007 for the purpose of tracking progress as more and more participants were exposed to more activities. The 3-part survey was based on the following:

- Survey #1 – December 2006 – interviews with program participants as a baseline reading for tracking progress (Appendix A: Questionnaires) There were 42 respondents (8 respondents from HRCM, 34 from PAMS) out of the 64 who had participated in the program as of December 2006.
- Survey #2 – May 2007 – interviews with program participants. Questions added to the December survey to reflect the new challenges recorded in December and to reflect the new activities offered in the program. (Appendix A: Questionnaires) There were 40 respondents (with 9 from HRCM, 21 from PAMS and 10 from other branches) out of the 126 who had participated in the program as of May 2007.

Description of Respondent Groups

Fewer managers were available to complete the questionnaire in May. There were 15 managers who participated in December 2006 and only 4 in May 2007. From comments provided to interviewers, we understand that the re-organisation that took place between December 2006 and May 2007 may have been an important factor.

Although the response rate or availability for response was much smaller in May, the number of respondents was the same and made the comparison possible. 65% of the participants responded in December 2006 versus 32% in May 2007. The total number of respondents in December was 42 and in May, 40.

The respondents on the May 2007 survey had a richer exposure to the program. The 40 May 2007 respondents had participated on a total of 182 separate program activities while the 42 respondents of the December 2006 survey had participated on a total of 90 activities altogether. (Please see Appendix B: TABLE 1)

PROGRAM OUTPUTS

As of May 31st 2007 we were able to record the following concrete program outputs:

- Total of 39 workshops delivered including coaching circles
- Total number of individual participants: 126
- Total of 346 days of training excluding coaching sessions
- Total individual coaching sessions: 229 sessions

All the workshop practices and exercises were based on real issues or goals brought forward by the participants themselves. From August 2006 to March 31st 2007, the 126 program participants worked on a total of over **650** issues, challenges and goals and came away with definite action plans. The recurring work-related themes we were able to informally identify (not in any order), included:

- Reorganizations and lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Poor communications between managers/ managers & employees/ employees
- Performance issues
- Career Development and changes
- Work/Life Balance, Managing Time
- High turnover of managers and employees

PROGRAM OUTCOMES RECORDED IN MAY 2007

The outcomes demonstrated by this survey are situated at two levels: results felt and observed at the individual level and results observed in work environment.

Personal and Professional Leadership Improvements Felt at the Individual Level

We asked respondents to identify the coaching skills with which they felt they were most comfortable. The following represent the skills with the highest percentage of respondents:

- Generous Listening: 80%
- Taking time to understand the situation: 77%
- Helping others see possibilities: 70%
- Asking Appreciative Questions' 57%

We asked respondents to identify what clear improvements they were able to observe within themselves and in their life in general. The highest recorded results were in the following areas:

- Better communicate with others: 70%,
- Deal with judgement of self and others: 67%,
- Meet personal challenges and goals: 65%,
- See new possibilities: 62%,
- Raise self-confidence: 62%

All of the above scores were higher than in December
(Please see Appendix B: TABLE 3)

Leadership Improvements at the Branch (Work Environment) level

We asked respondents to identify what clear improvements they were able to observe within their work environments. We consider that these indicators gauge the influence of the program on the working groups. Although these cultural results would appear in the long term, we felt it would be important to record them. The highest scores in May 2007 were:

- The work environment culture is more values-based: 22% and
- The employees and managers in my work environment take charge of their professional career: 20%.

In the following two areas 100% of respondents indicated that they had not observed any improvement. These areas received 0 scores from respondents:

- Work environment employees/managers better manage their workload: 0%
- There is less turnover of managers and/or employees in the Work environment: 0%.

(Please see Appendix B: **TABLE 4** for details)

Based on some of the comments gathered during the interviews, however, this lower scoring may indicate that the impact of the re-organisation that took place between December 2006 and May 2007 affected the general morale of respondents. The following is a comment to that effect:

“Employee - I think there has been significantly less of all of these things since Leadership has not been pushed at the ADM level. In fact I have noticed the sharp decline.”

CHANGES RECORDED FROM DECEMBER 06 TO MAY 07

At the Individual Level

In May, the group of respondents had taken more than double the number of program workshop and practice activities compared to the December 2006 respondents (182 activities for 42 respondents in May versus 90 activities for 40 respondents in December), They indicated a clear increase in comfort level with most of the coaching skills presented in the program. The skills with the greatest increases in comfort level since the December survey were:

- Helping identify the Outcome: 34% increase,
- Helping identify an action plan with person coached: 31% increase,
- Opening a coaching dialogue: 15% increase

- Helping identify obstacles that are preventing from reaching the outcome:15% increase.

(Please see Appendix B: TABLE 2)

At the Work Environment Level

From December to May however, we observed that most of the indicators were either stable or on a downward slope. Certain indicators dropped dramatically. The greatest decrease from the December scores are in the following areas:

- Managers in our work environment are more empowering: 24% decrease
- My work environment values personal leadership: 22% decrease,
- People in my work environment are more energized and enthusiastic: 14% decrease,
- My team has more breakthroughs in performance:12% decrease,
- Work environment employees/managers better manage their workload: 12% decrease.

EXAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS

During the surveys we also asked respondents to identify concrete outcomes that came about due to the program. (Please see Appendix C: Respondent Comments) The following are some of the key outcomes reported:

HRCM	
<p>At the personal level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Je m'explique d'une façon plus clair. • I am taking more control of my home life & am realizing that I need to react more to situations than just ignore them & pretend nothing is wrong. My home life is actually getting better since the workshop because I am being more assertive. <p>At the professional level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better time management • More assertive in my pursuit towards developing my career • Better organizing of my work and language studies • Mes rapports avec les gens au travail ou à la maison sont plus positifs et productifs. • Better questioning & listening skills led to quicker & more efficient problem finding solutions & resolutions in every day course of my work. • Better able to address sense of being disregarded. • Better able to assert & reflect clarification rather than allowing misunderstandings. • At work I have had to meet a lot of people recently to evaluate their experience & issues around working with a new program. I think the training probably helped to make most of these meetings useful and positive. • Taking more time to listen to a problem/situation before making judgement. Gaining a more full understanding of an issue or opportunity. 	

PASM	
At the personal level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling family issues with a more positive and productive attitude • Overall approach to situations, stepping back, breathing • More understanding in my family • Je reste très calme face aux vents contraire qui soufflent sur mon quotidien présentement • Meilleures communications avec conjoint (était nul avant le coaching) • Plus calme • Resolved a personal issue that was probably draining some energy • Focusing on listening skills has become a benefit • I better understand how people see me • Ne pas m'impliquer émotionnellement • Je m'énerve de moins en moins et je communique mieux dans ma famille. • I take better care of myself, am learning to build by own self-exam & confidence • Réussite de mon examen en compétences en communication écrite • A tool for work/life balances. Retention tool for employees.
At the professional level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open minded by looking at more than one option • Je suis davantage positive dans mon milieu de travail • Une meilleure compréhension de ce que je peux faire et de ce qui est hors de mon contrôle • Proche d'un burn-out. Changement professionnel pour un meilleur équilibre • Meeting more deadlines • Recently being nominated for a DM Wards for Excellence in Management by my team was an awesome personal honour that I can directly attribute to applying my coaching skills on a day to day basis. Another outcome has been the willingness of team members to register in an upcoming workshop. • Changement de carrière ou je me réalise plus en tant qu'individu • I stopped acting on assumptions I was making, & learned to ask questions. • Je sors graduellement de mon isolement au bureau je n'attends pas qu'on me sollicite, je fais des ouvertures • Un meilleur rendement dans l'équipe de travail. Un plus grand respect des différences et solutions de chacun(e). • My colleagues now has a mouse for a left-handed person, because I listened, observed & then offered to order one for her. She hadn't asked & used a right-handed one for 2 years. • Able to listen actively to a former colleague's obstacle. Able to empower colleague & provide direction/suggestions to explore.
At the organizational level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atteinte des objectifs de l'équipe • Planification stratégique tenant mieux compte de l'élément humain • Prendre davantage de temps pour mes collègues, • Improved communications with staff • Sensibilité envers les gens • J'ai acquis une plus grande confiance à exprimer, partager et échanger mes

idées, opinions, choix qui est un atout pour mon équipe

- Je crois que l'impact au niveau de la Direction générale n'est pas encore uniforme, surtout a cause de nombreuses restructurations, il y a un risque d'employés quittent. Il est important donc de poursuivre cette initiative afin d'assurer la continuité d'une nouvelle culture.
- Resolved HR issues at work
- More dialogue between managers and employees
- Comment vivre avec une nouvelle gestionnaire qui n'est pas la bienvenue pour l'équipe
- Was able to coach a colleague into a new position and this colleague has now become the manager's second in command
- Great program! Helps manage better work culture. Pressure off managers

