

# Talent Development Transitioning Within

## Developing and Retaining Your Leaders of Tomorrow

Despite the continued economic challenges, record numbers of organizations are reporting increased difficulty in attracting and retaining high quality talent. Preparing emerging talent for a successful and increasingly productive future with your company is within your control. It means proactively preparing for tomorrow... today.

Veolia Environmental Services in North America, a leader in efficient waste and environmental solutions, partnered with IMPACT Group to address the challenges of critical knowledge retention and skill transfer. For Veolia, developing and implementing its customized coaching-based talent development program increased the competencies and performance of its future leadership team.



**The Challenge:** So often, employees are promoted then trained after the fact on how to succeed in their new role. As Veolia's Baby Boomers retire, the company will be left with experience and knowledge gaps that cannot be filled by an unprepared next generation. A centralized and more targeted employee development initiative was needed to promote leadership pipeline growth among emerging talent.

**The Solution:** Branded internally as "Leaders of Tomorrow," Veolia's talent development program was kicked off in 2011, by bringing together leadership executives from the corporate level with program participants and their managers from more than 10 different regions across the country.

The customized Leaders of Tomorrow development program started with Veolia's executives identifying the competencies required by all leadership levels and functions to effectively support the organization in reaching its business objectives. Each program participant then completed an assessment to determine their skill levels in each identified competency.

With the guidance of a dedicated IMPACT Group coach, each participant selected a competency to improve and created a concrete development plan, including a manager-approved measurable "Capstone Activity." Individual Capstone Activities were selected to help develop the targeted competency on the job, as well as to sustain learnings focused on improving the chosen competency. Each competency and Capstone Activity selected were important to both Veolia's overall success as well as the career aspirations of the individual.

**The Results:** Key to ensuring accountability and sustained program momentum were the coaching guidance and support of a meaningful Capstone Activity, supplemented by technology resources for enhanced learning and success tracking. In addition, the flexibility to customize the program's process for Veolia ensured the results aligned with the development goals.

By thinking beyond the c-level and executive offices, Veolia brought the benefits of a coaching program to a deeper level within the organization: to the next generation of rising stars and individual contributors. According to recent survey results, 100% of participants agree or strongly agree that the Leaders of Tomorrow program helped them further develop competencies important to their careers, as well as helped them leverage the strengths of their work style and in turn, enhance their performance.

One program participant shared, "I gained hands-on experience managing a project from start to end. I now have a better understanding of my new developed competency which will be useful to my department..." Through the high-touch and flexible development program with impactful coaching, Veolia's team is better able to effectively manage their careers moving forward and more capable of effectively leading their teams to business success.

According to Michael Loeffel, Veolia's Director of Learning and Development, "Leaders of Tomorrow has encouraged our rising stars to think more strategically and proactively about the overall business. By empowering employees to take control of their careers, we've actively engaged them in performing better in their current roles while also focusing their attention on their future with Veolia."

Lauren Herring, Chief Executive Officer of IMPACT Group, agrees, "The success of the Leaders of Tomorrow program is based on the fact that the development efforts are not only directed towards the individual's learning, but first and foremost on business results. IMPACT Group's philosophy of aligning organizational and individual goals keeps development relevant and ensures retention of the new skills. By focusing on employee development in such a way, organizations like Veolia will experience improved performance as well as benefits related to engagement and talent retention."

In spring 2012, Veolia Environmental Services North America honored the Leaders of Tomorrow program for its outstanding success with the company's internal "People" award. As a result of the success achieved in the 2011 program, the company will be expanding the program's scope and size for 2012. What Veolia found in the Leaders of Tomorrow program was a solution that helped enhance employee engagement, foster a true leadership mindset, and most importantly, achieve business results.

## A Veolia Story: The Value of Developing Project Management Skills

After identifying Luke, an emerging star within the engineering group, Veolia sought to develop his project management skills and better equip him to recognize the impact of his short and long-term business decisions. Well-versed in the tactical issues and day-to-day responsibilities of his current position, Luke jumped at the opportunity for enhanced skills and more responsibility.

Upon choosing Project Management as his competency for development, Luke focused on the project management challenges surrounding the installation and construction of a new on-site storage facility for his Capstone Activity. In evaluating a previously unusable space for the new storage center, Luke also discovered that the nearby nitrogen tanks would soon require replacement, identifying an opportunity to consolidate assets and save resources. Implementing the replacement process as a stage in the storage facility construction added to the complexity of the project however, and required careful planning so as not to impact productivity or cause plant shutdowns.

Recognizing the importance of strategic thinking and relationship building through this process, Luke's dedicated coach focused his energy on how his plans and actions affected other functional groups and overall planning, scheduling, purchasing and contract supervision. Supplementing his on the job experiences with other strategically selected activities for enhanced project management learning, Luke's coach ensured he sustained momentum throughout the program.

On-time completion of the large, multi-faceted building construction project - without disruption to operations - was an immediate result of Luke's ability to implement the skills and competencies learned through his development experience. The program not only increased Luke's ability to recognize opportunities for change and handle new situations, but ultimately resulted in his ability to take on larger engineering projects. In presenting his achievements to top leadership executives, Luke shared the knowledge, transferable skills and productivity gains produced through his specialized talent development curriculum.

Since completing the Leaders of Tomorrow program, Luke has continued to benefit from the experience and was recently promoted to a supervisory role, reaffirming his confidence in Veolia's plan for his future - and Veolia's confidence in his ability to perform.

## Thinking About Tomorrow?

If your challenge is to improve the leadership culture in your company, IMPACT Group's Leadership Development and Engagement Training, customized consulting workshops and Talent Alliance™ development programs can produce measurable results in productivity, engagement and retention for your organization. To learn more about how our Talent Development programs can help your business, contact us today.



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