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Ignite and Sustain Performance™

## LSA Global | White Paper

## 7 Action Learning Design Best Practices that Provide Business Results

**W**ould you be surprised to find that most Action Learning Programs do not change behavior or deliver true business results?

While Action Learning can be a powerful learning platform, poor action learning design can greatly minimize the desired impact. As a guiding design principle, we have found that the larger the dose of “business reality” – the better. With that in mind, here are 7 Action Learning design best practices that should be addressed:

**1. Have teams focus on projects that will generate significant business results and naturally grab senior leaders’ attention and interest.**

There is a correlation between the size and complexity of the project and breadth and depth of learning. We typically have teams identify projects that will add a minimum of \$6 million to the bottom line through revenue increases and/or cost reductions.

**2. Involve senior leaders throughout the initiative.**

In addition to underscoring the importance of the program, understanding the unique expectations of senior leaders and how to effectively address them is a critical skill for developing leaders. In addition, Action Learning provides an excellent framework for senior leaders to contribute their unique knowledge and wisdom. We have achieved the best results when senior leaders have been active team mentors. Mentoring also provides leaders with a first hand view of their leadership bench strength.

**3. Get support and buy-in from participants’ direct managers.**

While initiative sponsors will get initial buy-in from managers, participants will be coached to work with their manager as a key project stakeholder. Just like any important project, participants are responsible for effectively working and communicating with their manager to get the level of support they need to accomplish the project.

**4. Make project teams accountable for project execution and results.**

Participants’ commitment is established when they present a business case for change to senior leaders, and it is approved. Participants meet monthly to discuss their progress, but they also must communicate with all project stakeholders regarding the progress of the project. Additional accountability is incorporated by having senior leaders act as team mentors.

**5. Use only expert Facilitators/Coaches to deliver the programs that can respond to the needs of participants with just-in-time content and coaching to address application challenges and instill learning.**

We have found that effective action learning facilitators have the skills and experience to provide just-in-time feedback, content, tools, models, and learning based on the specific needs and challenges of the group. They also must be able to train project mentors as the first line of coaching for project teams to create the ongoing infrastructure for success.



**6. Create a balance of action and reflection.**

Most managers are great at taking action but not very good at reflective learning—a process of diagnosing situations where they do not get the results they want based on the actions taken. From experience, we know that without effective reflection skills, managers are likely to continue getting the same undesirable result without understanding why. This is most powerful when all project teams come together to discuss success and challenges. We have found that once a month is an ideal frequency to meet.

**7. Review ongoing Action Learning initiative results on an ongoing basis to identify opportunities to enhance the program.**

It is imperative that the project team applies Action Learning principles throughout the initiative to continually modify and improve learning processes and support systems based on participant challenges, team results, and broad organizational feedback.

## About LSA Global

Since 1995, LSA has helped organizations create and maintain competitive advantages through people. Over 85% of our business comes from repeat clients and our customer satisfaction rating is 97.5%. Our clients tell us that we are different. Our clients tell us that we save them both time and money. Our clients tell us that they appreciate access to experts across many areas

*Our Leadership and Management clients report that we decrease their costs by up to 50%, while helping increase speed-to-productivity by 60% and decrease unwanted attrition by up to 40%.*

*Our Sales clients confirm that they have grown sales by 40%, increased units sold by 42%, increased average pricing by 12%, and closed over 50% of their pipeline.*

*Our Project Management clients inform us that, by regularly completing projects that meet or exceed expectations, they have become an anomaly in the world where most projects disappoint or fail.*

Our clients succeed in the marketplace through increased revenue, decreased costs, and higher productivity. They maintain that our rigorous assessment, implementation, and measurement capabilities bring them tangible results. As an organization, we are fiercely devoted to supporting their success.

