

Leadership Excellence Impact in the Workplace Report

Fall 2006 – Spring 2009

Major Findings:

- High average overall effectiveness rating: 4.52 – 4.71 on a five point scale.
- 91% of all participants listed at least one specific skill that they had implemented in the workplace. Furthermore, the top five skills mentioned most frequently directly related to the primary purposes for which Leadership Excellence (LE) was designed.
- On average, participants more than doubled their scores on the post-test knowledge content test compared to the pre-series content test results.
- 96% of supervisors of participants who responded to a post series survey listed at least one specific performance area that had improved as a result of the LE series. The top seven of these performance areas directly correlated to the primary areas which LE was charged to address.

Background and Objectives

In early 2000, President Plachta charged Human Resources with the task of developing a leadership program for staff. As a result, an extensive assessment was conducted to identify the training and development needs of University staff, and to help shape the content for a major leadership program. The Supervision Excellence (SE) series was launched in the fall of 2000 with a pilot program for Senior Officers, and met for six sessions. It was re-formatted to eight sessions, and has been offered twice a year since, with the spring series of 2009 marking the 18th series. Well over 400 staff have now participated. The name was changed in 2007 to Leadership Excellence (LE) to reflect the fact that the material was not only relevant for supervisors, but also for any leader or aspiring leader who desired to make an impact.

Although presenters and some of the particulars have changed over the years, the foundational content and purpose has not. The initial charge for the leadership program was to focus on fundamental leadership principles and the culturally based needs of the University as identified in the 2000 needs assessment mentioned above. These specific needs included: Communication and Conflict; Teamwork and Collaboration; Decision Making and Problem Solving; Change Management; Performance Management and Planning; Positive Attitude and Motivation; Respect and Trust; Diversity; and Knowledge of CMU departments, and how jobs align with the goals and mission of the University. Other specific needs which were identified, such as Technology, Customer Service, and Violence Prevention, were addressed through other training efforts, but were not a focus of SE. Over the years this initial focus and purpose for SE (now LE) series has been affirmed and validated by other institutional documents and initiatives. These included CMU's Four Service Values (2001), CMU's Four Core Values (2002), and by the more recent list of leadership competencies developed by Senior Leadership (2007).

Given the time and effort invested in this series as the capstone leadership program of Human Resources, the general purpose of this report was to see what difference, if any, it had made in the workplace behavior of the participants.

More specifically, was there any evidence that:

- a) Participants believed that it was effective and made a positive impact in their work
- b) Participants learned some of the major concepts that they did not already know
- c) Most importantly, that the SE/LE series made a positive difference in the participant's behavior back in the workplace, particularly in the above areas that it was charged to impact

Methods

For this study, data from the fall of 2006 to present was analyzed. This data came from three primary sources:

- 1. Final Overall Series Evaluations by Participants. See Appendix 1.
- 2. Pre and Post Content Knowledge Assessments. See Appendix 2.
- 3. Post Series Supervisor Assessments of Participant Behavior Change (Began in the Spring of 2008). See Appendix 3.

Results

Final Overall Series Evaluations by Participants

Perceptions of Overall Effectiveness

Participants were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of the entire eight week series on a 5 point scale (See Appendix 1: 1 – Little Effect, 5 – Highly Effective). As shown in Table 1, the reactions of participants were consistently very positive, with an average rating above 4.5 in each of the past 6 series.

	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009
Average Rating	4.55	4.52	4.71	4.62	4.71	4.57

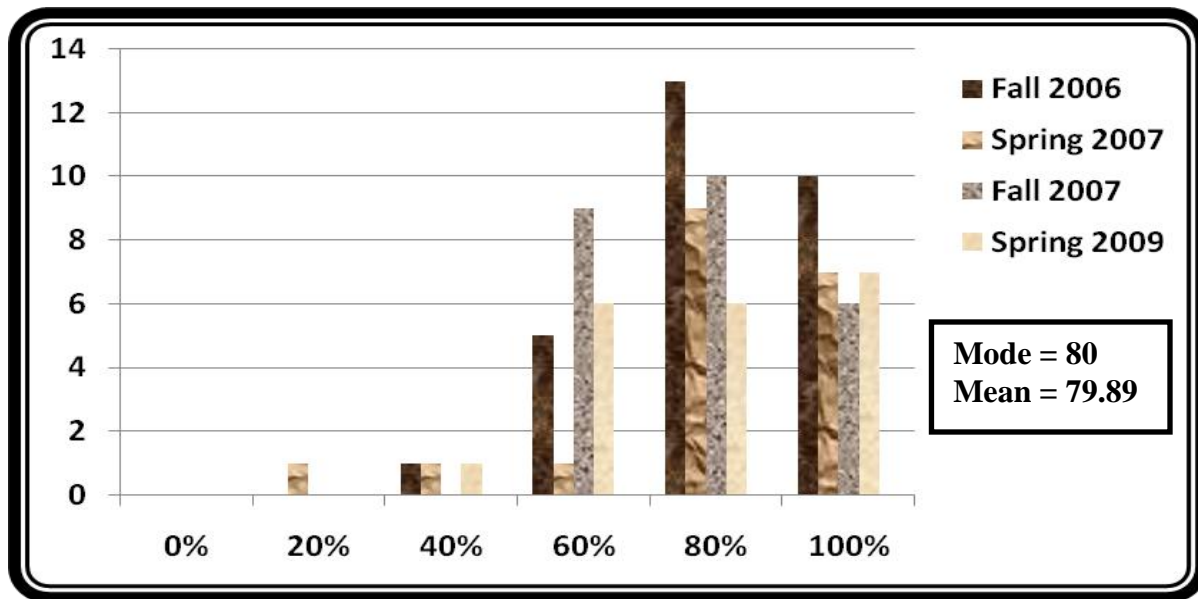
Table 1

Relevancy of Content

To check for relevancy of content, the following question was asked:

How much of what you learned in this course is relevant to your job?
Multiple Choice: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%.

How Much Of What Was Learned Is Relevant to the Job¹



Graph 1

When rounded to the nearest percent, the mode and mean of the data when all four series were combined were both 80, which indicated that the participants believed that most of the content was relevant to the work that they do.

Implementation of Skills

To obtain an indication of how likely the skills learned in LE would actually be used back in the workplace, the following question was asked:

How likely are you to use the skills you learned in this course back on the job?
5 point scale: 1 (Not likely) to 5 (Very likely).

When the data from this question was combined, the mode was 5 and the mean was 4.6.²

Furthermore, the following narrative question was also asked concerning the implementation of learned skills:

Specifically, what areas or skills from the series have you already implemented back in the workplace?

134 of the 148 survey participants (91%) listed something specific which they had implemented. The top five areas that were named are represented in Table 2.

¹ 2008 data not available

² Data from Fall 2006, Spring 2007, Fall 2007 and Fall 2008. Data from Spring of 2008 and 2009 was not available.

What has already been implemented back in the workplace?

	Communication and Listening Skills	Specific Appreciation Techniques	Motivational Environment Skills	MBTI: Leadership Styles	Performance Management Skills
Total Responses from all six series: Fall 06 – Spring 09	61	30	27	21	17

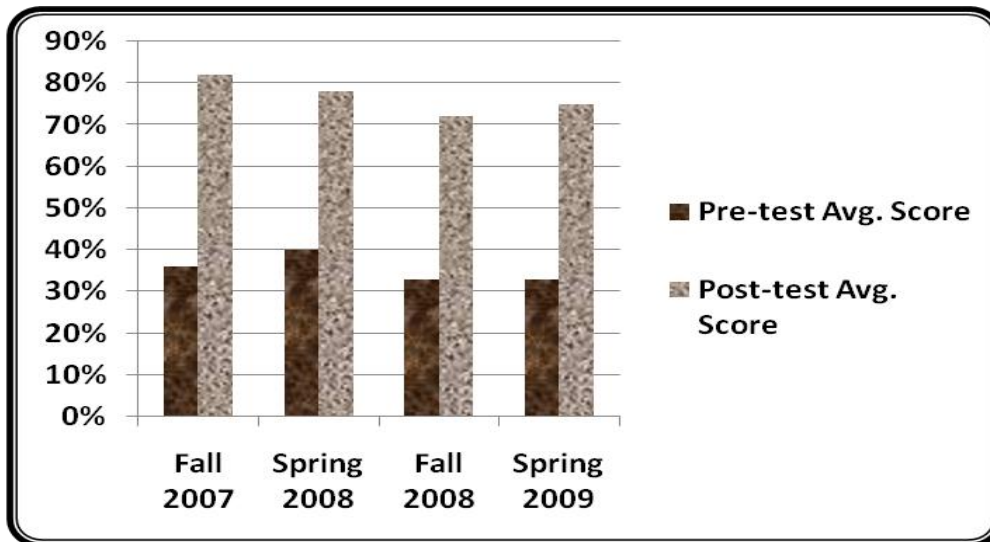
Table 2

All five of these implementation areas that participants named most frequently are directly related to the primary purposes for which SE/LE was designed.

The responses to these two questions clearly indicate that most SE/LE participants have implemented skills and concepts from the series back into the workplace, and that the ones they named most often are aligned with what the program was charged to improve.

Pre-test and Post-test Knowledge Content Scores

To assess participant learning and retention of some of the main concepts that were covered in the course, a pre and post knowledge content test was conducted (See Appendix 2). This test consisted of eleven questions: seven multiple choice and four short answer responses. The average scores from the past four series are represented in Graph 2.



Graph 2

Standard Deviation 16
Low Control 25
High Control 93

Adj. Standard Deviation 15
% within Control 76%
Avg. Score Differential 41

As the average score differential demonstrates, the participants have more than doubled their knowledge base on the main concepts that were covered and assessed in the course.

Supervisor's of Participants Perceptions of Impact in the Workplace

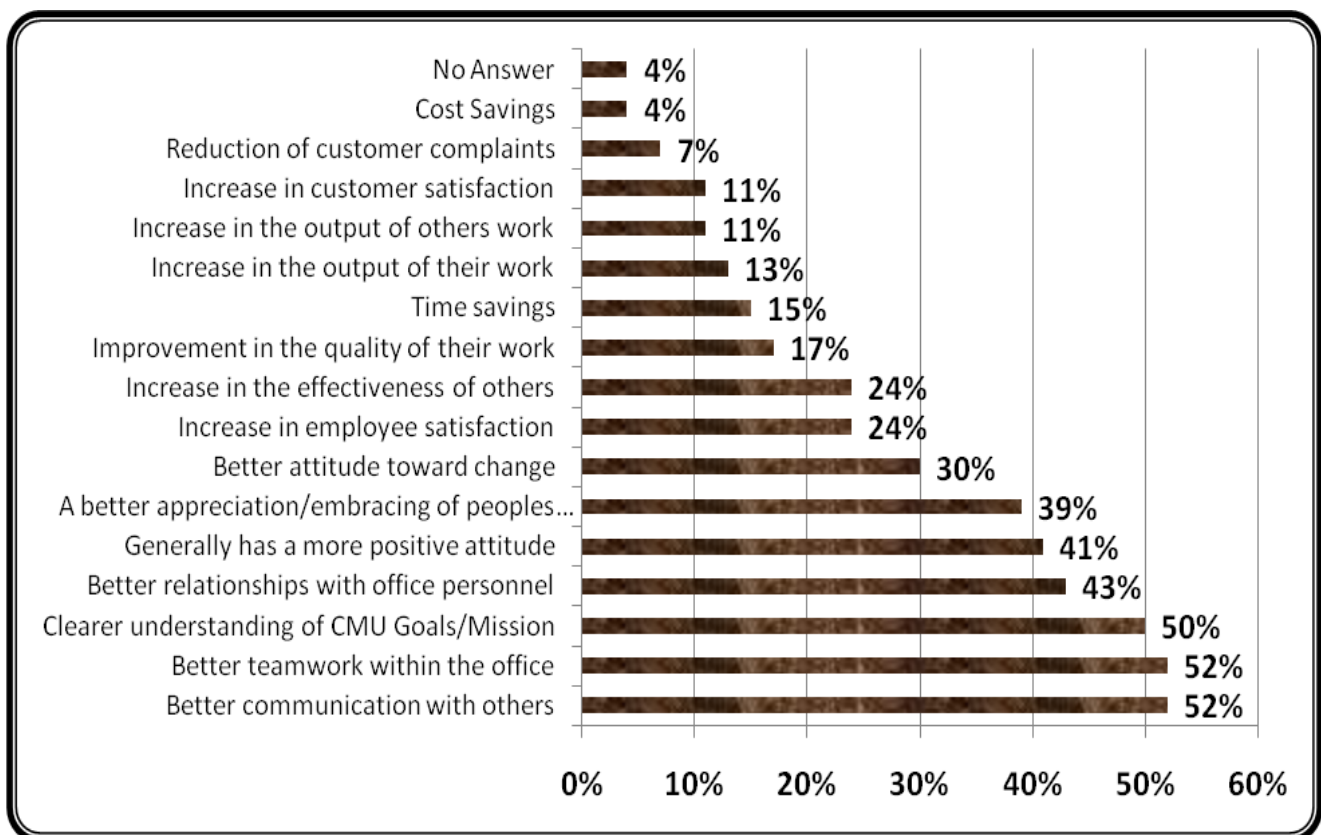
To further measure the impact in workplace behavior, the supervisors of participants in the past three series (the spring and fall of 2008 and the spring of 2009) were surveyed (See Appendix 3). There were a total of 46 supervisors who completed the survey out of a possible 76, for a response rate of 61%. Data from these three surveys are combined into one report in Graph 4 and in the information below.

To determine if supervisors felt that the LE series was making a difference in workplace behavior, and to get a sense of which areas had been impacted the most, they were provided with a list of 16 work performance areas, and asked the following:

Of the following performance areas, which ones have been positively impacted as a result of this person's involvement in Leadership Excellence? (please check all that apply).

The results are shown in Graph 4. Percentages listed are the percent of supervisors who marked the statement out of the 46 possible responses of the supervisors who completed the survey.

Supervisor Perception of Specific Performance Areas Positively Impacted by Involvement in Leadership Excellence



Graph 4

44 of the 46 supervisors (96%), who responded to the survey marked at least one of the performance areas. It is encouraging to note that the seven areas that scored the highest (30% and greater) are the very areas that Human Resources was charged to address through this leadership series. Furthermore, all of the 44 supervisors who marked at least one of the sixteen performance areas, marked one or more of these 7 areas.

Conclusion

Both participant and supervisor confidence that the program has made a positive impact in workplace behavior was very high. When the supervisors were asked in a narrative question if they would continue to recommend the Leadership Excellence series to others, 41 of 46 (89%) answered yes, certainly, or absolutely (the other 5 supervisors did not answer the question). That was a strong vote of confidence given that the supervisors committed close to a week of work time for their employees to participate in this series.

The data in Table 2 and Graph 4 which focused on what has been implemented, clearly demonstrated that this leadership series made a difference in the behavior of participants in the areas that it was designed to impact.

In the words of one supervisor, “It immerses participants in CMU service values for 8 weeks, and is a very important tool for bringing all CMU offices on board with the university’s service ethos.” And a participant shared, “You are making a cultural change. It’s a slow process. Persevere, you’re on the right track.” Perhaps this has been the largest impact, the influence it has had on the culture of the university. This has been accomplished over time, having now immersed well over 400 leaders of CMU to date in solid leadership principles.

We will therefore continue to offer this course, encouraging new supervisors and upcoming leaders at CMU to participate. We will also continue to evaluate this leadership series to ensure it is still making an impact on workplace behavior in the areas it was designed to improve.

Appendix 1: Final Overall Series Evaluation by Participants

FINAL SERIES EVALUATION

Name (Optional): _____

Please help Strategy & Organizational Development continue to improve the Leadership Excellence series by sharing your comments and opinions with us.

1. Please rate the overall effectiveness of the entire 8-week series:

Little Effect

Highly Effective

1

2

3

4

5

2. Do you have any suggestions regarding the content or format of the series? What would serve to improve the program for the next set of participants?

3. What are the most effective or helpful tools you will take away from the series?

4. Specifically, what areas or skills from the series have you already implemented back into your work environment?

5. How much of what you learned in this course is applicable to your job?

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

6. How likely are you to use some skills you learned in this course back on the job?

1 2 3 4 5
Not Likely Very Likely

7a. Prior to this course, my manager (check all that apply):

- _____ Showed true interest in my involvement in this course
- _____ Talked with me about what I do well and what I could improve in (a “2 + 2” discussion)
- _____ Helped me establish specific course objectives
- _____ Other: _____

7b. *During this course, my manager (check all that apply):*

- _____ Supported me by doing all he or she could to make sure the bases were covered, remove distractions, etc.
- _____ Checked in with me about what I was learning
- _____ Specifically set some time aside to talk with me about what I was learning
- _____ Other: _____

8. The following performance area(s) will definitely be positively impacted as a result of my participation in this course (check all that apply):

- _____ Increase in my output
- _____ Increase in the output of others
- _____ Increase in customer satisfaction
- _____ Increase in the effectiveness of others
- _____ Increase in employee satisfaction
- _____ Reduction in customer complaints
- _____ Time savings
- _____ Improvement in quality
- _____ Other (please specify): _____

9. Do you have any other feedback or requests for the Strategy & OD staff, presenters, or the series in general?

Appendix 2: Pre and Post Content Knowledge Assessment

Content Knowledge

This questionnaire is designed to assess your current level of knowledge of some of the information covered in the Supervision Excellence series.

Participant Code:_____

Date:_____

1. Please write 3 of the 5 “F’s” of Leadership, and a *brief* description of how to use it effectively:

2. Which of the following is true of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI):
 - a. MBTI is a tool for self awareness and team management
 - b. MBTI types are based on preferences on four dichotomies
 - c. MBTI is an explanation of behavior not an excuse
 - d. All of the above
 - e. Both (a) and (b)
3. What are CMU’s four (4) service values?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
4. Which of the following abilities are involved in being an effective Diversity Change Agent?
 - a. Speaking up publicly in every situation where there may have been offense
 - b. Having empathy for people on various sides of an issue, respecting different viewpoints
 - c. Being able to be a bit of a risk taker, taking action when appropriate
 - d. Having a response ready if your personal viewpoint is attacked
 - e. Both (b) and (c)
5. Which of the following is characteristic of feedback that is most effective and well received:
 - a. Public and Re-directive
 - b. Evaluative and General
 - c. Focused on the Individual’s Personality
 - d. Specific and Timely
 - e. A and D

6. Which of the following is an assertive communication tool:
 - a. "You" Statements
 - b. Paraphrasing
 - c. Empathy
 - d. All of the Above
 - e. Both (b) and (c)
7. Which of the following is the most effective way to communicate with an Aggressive person:
 - a. Talk more loudly and clearly
 - b. Let them know their behavior is making you nervous
 - c. Do not make eye contact
 - d. Maintain a calm tone
 - e. None of the Above
8. Which of the following should be included in a performance management system:
 - a. SMART Goals
 - b. Ongoing Feedback
 - c. Employee Coaching
 - d. Career Development Plan
 - e. All of the Above
9. If you have questions related to contract administration, discipline or other employment issues, who should you call?
 - a. Human Resources
 - b. Your Best Friend
 - c. President Rao
 - d. The Help Desk
 - e. Any of the Above
10. List three mistakes you are unlikely to make as a supervisor:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
11. List three (3) federal or state employment laws/regulations that impact the workplace:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Appendix 3: Post Series Supervisor Assessment of Participant Behavior Change

Note: This is normally an electronic survey. It is presented here without the radio buttons for easy reading.

Leadership Excellence Supervisor Survey

1. I have noticed a positive change in the workplace behavior of this LE participant.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

2. Please list any specific changes that you have observed that you believe are a result of this course (positive or negative!).

3. Of the following performance areas, which ones have been positively impacted as a result of this person's involvement in Leadership Excellence (please check all that apply)?

Improvement in the quality of their work
Increase in the output of their work
Increase in the output of others work
Increase in customer satisfaction
Increase in the effectiveness of others
Increase in employee satisfaction
Reduction of customer complaints
Time savings
Cost Savings
Better relationships with office personnel
Better teamwork within the office
Better communication with others
A better appreciation and embracing of peoples differences
Generally poses a more positive attitude
Obtaining a clearer understanding and perspective of University Goals and missions, and how they fit into that
Better attitude toward change

4. Over the past few years, we have worked to encourage participants to involve their supervisors more in the process, though it is not a mandatory part of the course. Please comment on your level of involvement in the process (i.e. did your report initiate any meetings with you before or during the course, did you initiate any discussions with them concerning what they were learning, involvement in the 360 survey, etc.).

5. Would you continue to recommend this course to others? Why or why not?
6. Is there anything else you think we could do as designers of this course to help participants and/or their supervisors to gain more from it?