



NewMindsets Case Study

Rapid Talent Development in a Fast-growing Company

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The Situation and Project Objectives:

A fast moving entrepreneurial business in a highly competitive industry is focused on rapid growth, through the creation and expansion of new business units. The scarcity of top talent is a problem in the industry at large, a potential block to the company's development plans, hence a major strategic imperative. With the support of the top executive team the HRD department has launched a senior management development program targeted at high potential leaders using NewMindsets as the core learning resource. The program faces special challenges since the participants are already stretched to the limit. The combination of time constraints, wide geographical dispersion of members, a corporate environment hostile to learning *as an end in itself*, and a culture of extreme pragmatism required an action-oriented approach capable of delivering an immediate return on investment of both time and money.

Implementation Approach:

The *NewMindsets* system is used to support a program blending NewMindsets online materials with a team learning and mentoring process that uses participants' action learning projects to deliver demonstrable ROI:

- High potential candidates identified through the annual succession planning process engage in a six-month program.
- Each participant brings a “stretch” project on which they want to make a breakthrough, approved by their immediate bosses and the executive team to ensure alignment with strategic priorities.
- After a face to face "kick off" workshop exploring the role of NewMindsets as the core learning support and an initial exchange of project ideas, participants engage in team-based action learning.
- Each month learning teams of 3 to 5 participants meet virtually via tele- or video-conferences. They are mentored by VP level managers and explore leadership themes such as *Creative Thinking for Business Improvement*, *Leading "Out of the Box" Thinking*, *Overcoming Barriers to Business Improvement*, *Team Leadership*. NewMindsets learning resources and job supports are used to create a focus for individual and team learning and to apply key ideas to work problems and their stretch projects. The mandate: “Make a difference to the business” with demonstrable ROI.



- In this way the online program mobilizes and supports a series of action initiatives, promotes leadership development and an exchange of problem solving ideas across the organization. Project achievements are reported at the company's annual conference.

Achievements:

- An action-based approach to leadership development with a demonstrable return on investment exceeding \$10million (US) on the action projects.
- On each cycle of the program approximately 60% of participants prove their worth as high potential leaders. Many succeed in producing major business or system breakthroughs valued in millions of dollars.
- The senior mentors are able to coach and motivate in relation to important business problems and to observe and assess the leadership creativity and potential of participants first hand.
- Best practice is shared across the organization
- The program produces many cascading effects and benefits as participants share their learning back in their everyday work settings e.g. with local team members and direct reports. It has also helped recruitment in establishing the company as an "employer of choice" in the industry, and created a pool of highly qualified talent capable of movement into senior business positions.
- The project has received a 2003 ASTD citation for excellence in practice for results-focused top-team development.

For further information contact info@newmindsets.com