



CISCO ILP CASE STUDY



A Report on the Cisco Intensive Leadership Program

THE “NEW NORMAL” IS A BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT TYPIFIED BY CONTINUAL AND FAST-PACED CHANGE. SUCCESS IN THIS DYNAMIC BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT REQUIRES A HIGHLY ADAPTABLE WORKFORCE. THAT MEANS CONSTANTLY BUILDING CAPACITY BY UPGRADING AND ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE, DEVELOPING NEW ATTITUDES, AND CHANGING BEHAVIORS. ADAPTABLE LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE THE ONES TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE.

THE SITUATION

Cisco has a tradition of hiring, developing, and retaining the best people in the high technology industry in order to drive successful business transformation. Vital to that process is the capacity to assess and develop talent, enabling employees to maximize their contribution to the organization. To support the important work of Talent Management, Cisco introduced the C-LEAD Leadership Framework, a matrix of five competencies that characterize what is referred to as “Cisco 3.0 Leadership.” These competencies are being incorporated into several processes, including training, coaching, performance management, and succession planning.

ECSTASIS RESPONSE

Ecstasis has worked with Employee Development to build a comprehensive leadership assessment and development program for leaders in the Customer Advocacy organization. The design incorporates the C-LEAD framework into all aspects of the program. The Intensive Leadership Program, as it is called internally, was designed with these objectives in mind:

- **Generate self-awareness of current leadership ability and create the desire to learn**
- **Understand the roles and functions of leadership – globally and cross-functionally**
- **Increase awareness of personal development areas and support ability to align career development to personal strengths**
- **Encourage C-LEAD Mindset, Skill Set, and Tool Set**

“If you’re ready to stretch and grow, this program and environment will position you to ratchet it up a level or two. Excellent opportunity to meet and interface with not only Cisco execs, but also talented cohort team members. However good you are – you’ll get better.”

–2009 Program Participant

Intensive Leadership Program Evolution

Ecstasis has been involved with the Intensive Leadership Program since its inception in 2002, guiding each redesign and enhancement over the years.

PROVIDING CONTINUITY AND CREATIVITY

In place since 2002, the ILP is aimed at experienced, high-potential managers and directors. Ecstasis has been involved with the ILP, every step of the way, leading each redesign and enhancement to the program. In 2009, Cisco asked for a redesign to reduce travel costs while keeping the high-touch experience that is so important to leadership development work. Ecstasis developed a six-month leadership development program employing a blended learning approach that consists of:

- One week in residence capped with a one-day assessment center experience with group exercises and role-plays with actors
- Eight synchronous, virtual learning modules using Web 2.0 tools
- Field work to support immediate application to driving business transformation and people development
- 1:1 coaching over six months for each cohort member
- Group project work aligned to corporate initiatives culminating in presentations to senior executives

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

All learning modules are based on leadership first principles and leading edge thinking on innovation, change management, and organizational development. Ecstasis used existing materials and conducted research as needed to generate program resources incorporating the Cisco brand. These highly interactive virtual learning sessions are designed to provide 80% small group discussion and practice and 20% lecture, covering relevant topics:

- Transformative Leadership
- Human Behavior & Emotional Intelligence
- Sustainable Innovation
- Coaching
- Systems Thinking
- Change Management

“I am an advocate of this experience and I recommend it to many colleagues. It forced me to take a pause and spend quality time reflecting on people around me including myself and better understand them and myself. Intensive program is a fantastic way to look into the mirror and help you identify things you are doing good and things you need to enhance ... and it shows you how you can get better and from there on it is up to you!”

– 2009 Program Participant



Intensive Leadership Program Results

“This program is unlike any other high-potential leadership development program at Cisco. Most of our distinguished alumni continue to serve as leaders across CA and Cisco.”

–Ginger Crowne, Program Manager, CA Employee Development

CONCLUSIONS

Cisco has made great strides in developing its leadership capacity and leveraging its talent. The Intensive Leadership Program continues to be an effective component of their talent management strategy. Ginger Crowne, Program Manager, CA Employee Development: “This program is unlike any other high-potential leadership development program at Cisco. Most of our distinguished alumni continue to serve as leaders across CA and Cisco.”

Overall the Intensive Leadership Program is having a positive impact on the organization. They recognize a growing capacity for dispersed leadership, collaboration, and innovation in a fast-paced, and stress-inducing business environment. Their commitment to a serious, innovative talent management strategy, including leadership development is a key differentiator that increases Cisco's competitive advantage in recruiting and hiring new leadership talent.

A STRONG ROI

Results from an internal survey conducted by Cisco indicate an overall rating for the programs run in FY2009 of 4.26 on a five point scale. Results from an external, anonymous on-line survey conducted six weeks post-program yielded an overall score of 4.86 on a five point scale. The redesigned program reduced expenses by 35% (not inclusive of additional saved travel expense) from the previous fiscal year. Projects also generated ideas, that, when implemented, will result in additional revenue.

On average, 93.5% of leaders report that the program increased their capacity to drive the business forward. 87% of leaders report that the program enabled them to better develop their people. 88.4% of leaders would recommend the program to colleagues seeking personal and team development.

