

L&D Tips to Drive Successful Leaders-as-Teachers (LAT) Programs

- **Design formal LAT programs.** Although many organizations take a somewhat casual approach to leaders' teaching, make a firm commitment by creating a formal, structured program. Remember to base LAT interventions on specific desired business goals and results, establish the program's value, educate and communicate about program details, and measure outcomes.
- **Determine your own best practices.** Once you know the business imperatives for your LAT initiative, you can decide the best uses of (and ways to save) leaders' time. Should they teach full courses? Single training modules? Teach in small increments during regular meetings? Facilitate discussions? Which applications best suit your organization, your leaders, and your employees' learning needs?
- **Create a participation process.** Many L&D functions develop selection criteria to determine which leaders will be selected to teach. In other organizations, the expectation that leaders at specified levels will teach is included in their job descriptions and/or performance goals. The leader-as-teacher role should be thoroughly defined, including responsibilities involved, the selection process clearly communicated, and training provided to participating leaders as needed.
- **Take L&D ownership of LAT.** In some companies, senior leadership teams or other functions oversee leaders' teaching. However, many organizations recognize the wisdom of having their L&D functions own LAT programs. L&D professionals have the expertise to help with content choices and design, evaluate teaching skills, and provide the training and support leaders need for success.
- **Make participation easy for leaders.** Consider leaders' strengths when designing their teaching roles; empower them to find comfortable ways to share their knowledge. Often, leaders are good storytellers, and their experiences and lessons learned make strong additions to content for leadership development programs, along with many other training applications. Companies frequently involve leaders (as company historians and brand or culture ambassadors) in new-hire orientations and onboarding or capitalize on executives' networking abilities by having them teach others how to make effective connections.
- **Encourage action.** When considering teaching roles for leaders, find ways to involve them in action-learning interventions. This can be accomplished by having executives facilitate live simulations, guide problem-solving sessions, lead hands-on skill-building exercises, or conduct other experiential training.

Overcome common barriers to LAT effectiveness with these additional tips:

- The time crunch can be an especially difficult challenge, but not an insurmountable one. **Careful planning can ensure that most leaders' schedules are accommodated.** In some companies, L&D professionals recruit leaders from many organizational levels to ensure that no single individual is asked to bear an unrealistic load. Other learning functions solve the time problem by limiting teaching assignments and by involving leaders on a rotating basis, providing plenty of teaching down time.
- Seasoned learning pros also make it their priority to **firmly establish the perception of LAT programs as valuable contributions to the organization.** Part of that goal is accomplished through comprehensive and consistent education and communication about leaders-as-teachers programs, including success stories and testimonials from participants.
- **Measurement is an indispensable help in affirming LAT value.** For any course or training program, defining appropriate metrics at the outset is the key that enables L&D to demonstrate ties to business results and organizational objectives. When leaders teach, their own development goals should reflect their experiences. L&D's ability to point to specific gains (both individual and organizational) driven by LAT programs also will aid in motivating leaders to teach.
- Whether leaders' teaching increases or decreases L&D costs tends to be contextual. As is true of any learning initiative, **budget projections and resource needs should be thoroughly examined before implementation proceeds to ensure that anticipated benefits are likely to outweigh associated costs.**
- **Managing attitudes of the various stakeholders involved in LAT programs relies heavily on education about the initiatives, with particular attention paid to conveying the value for all concerned.** Some L&D practitioners prepare a short orientation to set employees' expectations, and many screen leaders to assess their teaching skills and needs for support. If employees are hesitant to accept leaders as teachers, focused efforts to establish and communicate leaders' credentials and credibility can be helpful.

For more on this topic, please read [How Executives Pay Learning Forward: Leaders-as-Teachers Programs](#) on the Media Partners blog.

Media Partners provides L&D with hundreds of award-winning videos on topics that enable leaders and employees to gain extensive knowledge and skills...so they can share them with others confidently and enthusiastically.

Browse our topics and preview videos in their entirety on our website, <http://www.mediapartners.com>.