

Story of Impact

# Leadership Development Program *REFLECTIONS*®

Reinforcing New Leadership Competencies for the Long Term



Center for  
Creative  
Leadership

NORTH AMERICA EUROPE ASIA

[www.ccl.org](http://www.ccl.org)

## THE CHALLENGE

The Center for Creative Leadership's flagship Leadership Development Program (LDP)<sup>®</sup> has been in use for 30 years and is ranked as one of the top programs of its kind. Alumni of the highly interactive and feedback-intensive program typically describe LDP as the most transformational development experience they have ever had, both personally and professionally. Even highly motivated alumni, though, tend to retreat into their comfort zones as they return to the stresses and pace of the workplace, impeding the development of new leadership skills and behaviors learned at CCL<sup>®</sup>. The challenge is to help these professionals sustain their personal development and work toward their goals.

## THE SOLUTION

It is CCL's belief that providing managers and executives with an updated view of their leadership skills extends the learning and strengthens their developmental progress. Three months or more after LDP participants graduate from the program, they receive REFLECTIONS<sup>®</sup>, a 360-degree retrospective assessment instrument that measures skills and behavioral improvement along with the program's impact on participants' organizations. A critical part of CCL's follow-through process, this tool enables individuals to see the positive changes they have made and helps them transform their LDP experience from a past "event" to an ongoing learning process. REFLECTIONS also increases awareness of areas of potential improvement, increasing the likelihood that positive changes will be sustained over time.

Finally, REFLECTIONS enables participants to make concrete connections between their own leadership development success and outcomes at the organizational level. For this research, the REFLECTIONS instrument designed specifically for CCL's open-enrollment LDP used a set of nine-point scales to measure competency in 12 areas of leadership development, with each area having its own set of desired outcomes and behaviors. The developmental areas were:

1. Improve self-awareness
2. Improve self-confidence
3. Balance work and non-work activities
4. Enhance learning
5. Set and achieve goals
6. Build and maintain relationships
7. Leverage diversity
8. Demonstrate leadership

9. Work across organizational boundaries
10. Make effective decisions
11. Build effective teams
12. Develop others

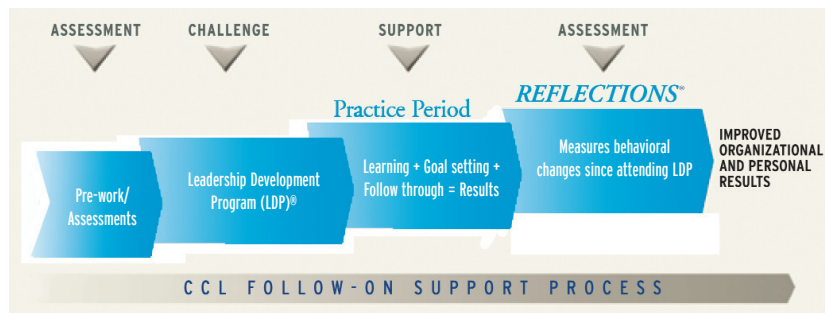
### Reviewing the Data

Between 1999 and 2003, 2,800 LDP participants completed the REFLECTIONS assessment. These participants comprised 27 percent of more than 10,000 most-recent LDP graduates. More than 20,000 observers of these participants — bosses, superiors, direct reports, peers and others — also took part. In 2004, CCL researchers analyzed the data collected from the assessment.

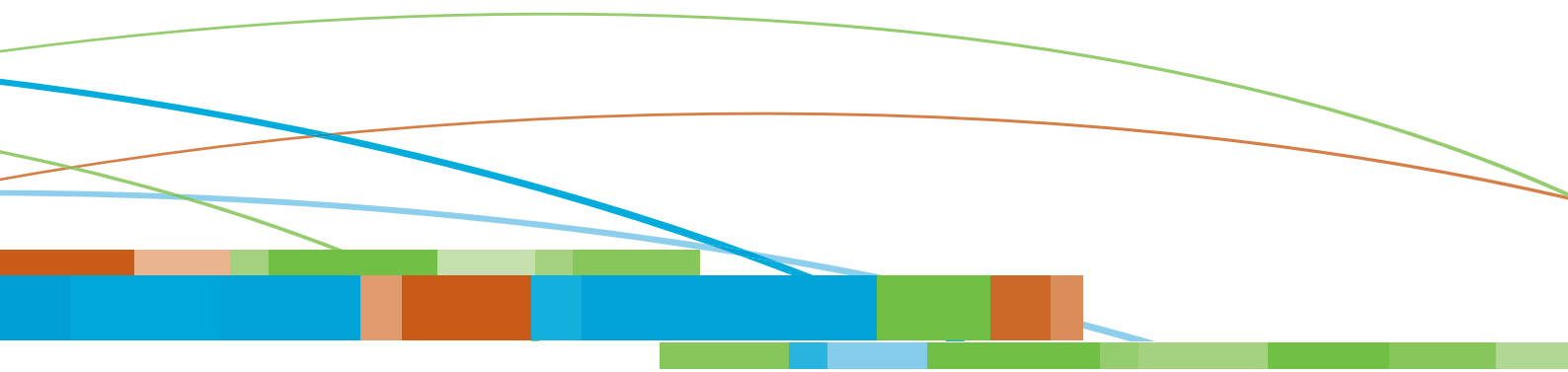
Participants and observers rated the participants' leadership competencies using the REFLECTIONS scales of measurement. There are two sets of ratings: "before" and "now." The raters (self and others) were asked to think back to before LDP and rate how well the participant performed the competencies then, as well as rate how well the participant was performing them currently. Participants and observers also answered questions about the impact of the LDP alumni on their work groups and organizations.

The lower-ranked developmental areas of the "before" ratings are referred to as "initial developmental needs." These are areas in which the participants have the greatest potential for positive change. Both participants and observers rated "improving self-awareness" and "setting and achieving goals" as developmental areas of greatest need.

Comparing the "before" and "now" ratings, CCL researchers found that participants and observers agreed on the three areas where the greatest change had occurred. They were: "improving self-awareness," "setting and achieving goals" and "building and maintaining relationships."



LDP<sup>®</sup>  
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
REFLECTIONS<sup>®</sup>



On average, the “now” ratings were higher than the “before” ratings among all groups, indicating that participants and observers perceived improvement in all areas of leadership development.

### Organizational Impact

The perception of positive organizational change impact was consistent among all groups. About half of the observers perceived positive impact in these areas:

- Increased focus of work group on goals and strategy: 54%
- Development of work group as a team: 47%
- Better relations with other work groups: 41%

Thirty-nine percent of the observers noted stronger relationships within the work group. Thirty-seven percent noted that work group members were more empowered. Most impressive was that 93 percent of participants and observers reported that attending the program had a positive overall impact on some aspect of their work groups and organizations.

## OUTCOMES

It is often difficult to manage the intentional planning, time and effort necessary to create successful and lasting change, but we can see in the data that REFLECTIONS® users (who are very much like other LDP alumni) showed improvement in leadership skills and behaviors, both as they rated themselves and as their observers rated them. Colleagues perceived these LDP participants as performing more effectively as leaders and having a positive impact on their work groups and their organizations since completing the program.

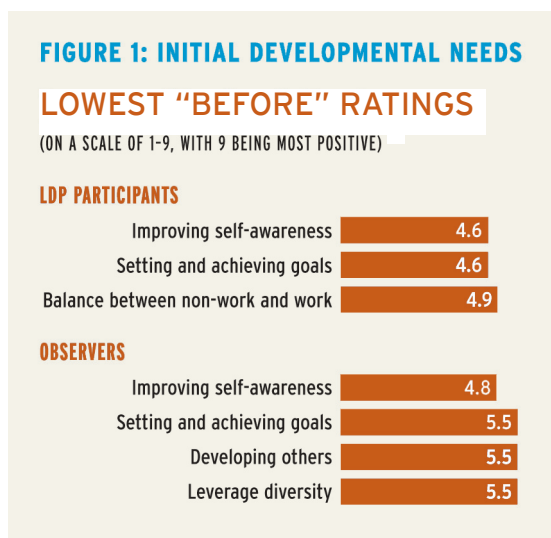
These changes, measured three months or more after their LDP experience, indicated that positive outcomes are sustained from the CCL program over time and that participants benefit from completing the entire follow-through LDP process.

Since the conclusion of this portion of the data-evaluation project, CCL has refined and augmented its open-enrollment LDP REFLECTIONS instrument, moving it to a Web-based platform with additional “desired outcome” scales and impact items. The updated version now includes 14 areas of development.

REFLECTIONS can be customized for other CCL open-enrollment and custom programs as well. CCL researchers look forward to further research on and understanding of the benefits of using this assessment with additional programs.

## CONCLUSION

REFLECTIONS helps participants of CCL programs stretch their learning experience beyond the five-day classroom event, supporting the transition from “learning as an event” to “learning as a process.” The instrument measures changes in leadership skills and interpersonal behaviors that individuals have worked on since returning to work and links those changes to positive impact on a participant’s work group and organization.





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#### GET STARTED WITH CCL

If building organizational leadership capacity is a concern for you, the Center can offer creative and customized solutions for addressing your leadership needs. Whether your goal is to improve the effectiveness of the executive team, to systematically develop your high-potential managers, expand your organization's ability to work globally or to create a shared leadership culture at all levels of the organization, we can help. To get started, visit [www.ccl.org/custom](http://www.ccl.org/custom) or contact us at the CCL location most convenient to you.

#### ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL<sup>®</sup>) is a top-ranked, global provider of executive education that develops better leaders through its exclusive focus on leadership education and research. Founded in 1970 as a nonprofit, educational institution, CCL helps clients worldwide cultivate creative leadership – the capacity to achieve more than imagined by thinking and acting beyond boundaries – through an array of programs, products and other services.