



The language of leadership

Introduction

Leadership development programmes abound offering their clients a huge range of ways and means of developing the leadership capabilities of people.

At SoundWave, we focus on developing the interactional skills of leaders, managers and professionals by focussing on 'talk'. We do this because, talk is the primary way in which things get done, in which leaders direct, influence, argue, correct, cajole, inspire, question and motivate their people. Without talk, there is no leadership.

"But what about feelings and what about action?", people ask.

The answer is that talk, or dialogue or conversation, is the gateway to both. What we say and how we say it, is an expression of our feelings and when we stop and consider how we talk and its effect on others' we are compelled to ask ourselves, 'how it is that we express ourselves in the way we do?'



Similarly, the gap between what I say and the actions I take is narrow and sometimes non-existent. When I correct someone's performance is that merely talk or is that in itself an action? Talk *is* action.

And so when it comes to designing and running leadership development programmes, our *focus* is talk and social interaction but our *scope* is the whole person. Talk provides the gateway.

Principles of design

We work to three principles in designing leadership programmes and interventions.

1. **Small changes have big impacts** - we notice that when leaders identify their preferences in talk through the use of the SoundWave analytic suite, that they often find it simple to spot where an improvement or change needs to be made. We notice also, that in making just a small change, these same leaders report a significant impact on others. For example, where a leader decides to



use the correctional voice well having previously avoided it's use, the leader will report back his or her increased sense of control and their team member's increased sense of support.

2. **It's the many conversations that matter, not just the 'difficult' ones** - leaders set the tone and the tone they set is largely dictated through their preferences in talk. Think of it numerically; if as a leader I interact with other people for just three hours a day and that I'm capable of speaking at 350 words a minute (and if we assume that that's 3 sentences, or one small paragraph, a minute) well, it doesn't take much to work out the many hundreds of times a day I am impacting others peoples thoughts and feelings thorough the way I talk. And thats fine until we recognise, that what I say and how I say not may not be fully conscious to me. Our programme San interventions, make our talk conscious.

3. **It's what happens in the context of the workplace that counts** - insights can be garnered, emotions explored and skills improved in workshop settings but it's what happens for real, in the workplace, that matters. Our programmes and interventions, seek to take the skills to the workplace and to coach-in their success from there. In this way the situationally specific circumstances faced by the leader can be taken into account.

Case examples

Below we offer a summery of some of our work

Client Sector	Programme focus	Programme Process	Results
Oil and Gas	Building a culture of continuous improvement. Run annually for global management cadre. Operational since 2011	A programme of four week's face-to-face plus off-line testing as part of a certification process. Skills development covering the spectrum from Lean-Sigma through to the skills of social interaction.	Multiple operational benefits within six months of programme end. Significant leader capability enhancements.
Automotive	Personal Development for HiPO's	Three week residential with project activity. A focus of personal transformation as emerging leader. Operating at a strategic level.	Participants report new ways of seeing and acting. A variety of career development moves. Improved personal performance.
Pharmaceutical	Building a culture of continuous improvement.	A programme of x3 two day workshops with 1-2-1 coaching and workplace support. A focus on broadening the range of social interaction to include strong coaching skills. The ability to work better with new and pre-existing processes.	Improved operational performance. Greatly improved coaching and international skills. More confidence. Better surfacing of problems. Leaders closer to the business.



Paper Manufacturing	Building a culture of continuous improvement.	A programme of x3 two day workshops with 1-2-1 coaching and workplace support. A focus on broadening the range of social interaction to include strong coaching skills. The ability to work better with new and pre-existing processes.	Improved operational performance - yield and uptime. Greatly improved coaching and international skills. More confidence. A model for other group business units.
---------------------	---	---	---

For further details on any of the above including Sector cases, please contact the SoundWave Team info@soundwave.global.