



WES DEEPENS ITS POOL OF LEADERS



“WE ARE INCREASINGLY PROMOTING PEOPLE THROUGH THE RANKS FROM THE POOL OF WORK. LIFE. LEADER. COHORT MEMBERS.”

MIKE LOWE

*Senior Director of
Human Resources*

CUSTOMER

WES enables the global mobility and integration of students and professionals into academic and professional settings by evaluating and advocating for the recognition of their international education qualifications.

PROBLEM

With senior executives retiring, WES wanted to avoid the expensive and risky option of hiring executives from outside the organization. They needed to create an internal pool of talented leaders who could step into larger roles over the next few years.

SOLUTION

Work. Life. Leader. is a cohort-based 12-month transformational program that creates a new generation of leaders with professional skills to drive organizational success.

RESULTS

Work – WES created a culture that develops their employees’ leadership competencies and increases their proficiency and productivity.

Life – Cohort members cultivated skills that empower them in their lives away from work. With their new perspective, they are more fully engaged at work.

Leader – WES developed a growing talent pool by nurturing its next generation of leaders. They are now able to promote from within.



“THE PROGRAM DEMYSTIFIED WHAT A TRUE LEADER LOOKS LIKE. THAT MADE IT DIFFERENT FROM ANY TRAINING I’VE EVER HAD.”

JILL HANDY

Associate Director of Human Resources

WES DEEPENS ITS POOL OF LEADERS

Founded in 1974, World Education Services (WES), is dedicated to helping international students and professionals achieve their educational and professional goals in the United States and Canada. The organization’s work centers around evaluating and advocating for the recognition of international education qualifications.

WES has set the standard of excellence in the field of international mobility with its credential evaluations, research and consulting services, and ongoing support for international students and skilled immigrants. Having assisted more than one million people worldwide, their evaluations are widely recognized by more than 2,500 educational, business, and governmental institutions.

THE PROBLEM

The problem WES faced was that members of the executive leadership team were either retiring or planning to retire soon. Unless they were replaced internally, WES risked losing decades of institutional knowledge.

In contrast, WES has experienced tremendous growth. In 2012, the organization had just 60 employees. In 2015 they had 160 employees. By 2018 WES had grown to more than 300 employees. However, most of these new employees weren’t ready to become leaders.

“THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR EMPLOYEES WERE YOUNG AND RECENTLY OUT OF COLLEGE,” SHARES MIKE LOWE, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES. “THIS LEFT THE ORGANIZATION WITH A REAL GAP IN TERMS OF EXPERIENCE AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS. AND, WE WEREN’T DOING MUCH TO MOVE PEOPLE FROM THOSE ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS INTO A MIDDLE-MANAGEMENT POOL FROM WHICH WE COULD DRAW FUTURE LEADERS OF THE COMPANY.”

If WES didn’t find a solution to fill the leadership gap, they would have had to resort to the less-preferred option of hiring executives from outside. WES needed a way to build leaders internally so that they could promote from within.



“TO CONTINUE MY GROWTH, I HAVE TO REMEMBER THE COACHING I RECEIVED. I’M ON A LIFELONG JOURNEY TO SUCCEED IN MY PERSONAL AND WORK LIFE.”

WORK. LIFE. LEADER.
Cohort Member

THE SOLUTION

Work. Life. Leader. is a holistic leadership and professional development program that provides emerging leaders with collaborative group coaching, individual executive coaching, and focused training on topics relevant to career, personal, and leadership growth.

During this 12-month program, cohort members gain knowledge, develop skills, increase their competence and confidence, enhance their impact on the organization, expand their networks, and achieve greater professional and personal satisfaction.

Being a robust turnkey solution, Work. Life. Leader. enables organizations to get a leadership development program up and running quickly. And, because the program is highly customizable, it fits the leadership initiatives of any organization.

WORK RESULTS

By investing in Work. Life. Leader., WES succeeded in creating a training and development culture. However, Mike’s true test was whether people came out of the program with a different attitude towards their abilities and their careers. He wanted them ready to compete for job openings. And, that’s exactly what he got.

The program made a significant difference in how cohort members worked. One manager found the program to be “incredibly successful.” It was clear to her that the person she supervised had learned valuable skills and was applying them to their job. Other managers gave similar feedback, saying that they saw tangible professional growth.

Self-reported success stories include mentions of improved communication, collaborative, and delegation skills. Cohort members also reported personal increases in productivity and proficiency.

After the end of the first cohort, 100% of the members reported that they would recommend the program to peers and direct reports. Additionally, many of them expressed interest in developing an “action plan” for keeping their cohort together.



**“NOW I THINK LIKE
A LEADER.”**

WORK. LIFE. LEADER.
Cohort Member

LIFE RESULTS

An important component of Work. Life. Leader. focuses on the personal life of the leaders and how it impacts their work. This holistic approach allows leaders to control their work-life balance. Empowered in this way, leaders are more engaged with their work and have a greater capacity for assuming more responsibility.

“AT THE END OF 12 MONTHS, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE PROGRAM WAS EFFECTIVE,” EXPLAINS JILL HANDY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES. “WE FOUND THAT EACH MEMBER OF THE COHORT HAD DISCOVERED A NEW WAY OF BEING AT WORK AND A NEW WAY OF BEING AT HOME.”

One cohort member described how the Life aspect of the program helped her become a better manager. “I learned how important it was to delegate and help my direct reports grow and love what they do. This keeps me from feeling overwhelmed, and it frees my time to supervise efficiently while focusing on the big picture, which is the effectiveness of my department.”

Many cohort members recognized that the “Life” element of Work. Life. Leader. is just the beginning. As one leader put it, “To continue my growth, I have to remember the coaching I received. I’m on a lifelong journey to succeed in my personal and work life.”

LEADER RESULTS

WES is maturing, and its leadership pool is getting larger. “For a variety of technical needs, we’ve had to hire talent from outside the organization,” says Mike. “However, we are increasingly promoting people through the ranks from the pool of Work. Life. Leader. cohort members. I’d say most people in the first cohort have assumed leadership positions.”

The success of the program is based on helping cohort members gain clarity. “Work. Life. Leader. demystified what a true leader looks like,” shares Jill. “It clearly presented the steps to take to become an effective leader. That alone made it different from any training I’ve ever had.”

One cohort member describes his experience succinctly when he says, “Now I think like a leader.”



LEADING INTO THE FUTURE

When asked what he would say to an organization deciding on whether to have their employees participate in Work. Life. Leader., Mike responded, "I encourage them to do it. I could tell them story after story about how the program has had a positive impact on our business and how program participants have contributed to the success of the organization."

The leadership at WES are extremely happy with the program's results. Getting closer to wrapping up its second cohort, they are in the planning stages of the third. As a cohort member said, "Work. Life. Leader. is a journey that should never end!"