



Winner of a Brandon Hall Group excellence award for best unique or innovative learning and development program.

## Client Story

# Developing an Award-Winning Learning and Development Program at Amgen

Blanchard® recently partnered with Amgen, one of the world's leading independent biotechnology companies, to create a program that won a Brandon Hall Group excellence award for best unique or innovative learning and development program. The learning journey is called Leading Without Authority.

"The program was designed to give account managers the skills needed to lead and influence cross-functional teams in a highly matrixed organization," says Betty Dannewitz, solutions architect with Blanchard. "Account managers don't operate as direct leaders, so we had to focus through a unique lens of leading and influencing others when there isn't a direct reporting structure."

The team used the principles of design thinking to create the Leading Without Authority learning journey. It is an innovative, multi-modality approach to building and applying needed skills over time. It is delivered on the Degreed platform in eight digital self-paced sprints, on a master pathway that enables participants to access learning on demand with little disruption to their regular schedules. After the initial kickoff webinar to introduce the Degreed platform, participants complete the eight sprints over sixteen weeks. Reinforcement tools, job aids, and reference materials are available on the platform to help drive sustainable behavior change.

"Learning in the flow of work was important to the client. The Degreed platform allowed us to design a learning experience that would engage learners while accommodating their busy schedules. Plus, all learning materials are in one convenient place," says Dannewitz.

The design team integrated the best practices of learning transfer: virtual, instructor-led application sessions for practice and feedback, a reflection and action plan for participants to share with their manager, and a community aspect for ongoing peer conversations, support, and guidance.

Getting participants' managers involved in the learning is critical to sustaining behavior change. To ensure this support, the manager receives an At-a-Glance workbook with details on learning activities and key discussion points, and then reviews the participant's reflections and action plans. The participant gets together with their manager for a check-in conversation after each sprint.

## Results of the Learning Journey

A measurement strategy during the design phase utilized surveys both before and after the training to create a comparison between pre- and post-learning. The results:

- 32.6 percent average increase in participants' knowledge and skill level across 16 skills in the learning journey.
- 100 percent of participants rated their satisfaction with the learning as satisfied or strongly satisfied and believed the new knowledge would help them lead cross-functional teams.
- 92 percent thought the concepts, tools, and resources introduced in the course were helpful and relevant to their roles and would recommend the program to others as valuable and impactful.

A survey completed approximately 90 days after training revealed these results:

- 100 percent of participants indicated that the new skills positively impacted their relationship with their focus team.
- 100 percent affirmed they were able to apply new behaviors on the job.
- 96 percent indicated they had some improvement to exceptional improvement in their skills.

The three primary learnings from the rollout of the Leading Without Authority learning experience include:

1. Participation by nomination (versus mandatory training) promotes engagement and commitment to learning for both learner and leader.
2. The multi-modality learning journey is a preferred way to learn. The self-paced sprints, collaboration opportunities, immediate application, and sustainability elements all work cohesively to build new skills for immediate and future impact.
3. Leadership sponsors and manager involvement are critical to demonstrating that the initiative is a priority and that supporting the learners' success is critical.

Happy with these results, the company plans to increase the number of participants invited to be a part of the experience and is considering opening this opportunity to additional roles throughout the company.



## Blanchard content included in the Leading Without Authority Learning Journey:

- SLII® teaches how to provide the right amount of support and direction to each team member as they navigate tasks, and how to have more productive conversations that empower people to achieve their goals.
- Self Leadership teaches how to challenge assumed constraints, be more proactive, and understand points of power.
- Building Trust teaches how to build trust with team members and restore trust when it has been broken.
- Conversational Capacity® teaches how to engage in constructive, learning-focused dialogue when challenging topics or conflicts arise, which enables people to make informed decisions and find the best solutions, even under pressure.
- Adapting to Change teaches how to confidently address the increasing pace of change by focusing on being mindful and harnessing curiosity, courage, and resilience.
- Team Leadership teaches specific skills leaders can use to improve collaboration and innovation while directing and supporting the work of the team.
- Team Chartering teaches how to establish guidelines and ground rules to ensure teams communicate effectively and run efficiently.

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