

ORGANIZATIONAL SOLUTIONS LEARNING AND CHANGE A SHORT CASE STUDY ON INTEL

Tolu Igbalajobi 

CEO, Global Business Consulting Services, USA

Globalbusinessconsulting46@gmail.com

Abstract

Organizational Learning is used for the successful implementation of Innovation and change. The purpose of Intel's Leadership Development Forum (LDF) was to serve as a learning process and not a training program on the ability of leadership to effect positive organizational changes and improve performance goals. Leadership Development Forum emphasizes the fact that leadership should plan, set direction, support components and inspire everyone in the organization. Solutions learning (SL) is used to identify innovative solutions to introduce innovation and change. Intel's approach to developing the leadership development forum is a design strategy that corresponds with solutions learning. Innovative change is needed to increase product and service base of an organization, and also for introducing something new for the improvement of organizational functions. This may include the use of a new method of production or a new form of business organization. Implementation for success is the key here. Intel utilizes a systematic approach that develops and coaches leaders in a unique way for innovation and change that includes self-reflection, coaching and action learning methodologies.

Keywords: Solutions Learning, Innovation, Intel, Organizational Learning, Leadership

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast paced atmosphere, staying competitive with market leadership depends on the ability of an organization to learn quicker, better, and cheaper than other competitors. Process of innovation involves searching for the innovation strategy systematically, and survey and synthesis of the new processes (Dooley & O'Sullivan, 2001). This can be a whole organizational survey, or cycles of differing thoughts on new process such as the practice exercises at Intel's group discussions before, during, and after learning and coaching sessions, and merging all the

processes in form of evaluation and feedback (Davila et al., 2006). Intel is an American global technology company, the world's largest semiconductor chip maker based on revenue, and the inventor of the x86 series of microprocessors found in most personal computers. In 2010, Intel announced a 10-year, \$200 million commitment to advance education in math and science in the United States. Intel's leadership program offers an innovative, comprehensive leadership development process utilizing unique learning methods over a five-month period. Participants are held accountable to apply new leadership behaviors on the job. As a result, several participants reported that they experienced leadership development, growth, and personal transformation (Carter et al., 2005).

SAMPLE RESULTS OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE AT INTEL

Leadership is a skill that must be learned, and developed which ultimately becomes part of you. It is a self-expression of someone and a process; you do not just do it for nothing (Fields, 2011). Being a coach and part of the leadership team, there is the responsibility of helping participants recognize the value of the program in actually seeing themselves as a change agent. The coach will have to make participants reflect and engage them in problem solving exercise by asking relevant questions, with assignments, and feedback to feel and see the value of the change. Research results based on Intel's best practices showed that:

- 47% of participants who have completed leadership development forum have better prospects with new positions of greater responsibility.
- There was 68% improvement in participant's ability to apply leadership practices to their work.
- 89% of leadership development forum participants report a well-connected network of interdepartmental colleagues.
- 100% of the participants reported improved leadership skills and styles.

In comparison to some other member companies, the leadership development was established to be the most innovative and results-oriented leadership program reviewed. When staff members were surveyed at Intel on the effectiveness of the program, 100% of the participants agreed to the ongoing need for the program. Intel has definitely initiated an innovative program that is part of the corporation's culture for continuous and creative changes (Carter et al., 2005).

APPLICATION OF THE STAGES OF SOLUTION LEARNING

Leadership style breakthrough would bring about a paradigm shift as leaders become learners who are innovative thinkers, engage in being creative, to effect positive changes for optimum performance and increased profitability (Hrebiniak, 2006).When leaders develop and improve

themselves, it enhances performance goals they can then successfully work with other team members until it becomes company-wide culture (Anthony, Eyring, & Gibson, 2006). Leadership forum is a learning process to effect changes and meet company. Research also shows that leadership is being able to inspire others, setting directions, having flexibility in applying different techniques to various situations with openness, leading breakthrough projects, and reinventing as against just having fundamental management skills (Davila et al., 2006). Intel is a high-tech company and it is imperative that changes be made when necessary to match up to new developments in our dynamic environment for success and profitability.

Upper level management at the corporation budgeted for the change and aggressively wanted to create changes, make a difference within the organization, at the community level, as well as maintain a global competitive advantage. The leadership at Intel supported the leadership development forum, participated, and applied the model for success (Bates & Khasawneha, 2005). This shows the significant effect that senior level management can have on the smooth running of the organization. Furthermore, Intel's approach to developing the leadership development forum is the adoption of the following design strategies which corresponds to the solutions learning stages.

IDENTIFY AND DIAGNOSE

The realization here at Intel is the principled fact that leadership is a self-discovery process. A study conducted of other Intel manufacturing sites and external programs revealed that as many as twenty-four competencies were identified as key to leadership development. For instance, the organizational development team had to decide to focus on some leadership best practice as the best fit. Leadership framework exemplifies the effective ways of humans as living system that is simple and more powerful than a long list of competencies. Organizational development teams are coaches and facilitators. As facilitators, the organizational team provides a process and environment for learning. Also, as coaches, the organizational team serve as discussion panels for all participants, not just job content specialists; helping everyone see things differently, and discussing and applying lessons learned (Carter et al. 2005). In addition, solution learning for this process should include ethical standards and policies, well defined organizational code of conduct, motivational strategies, incentives and commitment for the whole organization as well as cross functional teams and inter-intra organizational departments leaders should use resilient skills acquired to impact positive motivation and significant value creation holistically. Innovation should be matched with strategic business plan using a balanced portfolio and the play to win innovative strategy (Davila et al., 2006).

LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

According to Carter et al. (2005), the organizational development team at Intel conducted research on leadership based on data collected which showed a consistent theme of the emergence of learned leadership. It is a process, an expression of who we are as humans in action (Joonmo, 2005). This program was delivered onsite which was more convenient, cost effective, and builds peer relationships across all departments. Ninety percent of LDF is delivered on-site. Leadership development is highly effective when integrated in the day-to-day activities of not just some managers but the whole organizational system (Brown, 2009). At Intel, for example, leadership development forum is delivered weekly over a five-month period to allow new leadership behaviors impact the organizational culture (Davila et al., 2006). Embedding innovation as part of the whole organizational culture has a positive impact on relationships but should be holistic in nature to involve everyone (Laszlo, 1996; Porter, 2004).

DESIGN

Each leadership session is designed to accommodate the goals and objectives of each department. Intel team developed a shared vision that identified a high-level program schedule and key learning concepts to eliminate redesigning of the entire program before the first pilot session (Porter, 2004). At the completion of each session, feedback is reviewed and inputs are incorporated into the design of upcoming sessions. This process encourages real commitment but the limitation is that only group leaders and managers that are truly interested in developing their leadership abilities participates in leadership development forum. However, the ultimate goal for Intel is to involve everyone on a rotational basis. For maximum return on investments, organizations must balance creativity and value (Davila et al. 2006).

IMPLEMENT/FOLLOW-UP

Carter et al. (2005) noted that Intel applied Warren Bennie's innovative learning methods to the design of Leadership Development Forum. This method advocates that learning is most effective in the decision making process with implementation and follow-up when it is active and imaginative. The benefit of self-knowledge is listening to everyone and shaping events; not being shaped by others while reflecting upon various experiences with sessions designed to allow time for open communication and feedback so that participants can learn from each other. Davila et al. (2006) noted the importance of neutralizing organizational antibodies that eradicates excellent ideas because they are different from the standards in creating internal and external innovative networks. It also involves implementing the right metrics and incentives for manageability and creating positive behavior; many companies lack incentives to elicit the

appropriate innovation behavior. So, every session must include action learning for all participants to put into practice lessons learned and conclude with sharing of new learning's for practical applicability on the job.

EVALUATE/MONITOR

Coaches make sure that all participants self-reflect and utilize problem solving skills to evaluate problems by asking questions, providing feedback, with assignments that encourages the thinking of new innovative ideas and monitor (Huggett & Kaplan, 2011). Self-assessment at the conclusion of Intel's LDF session measured participants' ability in the application of effective leadership practices for personal and organizational growth. Participants score themselves openly at the forum against the leadership practices and then discuss the results. In effect, the leadership development forum at Intel provided an innovative leadership development program for the organization to engage in a conference based on the organizational vision with excellent examples. Also, pre and post program self-assessments need to be conducted. These stages are depicted below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Leadership Solution Learning Stages



LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATIVE SKILLS FOR INNOVATION

Expounding on some important leadership participative management skills for successful innovation includes:

Establishment of Vision and Strategy

How can there be a focus or purpose without a plan? As inspiring leaders, a plan must be developed with motivation, vision and a strategy that involves everyone from the very beginning to achieve success. Without this process it is almost impossible to sustain any business process.

This is the initial phase when the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) meets with the leadership team to brainstorm on several strategies including the best way to involve everyone in the innovation process on an ongoing basis with questions such as: What will the company look like in five years? How successful will the business be? What will the corporate culture be like? How will the business be viewed in the industry? Hence, all member of the team would be involved in a writing exercise like writing of an article about the business as if it would be read in a major business publication. Each senior leader will share writings and stories to the rest of the team. After this collaborative session, leadership will now coach the managers and involve everyone as a team on the process for consistency in shared values. It is a leadership development tool that sets the tone of the organizational culture and the level of leadership involvement and support (Brown, 2009).

Formation of Shared Values

This is where executive meetings and workshops are used to establish problems and solutions with a plan in place taking into consideration everyone's view point. A diverse organization has human capital with diverse perspectives (Huggett & Kaplan, 2011). Leadership forum will include all the organizations top executives. Everyone in the organization should participate and contribute. The process of implementing changes with everyone's buy-in should be established as well. Without coaching top leaders, then changes cannot be effectively implemented.

Mentoring and Nurturing

Organizational culture based on the example of Silicon Valley and Hewlett Packard's early days on intelligent risk culture that are positive can be implemented. Mentoring attitude is usually firm and followed in a realistic manner without being overly critical. This type of relationship is very critical for starting new businesses but not widely used for leading innovation and change.

Invest in People

This is an excellent business practice that is rewarding for leaders and managers who also become coaches and leaders which eventually results in the training of all team members. Investment in people should be on-going and supported by leadership for sustainability. Carter et al. (2005) reported that Intel's best practices on leadership development Forum (LDF) was embedded into the organizational culture with emphasis on constant practice and repetition for learning and embracing change.

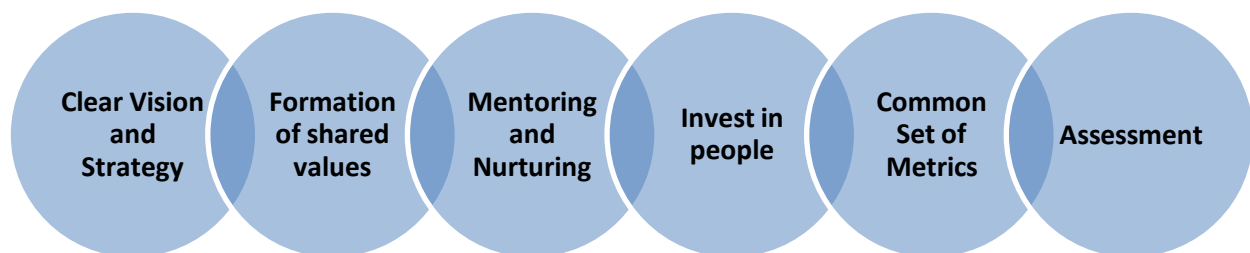
Common Set of Metrics

Follow up of the vision, strategy, and values using a participative seminar that focuses on value drivers can be very effective. Corporate metrics has to be something meaningful to all employees including frontline employees and supervisors. This provides the organization with the opportunity to monitor everyday activities. Employees become cognizance of the impact performance has on the daily activities of the business which means that leaders attending this seminars are prepared with the data and information for total business alignment at all levels. Leadership groups go back to the organization and coach the concepts learned to other team members.

Assessment

Best practices can be replicated all the way down to frontline management. Follow up can be in the form of about two or three progress reviews per year at every level of the business to involve everyone. Leaders must lead by example with courage and conviction and provide timely feedback. Key participative management skills are depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Some Key Participative Management Skills



For leadership to be successful in leading innovation and change, the best fit for the organization based on a combination of theories, models and best practices should be adopted. There are no hard and fast rules set on concrete stone for managing and leading innovation and change. Vision, strategy, embracement of values fuel an organization while recognizing humans as living systems in the process, working together as team members while acknowledging diversity using high ethical standards will result in positive organizational growth (Hesselbein et al. 2002).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is essential that leaders build enduring excellent ethical organizations from the beginning or turn good organizations into great ones which is the most powerful and profound form of innovation called social innovation must be developed (Huggett & Kaplan, 2011). This type of innovation is the first concept that makes human productivity possible for organizational innovation growth and success. Invention of constitutional government, private property as a social mechanism, money, public stock ownership, the corporation, the free-market economy, free public education, and free health care are all social innovations are ultimately more significant than the invention of the personal computer, the telephone, the automobile, the jet airplane, or the Internet. Today, there is a need for leadership to motivate, coach, energize, inspire, and empower based on respect for people who already know what to do with added support. Leaders manage with flexibility and get people involved and inspired to do what is right. The greatest of all inventions is human organization and society, the ultimate tool for achieving human objectives (Hesselbein et al., 2002). So, emphasis will be moved from product and technology innovation to social innovation. For example, Thomas Edison's greatest invention was not the light bulb, phonograph, or telegraph rather; it was the modern research and development laboratory which was a social invention.

CONCLUSION

The challenge for Intel like many other organizations is making sure the process is monitored for consistency as a continuous process for the survival and growth of the whole organization to increase profitability. Organizational team must develop and maintain systems for refining the current model, building the learning process, and planning new strategies (Davila et al. 2006). Learning should be integrated in the design of the process and in the response to deviations (Carter et al. 2005). Intel Corporation and other businesses should use the holistic organizational development approach which involves the whole organization, social innovation, balancing of business technology and leadership model using the holistic diagnosis approach

that includes everyone in the organization (Porter, 2004). In a fast-changing environment, the ability to learn faster, better, and more cheaply than your competitors could mean the difference between retaining market competitive edge and losing it (Brown, 2009). This article provided a short overview of solution learning innovation method. Use of an applicable example like Intel have been included with a short strategy model proposed that can be viewed at a glance for starting solutions learning process for successful organizational growth through continuous improvement with an ongoing monitoring system in place for sustainability. It is vital to understand the process of innovation, how it might best be structured and managed, and what outcomes might result. Building and enhancing knowledge is clearly a challenge that researchers in all sectors must take seriously. This research was conducted in a way that should provide useful insights for future researchers choosing to focus on innovative solutions and issues.

REFERENCES

- Anthony, S., Eyring, M., & Gibson, L. (2006). Mapping your innovation strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(5), 104-113.
- Barnett, E., & Storey, J. (2001). Narratives of learning, development and innovation: Evidence from a manufacturing SME. *Enterprise and Innovation Management Studies*, (2), 83 – 101.
- Bates, R., & Khasawneh, S. (2005). Organizational learning culture, learning transfer climate and Perceived innovation I Jordanian organizations. *International Journal of Training & Development*, 9(2), 96-109.
- Berkowiz, S. (2001). Measuring and reporting human capital. *The Journal of Government Financial Management*, 50(3), 13–17.
- Brown, T. (2009). *Change by design: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation*. New York, NY: Harper Collins
- Carter, L., Ulrich, D., & Goldsmith, M. (2005). Best practices in leadership development and organizational change: *How the Best Companies Ensure Meaningful Change and Sustainable Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
- Davila, T., Epstein, M.J., & Shelton, R. (2006). *Making innovation work*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School Publishing.
- Dooley, L., & O'Sullivan, D. (2001). Structuring innovation: A conceptual model and implementation methodology. *Enterprise and Innovation Management Studies*, (2), 177-194.
- Fields, R. M. (2011). The new “best practices” standard? Independent legal counsel for compensation committees. *The Corporate Governance Advisor*, 19(4), 13–15.
- Hammond, J., Keeney, R., & Raiffa, H. (2006). The hidden traps in decision making. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(1), 118–126.
- Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M., Somerville, I. (2002). *Leading for innovation and organizing for results*. New York, NY: Jossey-Bass.
- Hrebiniak, G.L. (2006). *Making strategy work: Leading effective execution and change*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School.
- Huggett, M., & Kaplan, G. (2011). Human capital values and returns: Bounds implied by earnings and asset returns data. *Journal of Economic Theory*, 146(3), 897.

Joonmo, S. (2005). Organizational innovation: Studies of program change in community agencies. *Contemporary Sociology*, 34(3), 262-263.

Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (1999). *Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to rewarding and Recognizing Others*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Laszlo, E. (1996). *The systems view of the world: A holistic vision for our time*. Cresskill, NJ: HamptonPress.

Porter, A. M. (2004). The case for holistic strategies. *Purchasing*, 133(5), 55-59.