

Engineering Management  
Field Project

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

By

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2010

An EMGT Field Project report submitted to the Engineering Management Program  
and the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Kansas  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master's of Science

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Rapid growth at SWEF (Software Engineering Firm) in recent years has led to the creation of many new team lead positions. This led to Human Resources developing a leadership development program to better equip newly promoted individuals to perform in their new roles. This project research supplements HR's efforts. It builds a more wholesome program by developing additional program components such as a Toastmasters chapter to develop communication skills, a personal development plan for a program project, and a training evaluation framework. The project's chapter titled Program Design describes each of these components. Material developed and used for these components is included in the appendix. A literature review that discusses source material and research basis for some program components is included.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

SWEF has experienced exceptionally high growth (20% to 30%) in recent years. With this has come an influx of new employees and the need for additional leadership and management positions. Employees, mostly engineers, with four to seven years work experience are being promoted into these positions. Many of these individuals have no formal background or education in leadership and management. Middle and senior management have observed the gap in skills between what the positions require and the newly promoted possess. SWEF's Human Resources (HR) department acknowledges this and understands that they've a duty to equip these newly promoted individuals with knowledge and tools that will better enable them to perform in their new roles. This forms the basis for SWEF's first Leadership Development Program (LDP).

Fundamentally, LDP consists of a series of thirteen classroom-based training sessions that last two to four hours. Each session covers a different topic relating to leadership in the business context. Additionally, a series of six department overviews is interspersed in the training sessions. These overviews are a light-weight rotational component designed to give new leaders additional insight into how their work impacts other departments. Organization and logistics of the training sessions and department overviews are HR's contribution to LDP.

The work of this project supplements HR's work. This project helps flesh out the program through means such as ensuring the education is aligned with the company's values, providing training material to the senior managers and directors giving the

department overview sessions to improve the effectiveness of their training, developing a “semester-long” final project, and establishing a training transfer measurement plan. These are examples of how this project builds LDP. Section 3, titled Program Design, describes contributions such as these on a subsection by subsection basis. The literature review is organized in a similar fashion. For each subsection in the Program Design section, there is a corresponding subsection in the literature review. Together, these sections describe how this project helps build full leadership development program.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Management Involvement**

Multiple studies have provided evidence demonstrating that management can positively influence training transfer. (Training transfer is a common term for the extent to which trainees apply training material.) Three relevant studies are briefly discussed below. Before discussing these studies, it is noteworthy to point out they are based on frameworks for examining training transfer. One such framework is developed in Baldwin and Ford’s 1988 article titled “Transfer of Training: A Review and Directions for Future Research” (Baldwin and Ford 1988). Another such framework belongs to Geilen (Geilen 1996). Both of these frameworks describe that training effectiveness is influenced by training design characteristics, trainee characteristics, and work environment characteristics. Work environment characteristics are relevant to management involvement in LDP. Examples of work environment characteristics

are supervisory or peer support and opportunities to perform learned behaviors. The noteworthy aspect of these frameworks is that they draw attention to how management can influence training transfer. Each of the three studies discussed below cite either of these frameworks as part of the basis of the study's research.

A study by Nicholas Clarke (Clarke 2002) found the following work environment factors impeded training transfer: heavy workloads, time pressures, lack of reinforcement of training, an absence of feedback on performance, and the perception of in-service training. Clarke notes, "these first four factors suggest some support for the two variables, (1) opportunity to use training; and (2) social support, as chief components of the organizational environment construct posited by Baldwin and Ford (1988) that may potentially generalize across different organizational settings." Clarke also cites a 1986 study by Vinokur-Kaplan that similarly found a lack of time or resources and a lack of management support or approval were major barriers to implementing training transfer (Vinokur-Kaplan 1986). Clarke further asserts, "Social support from supervisors in providing cues to implement newly trained behaviors and feedback on performance are therefore critical in this regard." ("This regard" refers to "maximizing the benefits from such in-service training.")

A study by Lim and Johnson (Lim and Johnson 2002) also provides empirical data on how management can influence training transfer. The following quote from concluding discussion in Lim and Johnson's study describes how management can influence training transfer:

*As several researchers suggest, supervisory variables impose critical influence on the likelihood of successful transfer (Georgenson, 1982; House, 1986; Huczynski and Lewis, 1980). This study showed similar results, that work environment factors related to supervisors were among the strongest factors influencing transfer. In fact, ensuring a supportive work climate may be the single most important requirement for the successful transfer of learning.*

The prior two studies drew their conclusions based on studying trainees. A study by Burke and Hutchins (Burke and Hutchins 2008) found similar results by surveying trainers. Survey results indicated that “training professionals most frequently identified strategies used in the work environment...to support transfer.” Furthermore, trainers reported on specific work environment strategies they found to be best practices. Quoting Burke and Hutchins study, “training professionals most frequently reported supervisory support...as best practices in training transfer.”

The significance of these studies is that they provide a degree of empirical support for how management may influence training transfer. These studies provide a basis for how the content of section 3.2 titled “Management Involvement” will promote training transfer.

## **2.2. Explore SWEF Support**

Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997) is generally regarded as the grandfather of adult learning theory. His work explains how adult learning (andragogy) differs from



adolescent learning (pedagogy). This literature review first came across his work in chapter 2 of Elaine Biech's "Training for Dummies" (Biech 2005). Elaine's work summarized Malcolm's main points about andragogy and explained how to apply them to training. Elaine's source for this summary, Malcolm Knowles' classic text "The Adult Learner" (Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson 2005), was briefly reviewed to see if it would provide additional insight. The conclusion of reviewing Malcolm's classic book was that Elaine's summary was sufficient for this project. Malcolm's book did not provide any further insight that was used for this project's contribution to the Explore SWEF component of LDP.

The other material that contributed to Explore SWEF came from ASTD Press's "10 steps" series of books, specifically, "10 Steps to Successful Training" (Biech 2009) and "10 Steps to Successful Presentations" (ASTD 2008). Both are full books, but they're written to be concise quick-read works that one can immediately put to use.

Rather than discuss this material further here, the reader is referred to the Explore SWEF material included in the appendix. The knowledge that was drawn from the works discussed here will be immediately obvious when reviewing the Explore SWEF material included in the appendix.

### **2.3. Toastmasters**

Academic research relating to the effectiveness of Toastmasters' methods is scarce. The KU Library's extensive list of databases was extensively searched for articles containing the word "Toastmasters." This yielded many results, but most were

news rather than studies. Results were narrowed by selecting scholarly databases. Results were further narrowed by searching for the keywords “Toastmasters” and “dissertation.” Google Scholar was also searched with these keywords, but this did not yield any results that weren’t found through the databases available through the KU Library.

One paper of relevance was found (Frischknecht 1977). In 1977 Jacqueline Frischknecht performed a thorough study of Toastmasters’ program to determine whether it was effective and, if so, whether its methods could be applied in traditional classroom schooling. Jacqueline’s work produced a 520 page dissertation that is impressive for its comprehensiveness. Results from Jacqueline’s study that are relevant to this paper are found in section 3.4.2, which is part of the section on Toastmasters’ role in LDP. Jacqueline’s study is summarized no further here because Angela Leone-Rundell’s dissertation mentioned in the next paragraph provides an excellent summary.

Angela Leone-Rundell wrote a dissertation that bears indirect relevance to this paper (Leone-Rundell 1993). Angela studied the values of Toastmasters and Dale Carnegie courses against the values of the members in each. As part of her study, she did a literature review for evidence of the effectiveness of Toastmasters’ program. Jacqueline’s dissertation (discussed above) was her principal finding. Angela summarizes Jacqueline’s study in pages 41 through 44 of her dissertation. Angela’s study is discussed here to reinforce the lack of research relating to Toastmasters. “In a review of literature about Toastmasters, little can be found in textbooks or reference

material located in libraries,” is a quote from her dissertation that is consistent with the literature review performed for this paper. Note, however, that Angela’s paper also has a section titled “Participants’ Ability to Present with Confidence,” on pages 41 and 42, that provides additional anecdotal evidence in support of the effectiveness of Toastmasters’ program.

#### **2.4. Personal Development Plan**

Hours were spent searching KU’s online databases and Google Scholar for research about how personal development plans (PDP) may contribute to business results. An abundance of articles about the benefits of PDPs and the process of creating them were found. Some articles about how particular companies tied personal development planning into their training and development processes were found as well. For instance, this literature typically discussed a trend where companies were working to shift the responsibility of personnel development from the company to the employee by facilitating personal development planning for employees. However, regarding the literature review, almost no scientific research or objective data substantiating the benefits of personal development planning was found.

The most relevant data that was found was a research report supported by the IES Co-operative Research Program titled Personal Development Plans: Case Studies of Practice (Tamkin 1995). The report covered case studies and phone interviews of fourteen companies in the UK. The companies had most or all employees develop a personal development plan. These companies were looking to implement a cultural

shift that moved the responsibility of employee development from the company to the employee (which was a common theme in other articles found in the literature review). The author makes a point that the study wasn't large enough to "conduct any assessment of impact" (impact referring to how the PDPs yielded positive business results); however, section 3.5 reports that various organizations did find positive benefits in the PDP process.

## **2.5. Program Evaluation**

Research regarding how to evaluate LDP started broad and quickly narrowed. "How to evaluate training" was entered into Google to scope methods to research further. Donald Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation was a predominate theme among the results, so it was investigated further. Descriptions of Kirkpatrick's four level system abound. Searching Google for "Kirkpatrick four level" turned up many of results that describe the method. Elaine Biech's chapter on evaluating training in her book *Training for Dummies* (Biech 2005) introduces Kirkpatrick's four level and helps the reader build an evaluation system based on those levels. Searching the ASTD's website (*American Society of Training and Development* 2010) for "Kirkpatrick" alone yields 258 results.

The evaluation of LDP developed by this project draws upon two works directly from Donald Kirkpatrick. An electronic copy of the second edition of his book *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels* (Kirkpatrick 1998) was obtained online through the KU library's website. Chapter three presents an overview of the four

levels. The descriptions of the four levels presented later in the paper are based upon what was read in this chapter. Subsequent chapters of Kirkpatrick's book were browsed through, but his article titled "How to Apply Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation" in a December 2008 issue of T+D (Kirkpatrick 2008) was the primary resource for the evaluation process outlined in this paper. This article provided a much more concise description of the details of implementing Kirkpatrick's four level process.

## **2.6. Summary of the Literature Review**

The literature review provided here summarizes the research material used for two aspects of the program design detailed in the next section:

1. it provides a research basis to substantiate the effectiveness of LDP components described in the following program design section, and
2. it provides references and discussion of material used to develop components of LDP.

## **3. PROGRAM DESIGN**

### **3.1. Foundation**

SWEF has a written set of company-wide values and a separate list of key attributes for managers. LDP was built with these values and attributes as the foundation. Curriculum courses with content geared to develop these attributes and values were selected. Gap analysis (which is included in the appendix) that visually depicted the courses' coverage of SWEF's values and management attributes was then

performed. The visual mapping helped HR better identify whether some values and attributes were over or under emphasized. Based upon this analysis, five courses were removed from the curriculum and three were added. The end result was a curriculum whose content was better concentrated on the company's values and key management attributes.

### **3.2. Management Involvement**

There are three ways in which involvement from the managers of trainees will enhance the program. This section addresses each in a separate subsection.

#### **3.2.1. Periodic Discussion**

Managers of trainees are highly encouraged, but not required, to regularly discuss LDP with their trainees. Research discussed in the literature review indicated that managerial support of training can improve training transfer. Regular discussion is recommended because it will provide an avenue for the manager to show support in the program. Additionally, regularly asking the question, 'So, what did you learn in LDP this week?' is recommended for starting discussion. When trainees begin to expect this question, they'll become increasingly motivated to retain course material so they have an answer to their manager's inquiry. Moreover, being able to communicate knowledge typically requires a higher level of understanding than what's gained from listening in training, so asking trainees to communicate the content of LDP will likely

help develop trainees' understanding of it. The communication this project developed to managers that requests this involvement is included in the appendix.

### 3.2.2. Facilitating the Personal Development Plan

Anecdotal evidence shows that often individuals accomplish more when someone holds them accountable. For example, people study and work on assignments when in school and a teacher holds them accountable. These same people are often interested in learning something after completing school, but don't pursue it to the same degree as though they were in school. Personal coaches that hold one to their goals, workout partners that motivate one to go to the gym, and reporting progress to supervisors are more examples.

The notion of accountability facilitating accomplishment can be extended to trainees' managers working with them to better develop and implement their personal development plans. Requesting managers to help trainees with their personal development plans is not an unreasonable given that doing so is little different than coaching, and many managers at SWEF are happy to coach. Managers' involvement in trainees' personal development plans will be limited to two phases: (1) supporting plan development and (2) periodically following up on progress. Regarding plan development, managers are asked to participate in three ways: (1) reviewing objectives and rationale for those objectives, (2) reviewing steps toward meeting those objectives, and (3) reviewing the collected, completed plan that includes a timeline and how one measures progress. (To better understand the complete PDP process for

LDP, please see the PDP material in the appendix.) Managers are expected to provide support and constructive feedback as they deem appropriate. Regarding periodically following up on plan progress, LDP requests that managers follow-up with trainees about progress twice a year. This allows time for progress while not requiring much time of either the manager or the trainee. Following-up during an annual evaluation is a convenient option; although, managers should not base their evaluation on the candidate's progress with regards to their personal development plan. Tying the personal development plan to the evaluation process is likely to make the development plan less genuine on the trainee's part. Managers that follow-up with trainees during the annual evaluation must make it expressly clear that results from the personal development plan do not affect the trainee's annual evaluation. Actual communication requesting this involvement from managers is included in the appendix.

### 3.2.3. Involvement for Evaluation

Managerial feedback about training transfer provides valuable input into evaluating training effectiveness, and evaluating training effectiveness is an essential ingredient of a well-designed training program. Donald Kirkpatrick, himself, emphasized managerial involvement as a key aspect in level 3 evaluation (Kirkpatrick 2006). (Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation and how they are applied to LDP are described in a section titled "Program Evaluation" later in this paper.) For LDP, managers asking the question, "So, what did you learn in LDP this week?" is important



because it provides them with information that helps in level 2 and 3 evaluation. Level 2 evaluation involves determining what trainees' have retained, so their response to this question immediately provides information that enables managers to assist the trainer in level 2 evaluation. Furthermore, if trainees have retained training material and their manager knows what they learned, the manager can focus his attention on whether the trainee is applying that material. Assessing whether trainees are applying learned material is level 3 evaluation, and this is how managers can help with evaluating LDP.

### **3.3. Explore SWEF Support**

Many leadership training programs include a rotational component where trainees spend time gaining work experience in different departments. Leadership programs at GE's Crotonville school is a high-profile example (*GE University* 2010). Additionally, managerial input collected when LDP was being designed indicated that the program should include a component that helps new leaders understand how their teams' work impacts other departments across the company. This inspired the "Explore SWEF" component of LDP.

"Explore SWEF" is LDP's version of a rotational component. Its primary objective is to broaden leaders' knowledge of SWEF so that they may better optimize their work for the company as a whole (as oppose to optimizing their work within their team or within Engineering alone). Explore SWEF is essentially a series of presentations where each month trainees attend a presentation about a different department in the

company. Vice presidents, directors, and senior managers were selected to provide these department overviews given that they typically had around ten or more years of experience in that department and knew it well. Selection of senior leaders also yielded an excellent opportunity for trainees to learn directly from their leadership experience. This led to a secondary objective for Explore SWEF: for senior leaders to pass on advice and best practices that have made them successful.

The title for this section includes the word “support” to indicate that this project contributed a supporting role to the Explore SWEF component. HR managed most of the fundamental requirements of Explore SWEF. They selected the departments; worked with them to select vice presidents, directors, and senior managers to provide the presentation; and managed the logistics of scheduling and sending meeting invites. This project helped develop material that would improve the effectiveness of presenters’ department overviews. The rationale that inspired this contribution was the thought that a teacher’s role regarding instructing a class of adults is significantly different than a senior manager’s role, which leads to the thought that there’s probably knowledge that a makes a teacher effective that the senior leaders do not know. The primary contribution of this project was to research this knowledge and communicate it to the senior leaders.

A three page handout summarizing key points of effective instruction was developed. It was distributed to senior leaders during an Explore SWEF orientation session. The material in the handout is self-explanatory, so rather than rehash it here, the interested reader is referred to the copy included in the appendix.

## **3.4. Toastmasters**

### **3.4.1. Overview**

Engineers often have room for improvement in their communication skills. LDP coursework contains a training session specifically for improving communication. Toastmasters International is an organization whose framework can build upon the LDP course. Toastmasters' process begins with a group of individuals that meet regularly to practice speaking before the group. Each session participants are given different roles such as speaker, evaluator, 'ah-'counter, timer, table topic speaker, toastmaster (meeting leader), etc. New members begin in Toastmasters' "competent communicator" manual that consists of a series of ten exercises (speeches). Members work on one speech per session, but members aren't required to do one each session. When a member completes all ten exercises, that person may move on to more advanced communication manuals or to a series of leadership development manuals. Interested members may apply for awards (sometimes called certificates) as they complete exercises in manuals to fulfill an award's criteria. The organization also holds an annual convention (going on 80 years) and an international speech competition whose competitors are the winners of club, area, and district speech competitions. Further information may be found at the Toastmasters International website (*Toastmasters International*).

### 3.4.2. Research Basis

An important question to ask is whether Toastmasters' framework yields improved communication skills. A member of the education department at Toastmasters International believes it does based on the high membership (Leone-Rundell 1993). Given the organization has existed since 1924, and it currently consists of over 260,000 in 113 countries, it is hard to imagine such a large and old organization is founded on a program that doesn't provide results (*Toastmasters International*). However, this logic provides only anecdotal evidence that Toastmasters' program yields results. A thorough study by Jacqueline Frischknecht provides information about Toastmasters' results that is more solid (Frischknecht 1977). The first major conclusion Jacqueline drew from her work was, "The educational program of T.I. is successful in its goal of improving speech communication competency and performance of its members in terms of public speaking, in the perception of the Toastmasters who participated in this study." She found the success of the program is largely due to (1) Toastmasters 'learning by doing' method and (2) peer evaluation process. Interestingly, these two factors were the second and fourth most commonly reported best practices for training transfer in a survey of training professionals conducted by Burke and Hutchins (Burke and Hutchins 2008). This is interesting because the two studies drew similar conclusions about what effected skill development, but the former (Frischknecht's study) was based on participants' input and the latter (Burke and Hutchins) trainers' input. This provides firmer logic for

Toastmasters' program effecting communication development, and it's the basis for including it as a supplement to LDP.

### 3.4.3. Implementation

Corporate Toastmasters clubs are not uncommon. Toastmasters' website lists 1,001 corporations that have their own employee-only club. Many are well-recognized names. This section addresses the details of implementing a SWEF Toastmasters club. The process described here loosely follows the startup process described at Toastmasters' website (*Toastmasters International*).

New clubs benefit from having an experienced Toastmaster (the "Mentor") help guide the meetings along. With as many employees as SWEF has, it is likely there will be more than a few who are Toastmaster members. Therefore, the first step will be for the club "Organizer" to post a message to the Outlook bulletin board inquiring whether an experienced member would help facilitate the startup group. Whether or not a mentor is found does not change the startup process because the mentor's sole purpose is to help guide the initial meetings. If a mentor is not found, the club president will assume the responsibility for guiding the initial meetings.

Recruiting twenty members is the next step. One week after the Outlook bulletin board post for a mentor, the Organizer will post another message instructing interested people to contact him. A similar message will be posted to the HR Sharepoint Intranet site. Also, people newly promoted into leadership positions will be notified by the LDP trainer. Lastly, the Organizer will notify team leaders of

engineers who regularly interface with customers so they can tell their team members if they find value their participation. Toastmasters' website has promotional material that can be used to explain most aspects of the club. If less than twenty people respond, the Organizer will have to make a judgment call on whether or not to form the club. The Organizer may contact the Toastmasters' district governor for support, or he may advertise the first meeting hoping that potential new recruits will show up.

Planning and conducting the first meeting comes next. This process is straightforward because Toastmasters' website has a startup guide PDF that provides a clear agenda. The meeting is similar to a normal one in that someone (the Organizer or Mentor) will give a speech, someone (a volunteer) will provide an oral review, and there will be a Table Topics session hosted by the Organizer or Mentor. What is unique about the first meeting is that the Organizer or Mentor will explain the process of the typical meeting beforehand, and that person will present the Toastmasters charter and collect application forms and payments after. If there are enough interested participants to start a club, then following the charter presentation, the Organizer will inquire whether the club would prefer to meet every week or every two weeks as well as whether members would like to meet before work, during lunch, or after work. A majority vote by individuals joining the club will determine these details. The Organizer will also solicit the club for a president, vice president, and secretary because Toastmasters requires each club have one. If no one volunteers, the Organizer will become the president for a six month term, and he will appoint a vice

president and secretary. The roles of these positions are spelled out in the Toastmasters charter.

Payment is a topic the Organizer will address with HR. The club startup charter fee is \$125. New members pay a \$20 application fee, and members must pay \$27 in dues every six months. The Organizer will inquire with the HR Manager responsible for training whether SWEF will pay for the club charter fee and reimburse members' application fee and dues. To be fair to SWEF, reimbursement will be contingent upon a member completing at least one speech, participating in one Table Topics, and being a Toastmaster for a meeting all within the six month period for which dues will be reimbursed. The club secretary will be responsible for tracking each member's participation. The secretary's records will be used to determine whether a member has met the requirements for reimbursement. Members seeking reimbursement must go to the secretary with their request. If the secretary's records indicate the requirements for reimbursement have been fulfilled, the secretary will notify HR, and HR will notify the payroll department to issue the reimbursement.

Once Toastmasters receives each member's application and the club application, Toastmasters will send copies of the Competent Communicator manual to each member. This manual consists of ten exercises (speeches) that members will work through one at a time. Future meetings will follow the standard agenda outlined on Toastmasters website, and individuals will work through the exercises in their Competent Communicator manual. Toastmasters has more advanced communication

manuals as well as leadership exercise manuals that an individual may move on to when he completes the ten exercises in this manual.

### **3.5. Personal Development Plan**

An HR manager at SWEF suggested that a final project would be a good addition to LDP. This project's author suggested trainees develop a personal development plan (PDP) throughout LDP. Both the HR manager and trainer agreed it was a suitable project, so this project's author developed PDP material for LDP (which is included in the appendix). When the material was complete, a copy of it was given to managers of the trainees, and a subset of them were asked one-on-one whether they thought it worthwhile. These managers show unanimous support for the PDP, so it was adopted as the final project.

The PDP material developed includes a description of the development plan, a framework for the PDP, and a schedule that facilitates trainees developing their plan throughout LDP. This material is included in the appendix. It was presented to trainees in the first session of LDP, and a copy was given to them. Credit must be given to the leadership development planning guidance at (*ManagementHelp.Org* 2010) because it loosely inspired the framework of the PDP; however, the content was mostly the creation of the author of this project.

Striking a balance between allowing flexibility vs. designing structure into the framework was a concern. The most flexible PDP final project assignment would be to leave the assignment open-ended and simply instruct the trainees to write one. This



would allow trainees to focus on what they care most about, which is good because they need to have a personal interest in their development to seriously pursue it. However, providing no guidance might lead to under-developed PDPs (e.g. ones without objectives or actions to meet an objective), or no guidance might make the task seem large enough to prevent some trainees from participating. Therefore, the balance struck includes a high-level framework of fundamental components of a PDP and process for creating one, but it's general enough to allow individuals to develop contents to the extent they see fit. What is most important with regards to flexibility is that the framework allows individuals to choose their own development objectives so they'll be more motivated to meet them. In the interests of SWEF, the PDP guidance strongly encourages choosing objectives that incorporate course material. The author strongly suspected allowing this flexibility would not be a problem because newly promoted people often have an interest in developing relevant skills, and trainees would wind up choosing objectives that intersected with LDP content because of this and because the LDP content would be fresh in their heads.

The inspiration for adding a PDP to LDP as well as the main concern for it are discussed above. Rather than discuss further details about it, the reader is referred to the PDP material provided in the appendix. This appendix content completes the description of this component of LDP.

### **3.6. Program Evaluation**

This section presents a framework for evaluating the results of LDP. The framework is based on Donald Kirkpatrick's four-level system for evaluating training. The purpose of evaluating LDP is aid in deciding whether to discontinue the program, improve it, or validate continuing the program.

Evaluating LDP is of little value unless one determines how the information gained from the evaluation will be used. Therefore, this section contains a subsection that considers different outcomes and addresses how information gathered will be used. However, before discussing how the evaluation results will be used, it makes sense to describe the evaluation process so the reader understands what information is available. Subsequently, the evaluation process is described from levels one to four, and then consideration is given to how results from each level will be used.

#### **3.6.1. Level 1: Reaction**

Kirkpatrick's first level of evaluation is called "reaction." It measures the "reaction" or attitude of trainees to the training. It is a quick, simple test that can identify whether the training was ineffective. It does not, however, tell one whether the training was effective.

Level 1 measurement is typically a survey. Kirkpatrick thought of this as a customer satisfaction survey. If trainees express a negative reaction toward the training, then one can reasonably assume the training was ineffective. Evaluation can stop here under this assumption. If the surveys showed a positive reaction, evaluation

can continue at level 2. A positive reaction doesn't guarantee learning nor application of the material to one's job. The level 1 test is simply an entry point to evaluating training. It is given primarily because it is quick and it can identify ineffective training. It also provides an opportunity for feedback.

HR developed the survey for level 1 measurement. It is included in the appendix. Administering the survey at the end of the training session before trainees leave is recommended for maximizing the response rate. Additionally, responses should be anonymous to better ensure honest responses.

### 3.6.2. Level 2: Learning

Kirkpatrick's second level of evaluation tests how much trainees learned. This is typically done by giving pencil-and-paper (or computer) pre- and post-tests surrounding the training session, which is exactly what is recommended for LDP. Administering the tests immediately before and after the training session gives an accurate representation of how much training material was learned by ruling out the possibility that the trainee learned any of the material outside of the session. These two tests can be the exact same. Making them the same makes comparison of the before and after results less ambiguous, and it reduces the test creator's workload.

At the trainer's discretion, the material can also be tested awhile after the training to assess retention. Administering one test four months after all LDP sessions is recommended to minimize interfering with individuals' work. This test should be a collection of a few questions from each test administered immediately after each

training session. Using the same questions will again reduce ambiguity in comparing the results, and it will also help refresh the material in trainees. Level 3 evaluation can begin eight months after the last LDP training session, so four months is advised for this additional level 2 measurement because it allows trainees time to apply any material that the additional level 2 measurement refreshed them on.

Each course that was purchased from the company DDI includes a ten question “knowledge check” that can be used for level 2 evaluation. Other courses that are not purchased from DDI will need an evaluation created. HR will need to prompt the subject matter experts creating the other courses to create these tests. Multiple choice questions are advised because there’s an unambiguous correct answer (unlike open-answer) and the chance of guessing a correct answer is less than true / false questions. Furthermore, the test should prompt each person to briefly write down a sentence or two about why they chose the answer they did. This better ensures answers aren’t guessed, and it provokes critical thought related to the material. It also provides the trainer with more data to assess training effectiveness.

### 3.6.3. Level 3: Behavior

The third level of evaluation measures the extent that learning is applied. Level 3 evaluation is often done by surveying or interviewing either a manager, coworker, or subordinate. For LDP, interviewing a subset of the trainees’ supervisors is advised. An interview is recommended over a survey because the opportunity for interaction will provide for better data collection. Interview questions should focus on obtaining

objective information. Probing for examples of how the trainee has demonstrated new behavior related to the objectives of LDP should be the focus. If the manager has been involved with the trainee's development in LDP as described in section 3.2, then there is a good chance the manager will be able to provide valuable feedback. If the manager cannot provide adequate feedback (maybe he hasn't been involved or he hasn't had enough opportunity to observe his subordinate), then the trainee should be interviewed. Sometimes trainers interview both and correlate the results for a better assessment. Feedback collected from enough managers and possibly trainees will provide the basis for evaluating LDP at Kirkpatrick level 3.

Managers and trainees are more likely to be focused on their day to day work rather than LDP, so they may have a hard time recalling specific examples off the top of their head. Informing managers and trainees about the level 3 evaluation process at the beginning of the program helps alleviate this problem. The training should let them know they'll be asked to provide specific examples of how the training material has been applied. Drawing attention to this will help them make note of the examples for recollection later. When informing others about the evaluation process, the trainer needs to express that the evaluation is solely evaluating LDP rather than the trainee. Individuals should understand that this evaluation is separate from the employee's annual performance evaluation.

Determining when to do level 3 evaluation is a challenge that levels 1 and 2 do not have. A trainer must allow time for the trainees to encounter the opportunity to apply their learning, particularly with leadership training. For instance, Kirkpatrick

recommends at least three months for leadership training (Kirkpatrick 2008). Since managers will be interviewed, time must also be allowed for managers to observe trainees. Beginning level 3 evaluation eight months after the last LDP session is an adequate amount of time. Evaluation could be done sooner (at six months instead), but eight months after allows four months between a level 2 follow-up evaluation and a level 3 evaluation for opportunities to arise in which trainees may exercise and develop training material that the level 2 follow-up evaluation may have refreshed them on. (Part of the purpose of the level 2 follow-up evaluation after four months is to refresh content to trainees.)

#### 3.6.4. Level 4: Results

The framework outlined here does not attempt to evaluate LDP at Kirkpatrick's fourth level because the scope of the program doesn't warrant the complexity of the task. Material read in the literature review (Biech 2005) pointed out that it is often difficult to accurately attribute business results to the effects of the training because often business results are influenced by many factors. Accurate evaluation at level four for LDP would be considered complex and costly by most people. For instance, shortened development schedules (a metric of value to SWEF that leaders are responsible for) could be the result of design reuse or simplification of the design process by others in the industry (e.g. a supplier integrating multiple functions into an easy-to-implement chip, or a supplier creating new design tools that streamline design process) rather than LDP. Shortened development schedules may be attributed to an

increase in people working under a leader; however, this may also increase development cost (salary) to an extent that is worse for the business than the shortened schedule. Determining how such factors would be isolated from the level four measurement would be complex and costly. If the training component of LDP were more costly, such as if it required multiple months of trainees' time, it would make more sense to evaluate at level four to justify the cost. The cost of this evaluation would also begin to shrink relative to the cost of the program, which makes the measurement relatively cheap insurance for discontinuing the program if it doesn't provide positive results. However, the scope of LDP doesn't warrant the complexity and cost of this measurement.

### 3.6.5. Using Evaluation Results

Evaluation proceeds from one level to the next if results are sufficiently positive. If results from one level are negative, then there is little sense in moving to the next level of evaluation since negative results indicate the training was ineffective.

Determining what to do based upon the level 1 results is straight forward. If the average response to either of the questions, "the tools introduced in this program will be helpful in my job," or "I would recommend this program to others" is "disagree" or "strongly disagree" then the training session can be considered ineffective. It's expected that SWEF leaders will generally answer positively, so a negative response would only result from a strong sense of the training content being irrelevant. Data from the other survey questions will provide the basis for determining whether to improve the program or discontinue it. If average answers to those two questions are

anything other than “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” then evaluation may continue to level 2, and information collected from the rest of the survey may be used to improve the program.

Determining a course of action based on results from a level 2 evaluation is less straight forward. The literature review turned up no guidance or research regarding this. Where does one draw the line on what pre- vs. post-training test scores deem the training effective vs. ineffective? Following are some guidelines based on academia and reasonable expectations. The traditional academic grading system applying  $A \geq 90\%$ ,  $90\% > B \geq 80\%$ ,  $80\% > C \geq 70\%$ ,  $70\% > D \geq 60\%$ ,  $F < 60\%$  will be used. If trainees, on the average, score A's on their pre-tests, then the program could be deemed ineffective simply because the trainees already know the material. If this happens for a couple consecutive sessions of training, the trainer may make attendance optional for trainees that have averaged an A on pre-tests. If a trainee is regularly scoring D's or F's on post-tests, this indicates the trainee is not learning enough, which implies training is not being effective enough. In this instance, the trainer should meet with the trainee to learn what's driving the low test scores. It could be the trainee has no interest in the material, or the issue could be in the design or delivery of the material. For all other cases of test scores, the guideline for determining training effectiveness is whether the number of incorrect answers decreased by half from pre-test to post-test. If test scores increase by this much for more than half of the trainees, then the program can be deemed effective at level 2 and evaluation can proceed to level 3. If there are particular trainees whose test



scores aren't improving, the trainer should meet with these individuals to better understand why. Lastly, if the number of incorrect answers isn't cut in half for more than half of the group, it is reasonable to assume the problem lies in the training design rather than the trainee. If information that can improve the training design can be gathered, then the training should be changed. Otherwise, it should be discontinued. Open-ended responses on the level 1 evaluation surveys are a source for information to augment the training design. The trainer can meet with the trainees one-on-one or as a group to collect further information or to discuss training changes based upon feedback in the surveys.

Regarding objective level 3 feedback, there is no clear line at which training is deemed effective vs. ineffective. This project recommends involving a subset of the trainees' managers in judging the programs' effectiveness and deciding whether to continue LDP as is, continue LDP with changes to the program, or discontinue LDP. The trainer can host a meeting with the managers to make this decision. At the outset of the meeting, the trainer should inform the managers that the purpose of the meeting is to review the level 3 evaluation results and then make a group decision about how to proceed with LDP in the future. After informing the meeting attendees of the purpose and meeting agenda, the trainer presents a summary of the evaluation information along with recommendations. Information about how many and what percentage of trainees demonstrated objective examples of improvement should be provided. Further information summarizing how many objective examples each trainee demonstrated is also useful to present. If feedback collected provides insight

into how the program could be modified to be improved, then the trainer should present the possibility of continuing the program with modifications based upon that feedback. After presenting this information, the trainer should facilitate discussion and eventually draw the meeting toward closing with a group decision.

Regarding the evaluation process in general, if results at any level indicate that the training content should focus on other topics, then any weaknesses documented on trainees' annual performance appraisals are subjects to consider. Kirkpatrick, himself, makes a case that performance appraisals are indirectly linked to training in that the appraisal process typically captures employee weaknesses that can be used as a basis for determining training needs (Kirkpatrick 2006). Additionally, trainees going into the program should be solicited for input regarding their training needs and interests. Trainees should be presented with a list of potential topics (including topics collected from performance appraisals) to spark thought and help promote feedback. Soliciting trainees for input helps to identify material that will engage them and make training more effective. Lastly, once updated program content is identified, management should be solicited for input to ensure the material is aligned with training needs.

#### **4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The work of this project brought about three considerations for future research:

1. Are the results of level 2 evaluation for each trainee useful in determining the trainee's leadership potential?

2. What is an optimal class size for a leadership program such as this?
3. When designing a program, to what extent does management's and trainees' input influence the effectiveness of the program?

## **5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This project supplements HR's efforts and helps build a more wholesome leadership development program at SWEF. HR organized and conducted a set of leadership development courses as well as coordinating a series of department overviews. This was the foundation of LDP. The work of this project developed additional leadership development components for the program as well as other measures to improve overall program effectiveness. Research performed determined the following:

- management's involvement in a training program can improve its effectiveness;
- knowledge provided in section 7.2 can help improve the effectiveness of the series of department overviews;
- there is some evidence that Toastmasters' program improves communication skills, but more research is needed for more conclusive support of its effectiveness;
- personal development plans are very common in business, but there is little research basis for their effectiveness in positively impacting business results; and
- there is a well-established framework (Kirkpatrick's) for evaluating training programs.

Furthermore, research material provided information that facilitated developing components for LDP such as guidance on the effect of management's involvement in the program, guidance to directors and senior managers for providing more effective department overviews, a plan for implementing a corporate Toastmasters club to develop communication skills, a framework for a personal development plan, and a framework evaluating the program's results and what to do with the evaluation results. Overall, the research and work of this project develops a more wholesome and effective leadership training development program.

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## 7. APPENDIX

### 7.1. Gap Analysis

Section 3.1 provides some discussion of this material. More detailed discussion follows. In the table below, a column along the left lists the original list of courses in LDP. Columns to the right list six key attributes of successful managers at SWEF and five core values of SWEF. HR worked with senior management to determine these key attributes and values. The exact attributes and values were replaced with numbers here to keep them confidential.

Each course's content was analyzed to determine which management attributes and core values it addressed. An "X" was placed in each column for which a course addressed any of these.

	Management Attributes						Core Values				
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
Course 1					X						
Course 2			X	X	X			X	X		X
Course 3			X	X	X			X			X
Course 4	X		X	X	X			X	X		X
Course 5	X		X	X	X			X	X		X
Course 6	X		X						X		
Course 7											
Course 8							X		X		
Course 9											
Course 10											
Course 11			X	X				X			X
Course 12					X			X			
Course 13											
Course 14											
<b>Num courses addressing this</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

## 7.2. Explore SWEF Support Handout

### Ideas for Preparing and Delivering a Successful Overview

#### Concepts of Adult Learning

The following four points are derived from Malcolm Knowles' foundational work on adult learning (Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson 2005). Consideration for how adult learning differs from traditional schooling most receive during adolescence will help improve effectiveness.

1. In your opening, addressing why LDP participants need to learn about your business segment's role in SWEF will improve learning. The first principle of adult learning theory is that adults need to understand why they should learn something in order for them to turn their attention toward it.
2. Consider regarding this overview more as exposure to your business segment rather than "training" or "education." Adult learners have a self-concept of being self-directing, responsible individuals. Notions of training or education may offend one's sense of capability and make one less receptive to the learning experience.
3. LDP group will have a substantial degree of experience, knowledge, and talent. Tapping into this by asking questions and facilitating discussion is effective for some situations involving adult learning (e.g. A Marketing or Operations overview could ask how SW or IT systems quality affects Marketing and Operations, and how those effects might feedback subsequent effects back into SW or IT).
4. Participants will be receptive to material that they see as having immediate applicability to their job. Aspects of your business segment that are strongly influenced by individuals in the audience will garner substantial interest.

#### Create a Welcoming and Open Environment

These will better engage participants and prevent an "auditorium effect" where participation is lacking because individuals are afraid to speak up. These ideas are borrowed from (Biech 2009).

5. Greet participants as they arrive. Mingle before the session's starting time and learn something about them.
6. Make an effort to provide a genuine smile to every individual before the session. Seek eye contact to ensure your smile is noticed and the participants feel welcome.
7. If appropriate, ensure confidentiality about what's discussed in the session.
8. Feel free to let participants know who you are personally as long as it doesn't detract from the session's objectives. Speaking to your personal interest related to the department and sharing what's contributed to your personal success are ideas. These are preferred compared to speaking toward credentials and giving success tips.

## Facilitation Techniques

The following ideas pertain to fostering engagement and facilitating. They are borrowed from (Biech 2009). “Participant engagement and involvement are key to successful training. A huge part of this success centers on the trainer’s facilitation skills and the techniques used to encourage participation.”

9. Early in the session, ask participants what they’re interested in covering. Adult learning is made more effective when individuals are motivated by their own personal interests. Try to address that material if it’s applicable the group and related to the session’s objectives. If it’s not applicable, offer to address it outside of the session.
10. Ask open-ended questions (avoid short answer questions) related to your business segment to facilitate discussion. ‘How is this aspect of the business important?’ and ‘How might this interact with your work?’ are examples. Round-robins, pop-quizzes, and polls are similar standard techniques.
11. Request ideas and information from participants prior to introducing a new topic.
12. Allow the group to guide the direction of the session. The session does require the planned content be covered. However, chances are participants’ ideas will be in line with the content at hand. If it’s not, subtly direct it back on track so as to keep the sessions’ content aligned with the objectives. Offering to address that idea outside of the session is a respectful way of getting things back on track.
13. Regularly encourage questions.
14. Use participants’ names early and often. Using names encourages input and communication.
15. Minimize lecturing.
16. Build in material to break-up lecturing. Examples: a tour of the warehouse, introduce participants to particular individuals and their roles in your department (if there’s benefit in LDP participants knowing them or their role), a story that does a good job explaining an aspect of your business segment, or a demonstration of an IT system.



## A Few General Ideas

17. Consider your audience when preparing content. Here's a summary of the first two groups of LDP participants:

<b>Department 1</b>	39		<b>Department 3</b>	4
<b>Department 2</b>	1		<b>Department 4</b>	4

18. Effective presentation openings often (2008):

- address the objective or main point of the presentation and
- address what's in it for the participants or why they should listen.

19. Including a variety of material to accommodate people's different learning styles will aid in learning (Biech 2009).

Visual:

- Demonstration
- Tour or walk-through
- Graphs, drawings, diagrams, or charts

Auditory:

- Lecture format material.
- Create discussion. Ask questions and attempt to get others to repeat material.
- Avoid making points solely through visual or kinesthetic means – supplement those two with explanation and discussion.

Kinesthetic:

- Activity that requires physical action
- Tour or walk-through

20. A relevant story can be an effective way to communicate an aspect of your business segment (2008).

## 7.3. Managerial Involvement Communication

### MANAGERIAL INVOLVEMENT FOR LDP

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#### Managers' Tasks

1. **Regularly follow up with participants.** Seminars are two weeks apart. Assuming most managers have some form of weekly one-on-one contact with their team's participant(s), ask,
  - a. 'So, what did you learn in LDP this week?' in the week following a session, and ask,
  - b. 'How has the material applied to you in the last two weeks?'

(Note the questions are open-ended rather than short-answer.)

2. **Have an active interest and role in your participants' personal development plan (PDP).** Incrementally developing a PDP throughout the program is a curriculum "final project." The plan's objective is to translate LDP material into learned skills and behavior that are exercised on the job.

Managers' involvement would be:

- a. Support plan development. Plan development will follow a schedule of (eleven) steps (assignments). Three of those steps involve managerial review, feedback, and support. Specifically:
  - i. review objectives and rationale;
  - ii. review three steps toward meeting objectives: (1) what to learn, (2) how to learn it, (3) how to apply it; and
  - iii. review the collected, complete plan, which includes a timeline and how one measures their progress.
- b. Twice a year (or more often), schedule a one-on-one meeting with each of your participants to review progress. During the annual performance review and in the summer are recommended. Managers' role here is to subtly and softly hold participants accountable for executing their plan.

Intentions: The intention is not to incorporate progress into the performance review. The intention is simply to better ensure participants follow through with their plan.

## Rationale for Tasks

### 1. Regularly follow up with participants.

- a. Motivates participants to focus on retaining some aspect of the material.
- b. Communicating the material to another is a step of development above absorbing it.
- c. Managers have the opportunity to facilitate development by engaging in discussion and coaching.
- d. Managers indirectly learn program material, which will become key for item #2 below and measuring "Training Transfer," (which is HR vernacular for the "extent to which the learned behavior from the training program is used on the job")

### 2. Have an active interest and role in your participants' personal development plan (PDP).

- a. The purpose of supporting plan development is largely to improve the quality of the plan and development. Managers' involvement will also heighten awareness of participants' development interests and approach. Lastly, simply having to communicate one's plan may also motivate participants to further develop it (providing a higher quality, more thought-out plan).
- b. The purpose of reviewing plan progress is to better ensure its execution. (The LDP "final project" is essentially worthless and LDP's ROI is diminished if the plan is not executed.) An analogy to learning and school might clarify how managerial involvement promotes execution. Schooling is in part successful because there is a teacher holds individuals accountable for carrying out assignments that promote learning. Many people are genuinely interested in learning, but don't put forth the same amount of effort toward development without someone holding them accountable. Therefore, the purpose of the manager's presence is to subtly and softly hold individuals accountable.  
(As an interesting side note, a key differentiator between adolescent and adult learning is that adult learning drives from internal motivation generated by allowing the adult to determine what is developed. This relates to how a PDP becomes an effective development instrument when plugged in to the LDP curriculum. The curriculum provides participants with a breath of material to develop. Equipped with this material, the PDP allows participants to determine what and how they want to develop further. Additionally, the session topics were chosen to align with SWEF's values and Management Attributes. When the participant chooses what they want to develop by drawing upon this pool, it better aligns their development interests with those of the organization.)

## 7.4. Personal Development Plan Handout

# **SWEF LDP PROJECT**

## Leadership Development and Application Plan

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### **Groundwork:**

A primary objective of LDP is to cultivate leadership and management knowledge and skills. The courses are the first step in this process. They are chosen to introduce and equip you with leadership knowledge and tools that are valuable to SWEF and aren't traditionally incorporated in technical schooling. The LDP project is designed to take development one step further by following learning with application targeted toward achieving objectives you choose.

## **Project Information:**

The objective of this project is to promote purposeful leadership development through planning and application of leadership and management knowledge and skills. Essentially, the project is to develop a personal or team development plan throughout the duration of LDP. The plan centers on picking and meeting objectives that require leadership and managerial knowledge and skills. You are free to pick any objectives that are in the best interest of you and SWEF, but you are strongly encouraged to focus on ones that will draw content from the LDP courses.

Plan development is distributed into mini-assignments given after each course and due before the next course. This is to better ensure a quality plan while minimizing stress. An outline of these mini-assignments follows:

- 1) Develop a list of objectives. Pick two to focus on in your plan. Write about why you pick these two over the others.
- 2) Clarify your objectives in detailed writing. Envision the final outcome and describe what will constitute the outcome being realized.
- 3) Understand where you now in relation to your objectives. Write about it.
- 4) Discuss objectives and rationale for their selection with your manager.
- 5) Determine what knowledge and skills you'll develop to facilitate meeting your objectives.
- 6) Identify how you'll acquire this knowledge and skills. Refine that into a set of discrete actions you'll take to acquire them.
- 7) Identify actions you'll take and ways you'll apply developing knowledge and skills to meet your objectives.
- 8) Discuss the previous three sessions' work with your manager.
- 9) Develop how you'll show evidence of progress that your actions will produce.
- 10) Apply a timeline to your plan.
- 11) Collect all the previous sessions' work into a single document, and discuss it with your manager.

Plan development begins shortly into the program and ends with a complete plan toward the end. It is expected that you will execute your plan to completion with the level of drive, motivation, and ability to execute that's SWEF team leads and managers have.

Your manager will have two roles in this project. First, he will serve as a sounding board to provide feedback and help refine your plan. The list of mini-assignments above shows how this is built into the project. Second, at your manager's discretion, he may hold you accountable for executing your plan. The program's guidance to LDP participants' managers is to periodically meet with the participant on their team two or three times throughout the year to review progress. Doing one of these reviews during the annual review period is recommended.

Regarding the length of the plan, there is no requirement. You are the best judge of how much writing makes sense for you to do. The guidance here is to keep in mind that writing tends to refine thought. For instance, the communication often reveals incomplete thought process or thoughts not considered. If you would prefer to work with a guideline for length, then five to ten pages is a suggestion.

Lastly, regarding the timeline on which you implement your plan, try to draw up objectives and an implementation that span at least four months. Longer-term development on the order of one, two, or more years is not discouraged.

## **Project Schedule:**

Session 1: Create a list of objectives you would like to meet pertaining to leadership or management. As a starting point, please review SWEF's management attributes, your annual review ratings for management attributes, and then the LDP curriculum. SWEF values these attributes in your role, and the LDP curriculum was designed to develop them. Clarifying what is meant by "objectives," they may involve acquiring new skills, attitudes, or specific outcomes that relate to a management attribute. It is not strictly necessary that your objectives focus around SWEF's management attributes and LDP because it is important that you have strong personal interest in your objectives, but it is encouraged because LDP will help equip you to meet those objectives.

Pick two to focus on in your plan. Two is recommended to emphasize focus and intensity toward excellent development. In writing, explain two things:

- 1) why you are picking those two, and
- 2) why other areas of development are less important right now.

Regard this as an exercise in effective decision making to better ensure you and SWEF benefit the most from your efforts.

Session 2: Refine your objectives in detailed writing if an objective is not clearly defined. For instance, if a chosen objective is 'increase team performance,' elaborate on what aspects of the team's performance will be improved and how the improvement will be observed. Be thoughtful and critical in designing the detail because it will guide the plan.

Envision the final outcome of each objective, and describe it in writing. In particular, describe how you will know when your objective is met. For instance, if your objective is to become a skilled mentor, you could describe how your objective would be met once a mentee is repeatedly demonstrating new skill directly resulting from your mentoring. Another example: if your objective is to improve your team's performance, it could be met when the rating on your annual evaluation for team performance increases.

Details are particularly important here. Invest time in clearly defining specifics of outcomes for each objective because they will help effectively determine steps to fulfill the objective. Thinking about the negative of this helps clarify the sense in it. How can one know for certain whether he or she is moving toward the objective's final outcome if it's not well defined? If specific outcomes for objectives are not clear to you, please feel free to seek help defining them from your manager or any LDP mentor.

Some objectives might not easily lend themselves to having a crystal clear outcome. One thing to do in this instance is focus on refining the objective more. If the objective is well-defined but the outcome that defines it as being fulfilled is less clear, then one will have to be more critical and detailed in determining how to meet the objective in order to make sure it is met. Also, periodically re-evaluating where you are in relation to having fulfilled your objectives is also recommended when the objective's final outcome is less clear.

Session 3: Consider where you are now in relation to your objectives. Understanding your current position relative to your objectives requires the detail and clarity developed in the previous session's work, so please ensure that you have a clear vision of your objectives' outcomes. Once your vision of the end result of your objectives is clear, write about where you are now in relation to your objectives.

Session 4: Discuss your objectives and rationale for selection with your manager. Open dialogue can help refine or solidify your work so far. Seek feedback and concurrence on objectives. It is perfectly acceptable to change your objectives if discussion suggests more beneficial areas to focus on developing.

Session 5: Now that your objectives and where you are now in relation to them are well-defined, identify what knowledge and skills support meeting your objectives. Pick out which ones would be effective for you to develop. Write down what you need to learn or develop in whatever form suits you (e.g. bulleted list, written paragraph(s)).

Session 6: There are two parts to this session's work:

- 1) Brainstorm general ideas about how you'll learn what you need to meet your objectives. Consider there are different styles of learning that have varying degrees of effectiveness in individuals. For instance, some people learn best by reading and reflecting on material, some learn best by visual or aural material, and some learn best in a hands-on environment. [http://www.managementhelp.org/prsn\\_dev/lrn\\_styl.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/prsn_dev/lrn_styl.htm) contains links to assessments that may help you determine your learning style. Write down ideas, in whatever form suits you, of how you'll learn this material. Here are some ideas:
  - if you learn well from discussion, then identify specific individuals or mentors, and generate a list of discussion topics for each;
  - if you learn well from reading, then identify books, credible articles or journals, or websites you'll learn from;
  - if you learn well from hands-on experience, identify particular activities to focus on.
- 2) Build on the previous session's work by defining (in writing) specific actions you'll take to support your learning. This list of steps is the beginning of the implementation

aspect of your plan. With respect to the bulleted list of items above, here are some ideas:

- develop questions or discussion plans for individuals or mentors,
- pick chapters of books or particular articles to read, or
- identify steps for participating and learning from activities you selected.

Consider the making strong use of content in the LDP curriculum because courses were picked to develop SWEF management attributes and most include written, visual, aural, and hands-on material. If it's not clear whether a future LDP session has content that will facilitate meeting your objectives, you are encouraged to discuss this with Brooke!

Time spent on researching and reading written materials should be kept to a minimum during work. SWEF does support your development by means of reading, however, so it will pay a reasonable amount for books if they clearly provide knowledge you need to meet your objectives. Talk to Brooke or your manager about this purchase.

Lastly, the library, courses from local colleges, and clubs or interest groups such as Toastmasters are sources of learning to keep in mind.

Session 7: Now consider ways in which you will apply your learning to meet your objectives, and define (in writing) specific activities or actions that will exercise this new knowledge toward meeting your objectives. This builds on your list of steps for implementing your plan. If at this point your list of steps doesn't lead to your objectives' final outcomes, add more to fill in gaps.

Session 8: Prepare a small, informal presentation of the previous three sessions' work for your manager. For instance, create and print a few bulleted slides covering what you need to learn, the details of how you'll learn it, and specific actions you'll take to apply it toward meeting your objectives. Schedule a meeting with your manager and present them. Attempt to generate discussion and seek feedback that will help you determine what to learn, how to learn it, and how to apply it to meet your objectives.

Session 9: Develop and write about evidence of progress your actions will produce as you execute your plan. Here are some ideas:

- periodically test your learning by seeing if you can recall main points,
- periodically discuss execution of your plan with your manager and gain concurrence on progress, and
- actively manage your list of steps for implementation by checking off items as you address them.

Session 10: Apply a timeline to your list of steps. Use any granularity you feel appropriate.



Session 11: As a closing step, collect all the plan development work you've done from the previous sessions into a single document. Email it to your manager. Expect him to provide comments and feedback in writing, and expect a follow up meeting for discussion.

Congratulations. Design of your plan is done. Now you are challenged to execute it!

## 7.5. Reaction Evaluation Sheet

1. The tools introduced in this program will be helpful in my job.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

2. The program's length was appropriate for the content covered.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

3. The materials used in the program were clear and easy to understand.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

4. The program provided an appropriate balance of practical and theoretical information.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

5. I would recommend this program to others.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

6. The facilitator effectively covered the content of this program.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

7. What areas (topics, concepts, skills, etc.) would you like to have covered in more depth?

8. Describe one important thing you learned in this program.

9. What did you like best about this program?

10. What did you like least about this program?

11. What suggestions do you have to improve this program?

12. Additional Comments: