



Developing Leadership

Who? What? Where?



focusing on the current issues and building capability of people and organisations

Introduction

Developing Leadership—Who? What? Where? is intended to assist in the promotion of a broader understanding of leadership development issues in the public sector. It seeks to provide readers with a snapshot of current leadership development programs and other initiatives in a variety of Australian Public Service (APS) agencies. The resource was initially developed and co-sponsored by the Department of Defence and the Australian Public Service Commission (then PSMPC) as a result of the Developing Leadership Seminar held in September 2001.

One of the clear messages from the 2001 Developing Leadership Seminar, was the enthusiasm participants' had for case studies of leadership programs and more details about programs referred to during the Seminar. This updated volume will build on that information and provide contact points for those who want additional information.

The Leadership Development Network initiated by the APSC and supported by a number of other agencies, will continue to pursue the aims of the Seminar and to provide opportunities for interested agencies to pursue particular cases in more detail (including comments from those who participated in the programs described).

The 2003 Resource Guide has been updated by the Leadership, Learning and Development Group of the APSC, based on contributions from agencies who participated in the 2001 Developing Leadership Seminar together with other agencies who have expressed an interest in providing information on their current programs.

Other agencies who are interested in participating in this resource are encouraged to contact the Leadership, Learning and Development Group of the APSC on (02) 6271 6560.

Australian Public Service Commission

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Department of the House of Representatives

The Department of the House of Representatives' purpose is to support Australia's Parliament. In particular, it supports the House of Representatives in fulfilling its role as a representative and legislative body by providing advice and services of the highest standard, cost effectively.

The Department has approximately 250 staff based in Canberra, grouped into functional areas such as the Committee Office, Table Office, and Serjeant-at-Arms Office. The staffing levels across the Department include 4 SES staff, 54 Executive Band 1 and 2s and 26 Parliamentary Service Level 6 staff. In addition we have a number of staff at lower levels that have supervisory responsibilities. We therefore view that many people have the opportunity to display leadership and are encouraged to do so.

The Department of the House of Representatives has a number of strategies to encourage, develop and promote leadership. In 1998, the Department initiated involvement in the Investors' in People (IiP) process, and the standard was achieved in July of 2001. This required a significant investment in people practices especially advancing the leadership capability of staff.

Development of leadership skills and behaviours

One initiative included departmental staff identifying 13 leadership skills and behaviours. The skills and behaviours were identified by staff and have been developed into a Leadership Statement that acts as a blueprint of what is expected of departmental leaders. The skills and behaviours are used as a significant aspect of our performance management process. All staff with supervisory responsibilities are assessed by their supervisor and the staff they supervise on the extent to which they are demonstrating the characteristics.

Identifying leadership needs

The work performance management process assists to identify the leadership needs of individuals, however this information is confidential to the parties involved. On a Department wide basis, we also conduct a leadership survey seeking more anonymous feedback on supervisor performance and Executive practices. Surveys were conducted in 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2003. The most important data captured from the results of the surveys has been the difference between the value staff place on the particular leadership skills and behaviours compared with the ratings they give to their supervisor, their SES manager and the department's Chief Executive, the Clerk of the House of Representatives. Comparison between the 1998 and 2003 surveys reveals an average 26-percentage point improvement across the board. This represents a strong return on the department's investment in its leadership development program.

Additionally all SES staff have used the 360 degree feedback process developed in association with the Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework. Participants in other programs are also required to use a 360-degree process to assess their current capability (eg DiSC).

Addressing and developing leadership capabilities

The Department also uses a number of programs to address needs. The intention is to develop a range of approaches from different providers focusing on:

- departmental needs, using internal programs;
- public sector issues, using external programs as provided through the APS Commission and Centre for Public Management;
- broader changes in the work environment, using Mt Eliza Business School; and
- more extensive development using accredited programs such as Graduate Certificates (Public Sector Management Course), and work-based programs such as the Senior Women in Management program

Internal customised programs

Introduction to Leadership

This two-day program is designed to equip middle management staff in the department with skills to work in teams and manage staff effectively, including: effective team leadership, managing conflict, assertiveness skills, managing meetings effectively, understanding of personality differences and implications for the workplace, giving and receiving feedback and managing marginal performance, demonstrating initiative and managing upwards.

Leadership Development Program—Coaching and Mentoring

To provide a focused development opportunity for Department of the House of Representatives staff as an extension to previous management and leadership training. The outcomes are to enhance skills and understanding in: self-awareness, motivating staff, setting direction and being innovative and creative.

Results

The leadership program is reviewed at the individual, area and departmental level. Nearly all senior staff, identified as having leadership responsibilities, have participated in relevant programs. Individuals attending the internal and external courses have provided positive feedback. The work performance management system provides much of the feedback on the effectiveness of the programs.

The results to date have indicated a change in culture in most work areas, as measured through the Investor in People process and the leadership surveys. As an outcome of this year's planning process the Department of the House of Representatives will continue to focus on evaluation to improve our ability to measure our performance improvement and introduce an executive coaching program.

Contacts

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