

Seven Best Practices

Improve your leadership development.



by Ken Shelton

HAVING JUST COMPLETED A comprehensive survey of 500 top leadership development programs, I now glean best practices:

1. **Vision and mission statements** are meaningful to participants, linked to a growth strategy, and focused on outcomes.

Best practice: McDonald's: *Leading yourself, your team, and your organization.*



The vision of the *Leadership at McDonald's Program* (LAMP) is to accelerate the development of high-potential leaders in a way that drives results, shapes culture, and builds leadership depth. To maximize the participants' learning experiences, full engagement is required. Participants spend 20 percent of their time on LAMP-related activities.

2. **Involvement** in the leadership program is both broad and deep. **Best practice: Best Buy:**



Unleashing the power of their people. Manager integration is the main focus of evaluation for leadership development programs. They "unleash the power of people" by allowing those in positions of influence and leadership to facilitate key courses. Nearly all of Best Buy's training focuses on leadership development of its people.

3. **ROI measurements** emphasize personal



accountability for performance and results. **Best practice: Simonton Windows:** *Make a difference. Get a return.* Simonton University develops employees personally and professionally. Their mission is to provide current and emerging leaders with the tools they need to succeed in an open, experiential and fun atmosphere. Employees participate in a 10-day leadership certificate program that yields an 8.1 Return on Learning Investment.

4. **Content and curriculum.** The program is well-



designed and customized, the content is credible, and the curriculum is relevant. **Best practice: Qualcomm:** *Leaders at all levels.* The Qualcomm leadership program is designed to help leaders obtain the goals and vision. Their leadership development strategy and initiatives include Next Generation Leadership and Leadership 2005, which emphasizes strategy, global leadership, creative thinking, and innovation. Qualcomm's quest to develop and sustain leaders at all levels is supported by strong performance metrics.

5. **Presentation and delivery.** The presenters are well qualified and their presentations are effective.

Best practice: Ball State University: *Engaging educational experts.*



BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

Preparing engaged experts who are sensitive and responsive to the contextual bases of teaching, learning, and development is the scope of the Ball State Department of Educational Leadership. They build leaders through advanced coursework, projects, and authentic leadership experiences.

6. **Take-home value.** Participants apply the principles to



improve themselves, their families, their teams, and their work. **Best practice: Carilion Health System:** *Focusing on the individual.* Carilion's leadership principles focus on identifying and applying individual strengths, while developing new areas of expertise. Each leader contributes to Carilion's mission and success by linking their learning to current business goals and applying their leadership capabilities to their work projects.

7. **Outreach of programs and products.** The program



impacts and benefits customers and clients and makes a positive difference in the stakeholder community. **Best practice: Baptist Leadership Institute:** *Sustaining Service and Operational Excellence.* More than 7,500 professionals from all 50 states have come to Pensacola to participate in offerings by the Leadership Institute. And the faculty of the Leadership Institute have provided on-site training to over 40,000 professionals.

I like what Baptist Leadership Institute says about leadership development:

1. **A lack of leadership development signals a culture of low accountability.** Is it then any wonder we are challenged by accountability, when we don't teach leaders what accountability is and how to hold others accountable?

2. **A lack of leadership development means leaders are spending time doing their jobs, not perfecting their roles.** The role of a leader is coaching, mentoring, guiding, developing, recognizing, challenging, and teaching.

3. **A lack of leadership development results in clogged arteries.** These clogs occur in places in the decision-and-permission cycle where progress is put on hold or killed. Great leaders drive decision-making down.

I invite you to create best practices in your approach to leadership development.

Ken Shelton

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