

Engaging for Performance: Measuring Change in a Multi-Dimensional Leadership Development Program

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Abstract

Introduction: *A global technology company, in collaboration with an international pioneer in emotional intelligence (EQ), designed and implemented a talent development program to enhance leadership knowledge and practice. Utilizing a normed, multi-rater leadership assessment and collaborative, experiential learning, the program emphasized open communication, coaching, and connection to help participants develop a personal vision of leadership.*

Objectives: *To create a multi-dimensional leadership development program based on established leadership competencies; a collaborative, experiential learning philosophy; a focus on the people side of leadership; internal coaching; and integration of a pre- and post-program leadership assessment tool.*

Methods: *The company partnered with a global emotional intelligence organization to design the program curriculum and certify human resources staff to administer a comprehensive leadership assessment. The 360° assessment, which requires a one-to-one debrief, was given to selected participants upon entry and repeated at 9-10 months. Additional quantitative and qualitative feedback was solicited to measure satisfaction and identify opportunities for improvement.*

Results: *Improvement was noted in a variety of key leadership attributes, as well as aggregated leadership performance scores and normed top quartile percentages, based on results for 124 participants who received pre- and post-program assessments. Analyzing matched pair data for aggregated leadership scores given by raters yielded a very low p value of .000046 when evaluating statistical significance. Feedback from participants and pre- and post-program results from the leadership assessment are guiding further talent development efforts. Across three global regions in a highly technical engineering organization, the program proved to measurably improve the people-side of leadership effectiveness for 73% of program participants.*

Conclusions: *Blending actionable data, experiential learning, and coaching support, the program earned acclaim from participants and sponsors. Quantitative and qualitative results supported the positive impact of the multi-dimensional program and a variety of key characteristics were identified that contributed to successful outcomes.*

Keywords: *360° feedback, assessment, effectiveness, training, coaching*

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I. Introduction

Developing leadership talent is at the heart of enhancing organizational culture and creating competitive advantage. This case study provides a look at a leadership development initiative, with a focus on the “people side” of leadership, at Excelitas Technologies. Excelitas is a global technology leader focused on delivering innovative, high-performance, market-driven photonic solutions to meet the lighting, detection and optical technology needs of worldwide customers. From biomedical technology to research laboratory, safety and security, consumer products, semiconductor, energy and environment, industrial sensing and imaging, defense and aerospace, Excelitas Technologies is committed to enabling its customers’ success in their end-markets.

The focus on leadership development reflects a growing appreciation of the benefits of cultivating leaders and leadership through formal programs. Dalakoura (2010) made an important distinction between leader and leadership development, promoting a holistic approach to cultivating leadership throughout the organization rather than focusing exclusively on developing individual leaders. Riggio (2008) summarized common themes and issues in leadership development, noting that leader self-awareness, introspection, and the practice of leadership as a professional discipline are key. He found that systematic training programs “need to be theory-driven, use proven methods, be integrated into ongoing organizational processes, evaluated for effectiveness, and substantial” (Riggio, 2008, p. 390). In many cases, however, rigorous program evaluation is not included in the learning design. Black and Earnest (2009) found a lack of research evaluating the results of leadership development programs, particularly assessments of post-program outcomes.

Following a broad review of leadership development initiatives, Day (2001) asserted that concept, practice, and research contexts must be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of such programs. Key practices identified included 360° feedback, executive coaching, mentoring, networking, job assignments, and action learning, with effective leadership development “less about which specific practices are endorsed than about consistent and intentional implementation” (Day, 2001, p. 606). Thach (2002) reported on the positive impact on leadership effectiveness of combining 360° feedback and coaching. Thematic analysis of participant comments revealed having a coach and receiving 360° data as the two

highest scoring items (Thach, 2002). The theory and practice of utilizing 360° feedback can be traced to industrial-organizational psychology and the goal of “collecting, quantifying, and reporting coworker observations about an individual” (Bracken, Rose, & Church, 2016, p. 764). According to Bracken, Rose, and Church (2016), this process has become a cornerstone of human resources evaluation practices, professional development programs, and sustainable change initiatives in many organizations. They also noted that the process has “devolved” in some quarters with respect to a) lack of clarity around purpose, b) not aligning design with purpose, c) misrepresenting effectiveness and research, and d) ignoring accountability (p. 774).

An integration of 83 studies on management development programs suggested that “practitioners can attain substantial improvements in both knowledge and skills if sufficient front-end analysis is conducted to assure that the right development is offered to the right leaders” (Collins & Holton, 2004, p. 217). This is coupled with the challenge of changing perceptions and viewing such training as an investment and not a cost (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2010). A comprehensive review of the literature on training programs for the first part of the 21st century identified several success factors, including a) high trainee motivation, b) careful design and delivery, c) meaningful training evaluation, and d) attention to interpersonal support (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Leskiw and Singh (2007) conducted a systematic review of the literature to identify best practices in leadership development. They uncovered six key factors: a) a thorough needs assessment, b) the selection of a suitable audience, c) the design of an appropriate infrastructure to support the initiative, d) the design and implementation of an entire learning system, e) an evaluation system, and f) corresponding actions to reward success and improve on deficiencies (p. 446).

Adopting a conceptual framework for leadership in an organization can also be critical to achieving positive results from development efforts. A variety of different leadership philosophies have been postulated, with evolution toward more holistic and humanistic models, including transformational, authentic, and servant leadership, and integrity-based approaches. Evaluation of a long-term development program in Germany revealed improvements in transformational leadership, leaders’ performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (Abrell, Rowold, Weibler, & Moenninghoff, 2011). The development program included leadership feedback, training, and

coaching. The emergence of transformational leadership helped define trust as central to contemporary perspective on leaders' key attributes (Bass, 1999).

The more recent concept of authentic leadership values openness and wellbeing, with a strong emphasis on self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). These core principles enable authentic leaders, through positive modeling, to "foster the development of authenticity in followers" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 317). Servant leadership privileges personal integrity, trustworthiness, positive 360° relationships, and exemplary customer service. These attributes of servant leadership were found to be measurable and predict subordinate organizational commitment, community citizenship behavior, and in-role performance (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008)

Ethical behavior and empowerment are central to leader effectiveness. These elements have positive associations with leader-member exchange relations, subordinate affective commitment, and perception of leader effectiveness (Hassan, Mahsud, Yukl, & Prussia, 2013). Trust is also critical to leadership. Palanski and Yammarino (2009), citing earlier work by Dirks and Ferrin (2002), stated that, "When followers develop trust in their leaders, they tend to perform better, display more organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and greater organizational commitment, experience greater job satisfaction and have less intent to leave the organization" (p. 415). Leader integrity is closely intertwined with trust, engendering trustworthiness and a sense of certainty and satisfaction in followers and improving performance (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009).

Social and emotional components also play a central role in people-oriented leadership. Riggio and Reichard (2008) developed a conceptual framework for the emotional and social skills that govern all interpersonal communication and applied it "specifically to leader and managerial processes and outcomes" (p. 169). In their view, "Research evidence suggests that emotional and social skills are both related to leader effectiveness and are able to be improved through training interventions" (Riggio & Reichard, 2008, p. 181). These elements are captured in the concepts and practices of emotional intelligence. A recent review of the literature found that emotional intelligence competencies were linked to key leadership development practices (Sadri, 2012). Groves and McEnrue (2008) noted the ability to enhance EQ skills and the positive personal and organizational outcomes that result. Muiya and Kacirek

(2009) provided further evidence that a well-designed leadership development training program that emphasized emotional intelligence skills can improve EQ scores, as shown by pre- and post-program testing.

The executive team at Excelitas, including the Chief Human Resources Officer, recognized that sustaining and developing people and relationship-based leadership capabilities could help support an improved work climate and engagement, and, in turn, improve performance. An initiative was undertaken to support leadership development that resulted in the creation of the Connected Leadership Program (CLP). The focus for CLP was formed, in part, by Excelitas' established leadership competencies, including:

- Bias for Action/Execution.
- Developing Self and Others.
- Effective Communication.
- Emotional Intelligence.
- Personal and Managerial Courage.
- Planning and Organization.
- Resilience/Adaptability.
- Sound Decision Making.
- Strategic Thinking.
- Team Development/Building Successful Teams.

The initiative also grew out of recent internal feedback, including Human Resources "voice of the customer" and employee engagement surveys, as well as input from executive leadership and others in the organization. Significantly, the program initiative was made part of Excelitas' Executive Management Priorities for implementation in the following year.

Excelitas, focusing on the people side of leadership, researched potential leadership development partners to help develop a unique, customized, and high impact program focused on leadership and how leaders relate to and connect with others in the workplace. To promote this focus on the "people side" of leadership, Excelitas reached out to Six Seconds, a global leader in emotional intelligence. Following a number of conversations, Excelitas decided to partner with Six Seconds, as their capabilities and approach aligned with what the company was looking for in a partner in the development of CLP.

The development of the program was also placed in the broader context of the mission and values of the company. The business case for rolling out the initiative, as stated by Excelitas, was clear and direct: Connecting with and valuing people goes a long way in terms of creating a positive work environment – a work environment where people feel empowered and engaged. Which in turn promotes high performance and strong business results.

In that spirit, the overall goal of the Connected Leadership Program was to help support and encourage leadership skills that have a positive impact on business and people, as depicted in Figure 1:

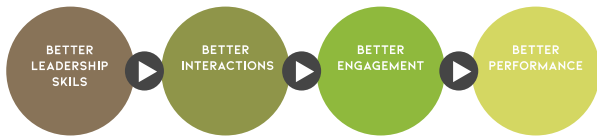


Figure 1. Flow Chart of the Connected Leadership Program.

Six Seconds, as an organization committed to enhancing the people side of performance through emotional intelligence, was a natural partner in this endeavor. The Six Seconds Change MAP and educational philosophy, based on a continuous cycle of engagement, activation, and reflection, dovetailed with and reinforced the approach adopted by Excelitas. Through a collaborative process of curriculum development, the Six Seconds organizational model, called Vital Signs, and elements of its EQ framework were introduced into the learning modules and practical activities. In addition, Six Seconds' Leadership Vital Signs (LVS) assessment was adopted as the pre- and post-measurement tool to monitor change and inform further personal development. The outcome was a structured, multi-phase program to which candidates in all of the company's regions were nominated and selected for participation.

The Excelitas Connected Leadership Program was unveiled first in North America, then in Europe, and, finally, in Asia. This case study includes data from approximately 50 CLP participants in each region, with the curriculum facilitated by Human Resources. Regional program participants came from 21 different office locations, a further indication of diversity and wide penetration within the organization. The distribution of participants by level of employment and strategic business unit is shown in Figure 2, with the number of total participants representing slightly more than half of the incumbents in those categories.

Motivation and interest were key determinants in the nomination and selection of CLP participants. The preference was to invite people who were truly interested and open to feedback, wanted to participate, and were keen to explore topics with positive intent. As part of the communication and invitation process, managers and HR staff held conversations with potential participants to gauge whether the program was well suited to the person's interest in growing and trying something new.

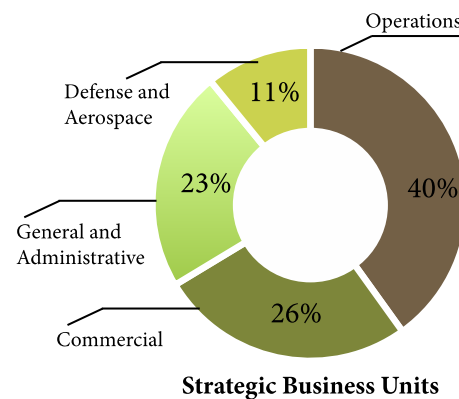
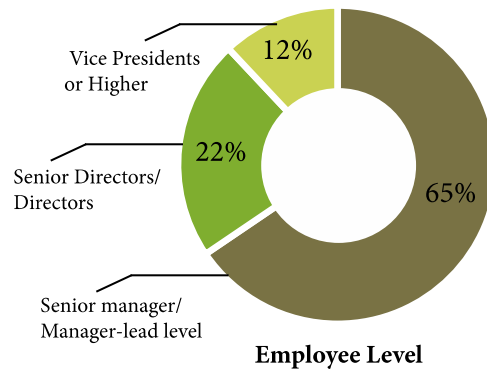


Figure 2. Participants by Employee Level and Strategic Business Unit.

An important principle communicated in those discussions was that participation in the program was not tied to performance reviews or improvement plans. This was intended to address any reluctance to participate and guard against having people join and simply comply with the requirements and go through the motions. The gathering of actionable data was built into the program design. All participants were given the Six Seconds' Leadership Vital Signs assessment upon entering the program. The LVS assessment must be administered by a certified consultant and, as a cost-effective, in-house solution, Six Seconds certified four Excelitas team members to use the toolkit, which also includes integrated team and organization-wide assessments.

Guided by Six Seconds' design principles, CLP was created as a project-based learning experience with real-world application. Where many corporate leadership programs offer an "assorted menu of leadership content," CLP was designed as an integrated whole where participants would identify and improve a specific leadership goal. The program included three phases that followed a cycle of engage, activate, and reflect derived from the Six Seconds action learning process (Freedman, 2012).

Phase I: Personal Insight (Engage)

During this phase, participants were nominated by their senior leaders and offered the opportunity to attend. Those who chose to join then completed the Leadership Vital Signs assessment, answering the questionnaire themselves, and receiving feedback from their supervisor plus anonymous feedback from peers and subordinates. Participants then had an individual coaching session with a certified consultant during a 1:1 debrief that lasted approximately 45-75 minutes to explore the feedback and define a specific leadership goal for CLP in one of the five areas of Vital Signs.

Phase II: Collaborative Learning (Activate)

Phase II was a three-day leadership program involving in-class collaborative learning. To maintain program cohesion, the in-person training was organized around the Vital Signs Model, providing the participants clarity that the training is directly connected to their pre-assessment and their personal goal. Much of the content of the in-person course was a customized version of the Developing Human Performance curriculum, integrated with Excelitas' existing leadership vocabulary and concepts. Since the Vital Signs Model is a comprehensive view of leadership, it was easy to integrate various content into the structure. The curriculum outline for the Phase II Leadership Program was as follows:

Day 1

Leadership, Personal Vision, and Goals
A Vision for Leadership
Building Trust
Leading Change
Delegation for Execution

Day 2

Coaching and Feedback for Individual and Team Performance

Day 3

Constructive Conflict
Motivation
Genuine Appreciation
Going Forward with Your Connected Leadership

Phase III: Application at Work (Reflect)

Phase III targeted Application at Work and included, among other activities, a) learning partners, b) conference calls and shared learning discussions, and c) a follow-up LVS assessment and coaching approximately 9-10 months after completion of the program. The follow-up assessment was critical to measuring change and

providing additional guidance and considerations for further personal leadership development.

In summary, the Connected Leadership Program gave participants the opportunity to:

- Increase self-awareness as a leader and develop a personal leadership vision.
- Explore the people and emotional side of leadership to support an improved work climate and better business performance.
- Increase ability to build trust, tap into the motivation of others, execute more effectively, coach and provide feedback, inspire others and lead change, and better connect with others.

The multi-dimensional structure of the Excelitas program, involving 360° feedback, collaborative, experiential learning, coaching, and reintegration of new insights into practice, resonates with best practices in the field. Design and implementation of the CLP, in retrospect, closely tracked Pernick's (2001) essential tasks in the creation of a leadership development program, with the exception of formal succession planning, an area for possible future attention:

1. Create program selection criteria.
2. Define leadership competencies.
3. Establish an application process.
4. Assess current leadership skills.
5. Provide developmental activities.
6. Align structures to reinforce program.
7. Develop leaders in context.
8. Plan for the next generation of leaders.
9. Evaluate the leadership development program.

The Connected Leadership Program at Excelitas fits with other company-based leadership development initiatives that have utilized needs assessments, a conceptual basis, and a multi-dimensional program evaluation component (Sirianni & Frey, 2001). With the exception of explicit rewards for success, the CLP comports with Leskiw and Singh's (2007) findings regarding best practices in leadership development. In keeping with the approach of Six Seconds' and the corporate values of Excelitas, social interaction and relationship skills underpin the learning philosophy, content, and process of the Connected Leadership Program.

II. Methods

An integral part of the CLP was to establish a baseline for participants regarding their leadership qualities and practices. The goals were to increase

insight and self-awareness based on 360-degree feedback, reinforce the personal relevance of the learning curriculum, and guide ongoing leadership development. A key ingredient of this development was creation of an energizing personal vision of leadership, in keeping with the belief that performance is a “people-driven result.” To close the learning cycle and provide a basis for evaluating change and program effectiveness, a follow-up assessment was built into the CLP plan.

The Six Seconds Vital Signs organizational model and leadership assessment were chosen by Excelitas to convey a clear, intuitive concept and practical framework that blends business logic with emotional intelligence insights and serves as a bridge so leaders can clearly see the importance of the people-side of performance. The Vital Signs model describes five key drivers of performance, or climate factors, arrayed against two axes depicting organizational domains. Each axis is a continuum, the vertical one from Operations to Strategy and the horizontal from People to Organization. The drivers, shown in blue in Figure 3, contribute to the adjacent domain. For example, Teamwork and Motivation drive the people side of the model and Teamwork and Execution impact operations.

In addition to the drivers, the model includes four outcomes specific to the level of analysis, in this case leadership. The leadership outcomes are shown in orange in Figure 3. Each is associated with an organizational domain and flows from the same confluence of drivers. For example, the leader’s outcome focus in Strategy is to determine and articulate Direction, in Organization, the leader’s goal is to Design structures and systems.

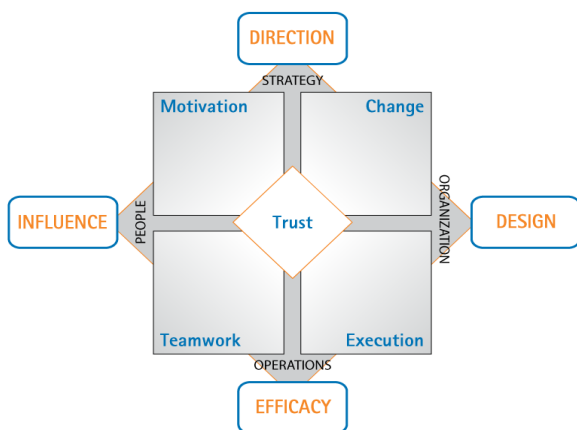


Figure 3. Leadership Vital Signs Model with Domains, Drivers, and Leadership Outcomes.

The Leadership Vital Signs (LVS) assessment linked to the model uses a 34-item, scaled questionnaire, with participants able to self-assess and receive feedback from others. In addition to the fixed items, open-text answers can be given to what the person would like to or should Start, Stop, and Continue, plus any other feedback offered by the participant or raters.

The LVS is validated using a large, international database. Each driver and outcome are normed separately and the thresholds for the top and bottom quartiles vary accordingly. Figure 4 shows the driver feedback page from a sample report, with the placement of the diamonds indicating the threshold for high performance for the top 25 percent. The green diamonds in this sample reflect rater scores that place the participant in the top 25 percent and the red diamond indicates an area in the bottom quartile.

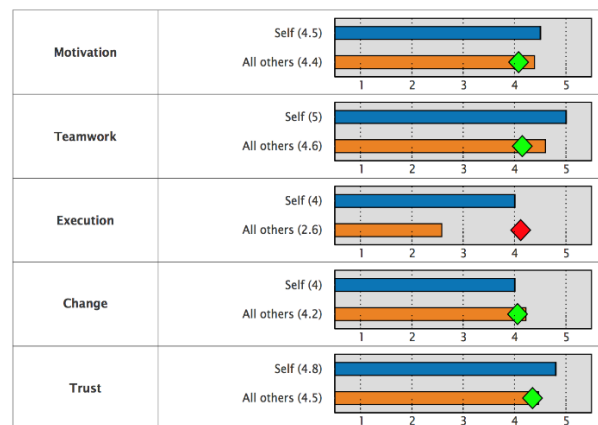


Figure 4. Sample Normed Leadership Vital Signs Driver Scores.

The tool accommodates customizable rater groups to facilitate broad and targeted input. Typical groups would include the manager and/or other supervisors, peers/colleagues, internal business partners and/or outside clients, direct reports, and others in the organization with whom the participant collaborates. The participant can then compare and contrast feedback scores from the different rater groups, a very powerful capability. Figure 5 provides an example of disaggregated rater scores from an LVS report for the Teamwork driver.

The LVS is automated and set up and delivered online, with a user-defined period for response. Once the assessment closes, an individual report is generated and the coach schedules a private debrief session with the participant. The results are confidential and, in this case, were shared only with the participant, although the coaches were members of the company’s Human

Resources department. Participants were assured, however, that no information would be used for performance appraisal or other personnel purposes.

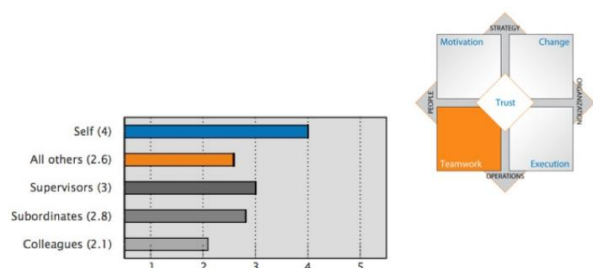


Figure 5. Sample Leadership Vital Signs Comparative Rater Scores for Teamwork Driver.

Debrief by a certified coach is a key element in making the LVS effective and the results sustainable. The four Excelitas' staff members who gained Vital Signs certification had broad HR and talent development experience and brought enthusiasm and commitment to the program. Each performed multiple LVS debriefs and coaching conversations and became highly proficient in use and interpretation of the assessment tool. In keeping with Six Seconds' approach, the debrief was viewed as a collaborative endeavor, with meaning and interpretation emerging from the one-on-one dialogue.

Participants had the opportunity to reflect on the numerical scores, as well as the narrative feedback from raters, and construct a personal leadership vision and development plan. They were actively encouraged to incorporate their insights into their actions as leaders in the organization, with the knowledge that a follow-up multi-rater assessment would be conducted. This interval allowed time to enact the personal leadership vision in practice and integrate any additional insights and learning from the structured curriculum. The comparative scores on the baseline and post-program assessment, as well as direct feedback from participants, provided the basis to evaluate the impact of the CLP and identify areas of accomplishment and those requiring further enhancement.

III. Results

Implementation of the Connected Leadership Program represented a significant investment for Excelitas. To gain an understanding of how the program was being received, the company surveyed CLP participants anonymously following Phase II. On average, across all regions, participants rated the program 4.54/5 (4 = very good, 5 = excellent). The results by region for Programs I and II are shown in

Figure 6. The consistent and highly positive ratings encouraged the company to launch another round of programs and enroll additional participants.

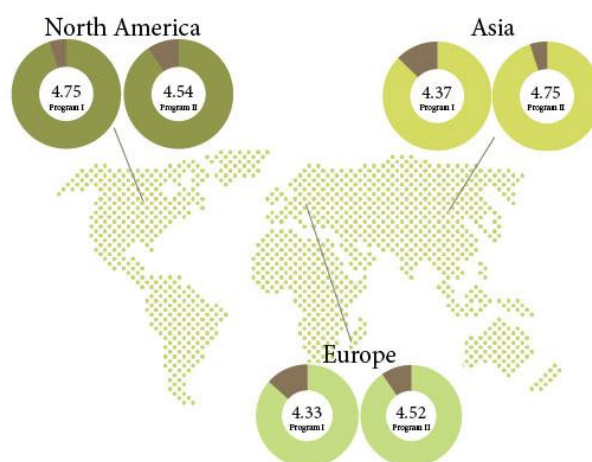


Figure 6. All Region Connected Leadership Program Participant Ratings.

Excelitas also solicited narrative feedback from participants to probe the human and emotional reaction to the program and identify highlights of the experience. Sample comments on the program included the following:

- *I've been with the company for 32 years and we had several trainings, similar to the CLP, but it is the best training I was given to attend in my career. It gave me tools that I actually use.*
- *The program expertly delivered the methodology and key elements of emotional dynamics, intrinsic motivation, coaching, all using EQ as a fundamental baseline. Excellent!*
- *In many years of leadership, this is the first training program that was/is truly helpful.*
- *Without a doubt, the best leadership program I've attended. Very accessible and practical focus.*

The quality of relationships was also a common subject, as the following quotes from the follow-up LVS coaching calls indicate:

- *I feel there is more trust and openness. I sense people see me as more approachable and more open to discuss topics and issues with me.*
- *An increase in trust and frequency of interactions. There is more comfort and openness, even during difficult or challenging situations.*
- *For some people, notably those who have participated in CLP, I am seeing more positive interactions and we are supporting each other*

more such that there has been a dramatic improvement in our meetings and more collaboration.

- Using the ideas and approaches has also helped improve teamwork.

Finally, positive impact was reported with respect to several key internal performance indicators. These areas, as expressed in participant quotes, included:

- Strengthened belief in and retention of key employees.
- Increased performance such that quarterly targets and goals are being exceeded and senior management has recognized this performance.
- Achieved 97% on time delivery over last 12 months, which is considered world class. In general, there has been improvement in delivery and quality metrics.
- People are more motivated, independent, and engaged, which has helped improve timeliness and quality.

Participants began to see progress in a number of vital people-driven dimensions as they implemented new personal insights and leadership knowledge. They identified the following performance areas:

- Improved Teamwork and Relationships.
- Better and More Open Communication.
- Increased Engagement, Initiative, and Empowerment.
- More Confidence.
- Improved Quality, Delivery, and Performance.
- Retention of Valued Employees.

The internal findings from Excelitas were complemented by comparative analysis of baseline and follow-up LVS results. Two different aspects of the data were analyzed for each region and cumulatively: a) the change in driver- and outcome-specific scores, separated for self and rater responses, and b) shifts into and out of the top and bottom normed quartiles. A total of 124 LVS matched pair responses with pre- and post-program scores were included, 44 from North America (NA), 43 from Europe (EU), and 37 from Asia.

In reviewing the results, it is important to understand the definitions of drivers and outcomes in the Vital Signs model. These definitions are reflected in the questions on the LVS assessment and indicate what is being measured by the tool. Table 1 shows the definitions as given in the LVS report:

Table 1

Driver and Outcome Definitions in the Leadership Vital Signs Assessment

Leadership Vital Signs Drivers

Motivation	Motivation is the source of energy to overcome challenges, pursue a goal, or maintain commitment.
Change	Change leadership is the ability to keep the team innovating and adapting to succeed in a continuously changing environment.
Teamwork	Teamwork is collaborating to pursue a goal; it requires a sense of shared purpose and belonging
Execution	Execution is the ability to achieve strategic results by implementing specific steps that work.
Trust	Trust is a feeling of confidence and surety – a trustworthy leader is someone who others will rely upon.

Leadership Vital Signs Outcomes

Design	Managing a smooth workflow with and through people.
Direction	Setting a viable, powerful vision.
Efficacy	Generating useful results.
Influence	Building strong relationships to enroll people.

All cumulative driver and outcome scores increased from baseline to follow-up assessment, except for self-assessed Efficacy. Regional results revealed 3 self-assessed drivers (Teamwork, Execution, and Trust) and 2 self-assessed outcomes (Efficacy and Design) that declined during this period. All regional rater scores increased, and on an individual basis, pre- and post-assessment scores given by raters increased for 73 percent of participants. Results for the combined regions for drivers and outcomes separated by self and rater scores, are shown in Figure 7.

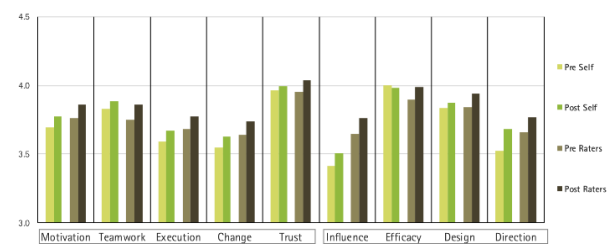


Figure 7. Total Pre/Post Leadership Vital Signs Assessment Scores for Self and Raters.

As seen in Figure 7, cumulative baseline scores for the drivers and outcomes varied, with Change having the lowest initial score among the drivers for both self and raters. For outcomes, Influence was the lowest for self and raters as well. The highest initial score among the drivers, for both self and raters, was Trust, with Efficacy the highest of the outcomes, again for self and rater assessments. In general, the greatest percentage gains were achieved from the lowest initial scores and the smallest gains were realized on the highest.

To analyze the results further, rater-given driver and outcome scores were aggregated for each participant to calculate an individual composite change indicator based on pre- and post-program results. Analysis of the changes for the 124 matched pairs yielded a *p* value of .000046, indicating a very low probability that change occurred randomly. The mean aggregated pre-program score, on a 1-5 scale, was 3.76 and the post-program score was 3.86, representing an average improvement of 2.7%. Standard deviations for the pre- and post-program means were 0.31 and 0.35, respectively.

On a percentage basis, for self-assessment scores, the Change driver had the largest increase. For raters, Teamwork showed the largest percentage gain. On the outcome side of the model, among self-assessments, Direction had the largest percentage gain. For raters, Influence had the largest increase. Change, which had the lowest initial driver score, had the largest percentage increase for self-assessments. For raters, Influence had the lowest initial outcome score and saw the largest percentage gain. Largest percentage gains for self and raters are shown in Figure 8:

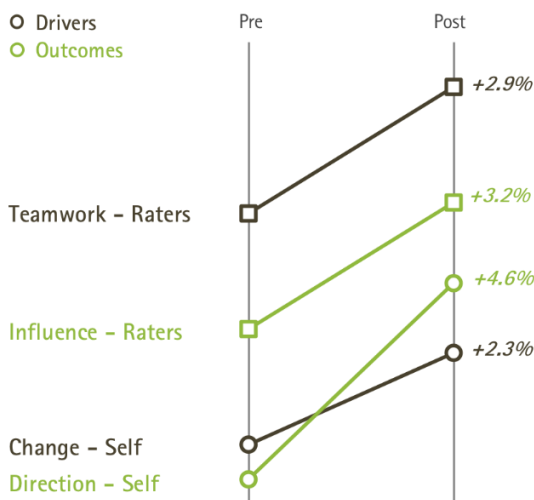


Figure 8. Largest Pre/Post Percentage Gains in Leadership Vital Signs Scores.

While all scores, except for self-assessed Efficacy, increased on a cumulative basis, some drivers and outcomes had relatively smaller improvements. For both self and rater driver scores, Trust had the smallest percentage increase. On the outcome side, Efficacy showed the smallest self-assessment gains. Trust and Efficacy had the highest initial scores and showed the smallest percentage increases.

Another key indicator of change is movement by participants into and out of the top and bottom quartiles of the normed distribution of LVS results for drivers and outcomes. Participants falling above the upper threshold and below the bottom were counted, based on benchmarked rater scores, both on their pre-program and follow-up LVS. The cumulative results are shown in Figure 9:



Figure 9. Total Pre/Post Number of Participants in Top and Bottom Quartiles.

Positive shifts out of the bottom quartile and into the top were detected across all drivers and outcomes. Percentages in the top and bottom quartiles were calculated for each driver and outcome based on the total number of participants. For the baseline assessment, Execution (28.2%) was the driver with the highest percentage of bottom quartile participants and Direction (35.1%) was the outcome with this distinction. Before the program, Trust (18.5%) was the driver with the highest percentage of top quartile participants and Influence (11.3%) was the outcome in the same category.

Following the program, Execution (21.8%) and Direction (25.0%) still had the highest bottom quartile percentages, but at lower levels than before the CLP. For the top quartile, Influence (25.8%) remained the outcome with the highest percentage, but Motivation (25.0%) replaced Trust (21.8%) among the drivers. Although no longer the highest, the Trust percentage in the top quartile did increase compared to baseline results.

Percentage shifts out of the bottom and into top quartiles from the baseline to the follow-up assessment were also calculated. For the bottom quartile, Teamwork showed the greatest driver improvement, with a 40.7% decrease in the number of people in that lowest tier.

Teamwork was also the driver with the biggest improvement on the top side, with a 107.1% increase in the number of people inhabiting the top quartile. For outcomes, Direction showed the largest shift out of the bottom quartile, with a decrease of 34.0%. Design was the outcome with the largest shift into the top quartile at 166.7%. These results are summarized in Figure 10:

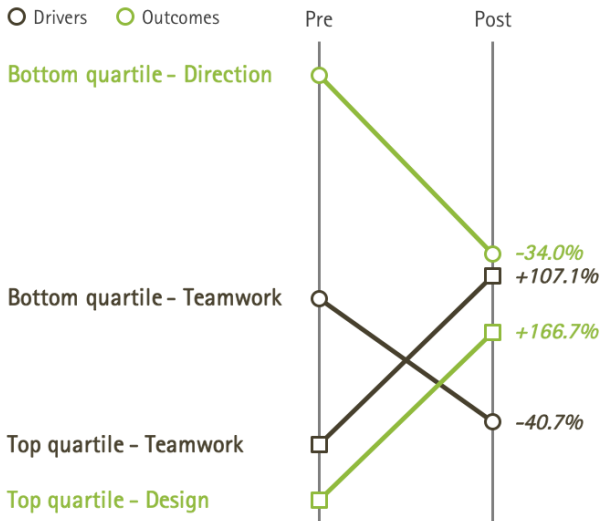


Figure 10. Largest Pre/Post Shifts Out of Bottom and Into Top Quartiles.

The results above were contrasted with those drivers and outcomes exhibiting the smallest shift out of the bottom quartile and into the top. It should be noted that although these results were relatively less positive than those described above, all drivers and outcomes showed improvement in decreasing the percentage in the bottom quartile and increasing the distribution in the top tier. For drivers, Motivation (16.0%) had the least improvement in moving out of the bottom quartile and Trust (17.4%) had the lowest percentage shift into the top. Among outcomes, Influence (16.0%) decreased the least in the number of people shifting out of the bottom quartile, while Efficacy (91.7%), despite almost doubling the number of people, had the lowest percentage shift into the top quartile.

If drivers and outcomes are combined across all regions to create a single composite score, the percentage of participants in the bottom quartile went from 25.5% to 19.2%, a decrease of 24.9% from the baseline to the post-program assessment. For the top quartile, the percentage of participants shifted from 11.7% to 20.4% over the same period, an increase of 74.0%. This cumulative shift out of the bottom and into the top quartile is shown in Figure 11:

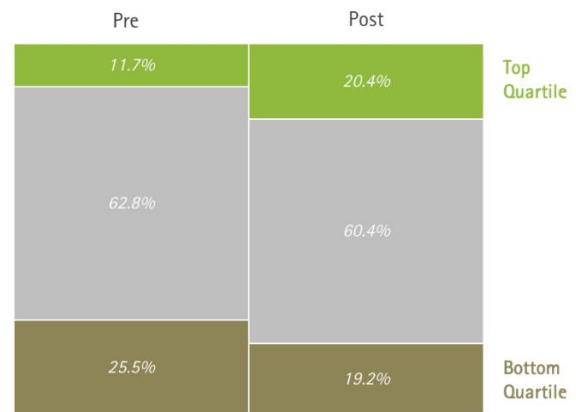


Figure 11. Pre/Post Top and Bottom Quartile Percentages for Combined Drivers and Outcomes.

IV. Discussion

Participant experience and feedback data gathered by Excelitas, both quantitative and qualitative, indicate that the CLP is achieving its goal of helping to support the people-side of leadership while having a positive effect on engagement and performance at multiple levels. Important themes include a) open communication encouraged by the feedback process, b) better collaboration supported by a strong focus on relationships, and c) enhanced quality and performance as a result of increased motivation, independence, and engagement.

One positive, tangible consequence of the CLP initiative has been the retention of valued employees. Excelitas is currently conducting the next round of the program to broaden its impact across the company, with added knowledge about how better to facilitate dialogue and collaborative, experiential learning. Keys goals for the future include keeping program content fresh and embedding continual learning into organizational culture.

Analyzing pre- and post-CLP LVS scores and bottom and top quartile shifts revealed both positive change and opportunities for continued improvement, by region and globally, across the Vital Signs drivers and outcomes. Overall results were very positive, with only one driver, Efficacy, declining in the total sample. Differential results within the regions emphasized the need to look at local context and dynamics and provided critical information to guide that process. Regional considerations include specific business environment, cultural, or structural issues, as well as ensuring clarity on expectations and criteria for performance.

All rater scores in every region increased, indicating high positive regard for the progress made by participants. For the self-assessment, Change and Influence had, respectively, the lowest initial driver and outcome scores. Despite showing high percentage gains, they

remained the lowest scores in the driver and outcome categories, indicating a need for specific interventions. Change leadership, the ability to keep the team innovating and adapting to succeed in a continuously changing environment, is a critical skill that must be cultivated explicitly. Exerting influence, building strong relationships to enroll people, is the prime activity of the leader committed to enhancing engagement and empowerment.

V. Conclusions

Maintaining sustainable change over time will be the key task during future iterations of the CLP program. Self-assessed Trust and Efficacy scores were the two highest drivers and outcomes initially and showed the lowest gains. This indicates the challenge of improving on high initial scores and, in the case of Efficacy which showed a pre- to post-program decline, sustaining high performance. In addition, regional self-assessment results revealed specific opportunities for further improvement around the drivers of Teamwork, Execution, and Trust and the outcomes of Efficacy and Design.

All drivers and outcomes in the total sample exhibited increases in top and decreases in bottom quartile percentages, a very positive result. As with the driver and outcomes scores, regional results revealed specific areas in which this favorable change did not occur, indicating targets for focused attention. In total, Execution and Direction were, respectively, the most challenging driver and outcome based on pre-program bottom quartile percentages. They both improved over the course of the program, but retained their low standing in the follow-up assessment, indicating the need for further dialogue around meaning and practice in these two key leadership areas.

Cumulative results show that an integrated, multi-faceted leadership development program can have a positive impact on people-side performance. In this study, 73% of participants showed aggregate improvement in leadership performance based on pre- and post-program rater-given assessment results. Positive changes in before and after matched, aggregated scores for the 124 participants yielded a very low p value of .000046, indicating that the improvement did not occur by chance. Key characteristics of the Excelitas Connected Leadership Program that produced these favorable outcomes include:

- Strong commitment to open communication, constructive feedback, and talent development.
- Nomination and selection of participants based on demonstrated motivation and interest in developing a personal vision of leadership.

- Inclusion of emotional intelligence in the learning philosophy and curriculum content
- Personal insight gained from an objective, normed multi-rater assessment.
- Blended, experiential learning and skill development through a structured curriculum and participant interaction.
- Active coaching, including a 1:1 debrief of quantitative and qualitative results from the leadership assessment.
- Pre- and post-program measurement for evaluation and personal development planning.
- Development of internal capabilities through the assessment certification of four HR team members.

Moving forward, Excelitas, with ongoing support from Six Seconds, will seek to build on the CLP and evolve its leadership development efforts. In doing so, company leaders will incorporate what they have learned from introducing the CLP to create the next level of leadership development.

Note: An abbreviated version of this case study was available on request through a Six Seconds' blogpost (Stillman, 2018).

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