



## Action Learning

This “real-time” leadership development process involves teaming up executives to solve existing work problems. It was designed to both develop the participants of the team through a great development experience and improve the business. Passive learning methods, such as in-classroom training often have little clear connection to the pressing business issues that executives face. By contrast, Action Learning closes the gap between theory and practice. It instills core leadership capabilities and is an exercise in leadership development.

## Critical Success Factors

- Active top management involvement
- Challenging but achievable project
- Trained, passionate sponsor with authority
- Balance of “action” and “learning”
- Explicit learning goals and frequent debriefings
- Skilled facilitation
- Implementation planned up-front
- Communicating progress and results
- Realistic expectations

## The Use of Active Reflection

Individuals will be encouraged throughout this process to have active reflection on their own behavior and the dynamics of the team. Action Learning demonstrates leadership development that is tangible and is connected directly to the team individual’s coaching needs. To make the connection, executive coaches are embedded on the team to make recommendations on how each individual can grow in self-awareness. The executive coach’s initial recommendation will be based on a pre-session assessment and the coach will continue to build on suggestions throughout the the process.

# Executive Development Associates

## Example Sessions

### Session One

- Project introduction and selection
- Work planning tools
- Team building
- Project specific/Just in time education
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Set learning/development goals
- Test project work plan

### Session Two

- Assimilate and synthesize work
- Create, test, improve presentations
  - What learned?
  - Findings and recommendations
  - Implementation plan
- Presentations to sponsors and executives
- Debriefing and planning next steps

**Your sessions will be customized for your individual company needs**

## The Process

- Define a company or workgroup need where a solution would provide a benefit to the company.
- The process carries on for 3-6 months and includes real-time problem solving and development.
- Select senior executive as the "sponsor". This person will introduce the project at Session One. Sponsor also participates at the mid-point progress review and receives the team's findings and recommendations in Session Two.
- Select individual participants included in the process are either from different parts of the organization or an intact team.
- A Team coach/consultant who supports them on their process, on their project work and who works with each participant on their individual development goals.
- A mid-point face-to-face session in which participants finalize their work and present their findings and recommendations to their sponsors and other key executives.
- The team will be encouraged to invite subject matter experts from outside the group who can provide technical and specialized assistance to the problem-solving process.
- Final presentations to Key Stakeholders with results of the Action Learning Project.
- An "After Action Review" to summarize key learnings and how they can be applied.

## The Goals & Incentives

- While this is an individual development process, it also includes the goal of making the team a cohesive unit that works well together.
- The development for leaders includes building individual competence and organization bench strength without having to remove individuals from their jobs for a long period of time.

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