

## Management and Leadership Development

### Background

Through a series of successful mergers and acquisitions, our client had more than doubled in size in just four years, becoming a much more diverse organization, and employing people from many different countries, nationalities, and corporate cultures. This diversity was reflected in the 35 different leadership development programs that were available enterprise-wide, with each business or group of businesses deciding on its own local offering.

It became evident to our client that it was missing a critical opportunity – to develop a common understanding of what it means to be a leader in the organization. Given this situation, the company prioritized the development of a small number of leadership development programs that could be locally tailored, but still provide consistent training and performance standards across the globe. In doing so, the development team realized that they ran the risk of looking back at some point and having no clear standard of measurement about the value of this critical program because of the lack of common success criteria or benchmarks by which to define progress.

### The Approach

Struggling with this goal to prove the value of leadership training, our client arranged for a multiple-day session with us to brainstorm about possible ways to address this question. What emerged was a multiphase process.

The first phase consisted of CSR's one-on-one telephone interviewing. CSR conducted 300 interviews worldwide, in four languages, with a broad cross-section of personnel. The purpose of this phase was to develop the criteria that the organization would use to measure the success of the program; that is, to define what would be the elements to assess, and among which populations within this global organization ("measuring the right things with the right people").

The second phase included an online survey, which was translated into five languages, and completed by 1,200 employees worldwide. The survey consisted primarily of closed-ended questions that we had created based on the results from the qualitative phase, using a 5-point rating scale. By comparing the responses to questions and the behavioral assessments of those who had not attended training (i.e., 0 courses of 3 possible) to those who had taken 1 course, to

those who had taken two or more courses, we were able to draw statistically valid and reliable conclusions about the value of the training program within the organization.

The third phase involved additional one-on-one telephone interviewing with a broad range of volunteers from the online study. This enabled CSR to gather additional in-depth feedback about, and solicit anecdotal examples of, the benefits of the leadership program. This material was used in compelling internal communications to help drive attendance to the program, which quickly became the most popular of leadership development courses across the company.

## Results

CSR initially presented the results of this multiphase project in 2003 and has been retained by the client to undertake the study again several times since.

The results have helped the organization build a “report card” that reflects the expectations of those who are most affected by the training and development program. In other words, the report card was designed to measure the right things with the right people. Each successive evaluative phase helps the organization benchmark and measure the program’s progress against this report card, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In addition, the popularity of this development course enabled two corporate-wide benefits: It built a common language and set of standards for leadership to emerge that could be applied across the globe; and, our client was able to discontinue supporting multiple training programs, thus saving money and management time. According to our client:

*“We were very happy with the process. We liked that CSR didn’t come in with a rigid methodology. And the team really appreciated creating something together, which was different from what we each could have come up with individually. CSR was very accommodating and able to hold an open space and let the solutions and criteria emerge. CSR really engaged with us as a client and tried to understand what it was we wanted and then responded to that.”*