



“This is about equipping leaders with all the tools they need to meet their people where they are, with empathy and purpose”

Client Story

Building Foundational Leadership Skills at PAR Western Line Contractors, LLC

Lijo Joseph, director, human resources at PAR Western Line Contractors, LLC understands the importance of investing in people through training. “Retention is always something I think about in my role. Investing in the development of people not only builds goodwill with employees, it also helps people improve their skills to become better versions of themselves. And that is the big payoff for us,” says Joseph.

Joseph recognized they were promoting high performers into manager positions but not necessarily giving them the skills they needed to be successful in their new roles. So he created the Management 101 program to get them off to the right start. “I wanted people to have the basic skills any manager in our company needs—technical training, business acumen, and key leadership skills. I had just participated in an SLII® course, and I knew it would serve as the foundation of the program we were building.”



Lijo Joseph

Joseph reached out to Blanchard to learn more about SLII® and found out about the Building Trust program, which he added to the learning journey. SLII® is a time-tested model that trains leaders how to provide the right amount of support and direction to each team member as they navigate certain tasks. It also focuses on teaching leaders how to have productive conversations that empower their direct reports to achieve goals. Building Trust is a simple model that teaches leaders how to build trust with employees and colleagues and also restore trust when it has been broken.

The Management 101 program is an 18-month course with new content being delivered in person to cohorts each quarter. SLII® is delivered in the second quarter and Building Trust in the fifth quarter. “I deliver SLII® in the full two-day design,” says Joseph. “I start the class by telling the participants they might struggle with the concepts initially, but to hang in there. It is great when they see it all come together and realize they are learning a new way to have productive conversations with their employees.”

Participants use the LBAII® (Leadership Behavior Analysis II), a self-assessment tool that helps them understand their leadership style by measuring their flexibility and effectiveness and providing real-time feedback for continuous improvement.

They also learn how to use conversation starters, which are worksheets to plan coaching conversations with direct reports based on each of the four leadership styles in the SLII® model. Joseph uses an interesting technique to get the participants engaged. “I read the conversation starter then tell them to use their own words the way they would with an employee in the field. I ask them to adapt it immediately in class, so they practice with a situation that they can relate to more readily. It’s like customizing the scenario right there in the class.”

Joseph checks in with the managers a couple of weeks after training to see if they are using their



new skills. “Of course, I love to hear the positive stories, but even more, I want to hear about the challenges. If someone says they are struggling, I know they are trying to use the new skills and not feeling comfortable, but they want to improve. That’s when I know they are hooked on the concept, and I just need to help them.”

Later in the learning journey, Joseph delivers the Building Trust program in a half-day session. It focuses on helping people understand the impact their behaviors have on either building or eroding trust, then identifying the aspects they should pay attention to in order to develop and maintain trusting relationships. “After teaching the elements of trust to the participants, I like to set aside time in the afternoon to work one-on-one with people who have specific issues,” says Joseph. “Creating a trusting relationship is one of the most important things a manager can do to increase engagement and commitment to an organization. I want to give everyone the chance to talk about what is happening in their current environment, and get immediate support.

Planning Ahead and Tips for Others

As Joseph looks back, he is proud of the progress

he has made with the Management 101 program, but he also has plans for the future. "I trained the senior leaders first and they loved it. That is what created the demand for their people to go through the training, too. Getting buy-in from the top of the organization makes the rollout easier. My next goal is to get the language of SLII® into our performance management system. It's great that our managers are diagnosing development levels and matching their leadership style to the situation daily, but we need to use the same language in performance appraisals. That would make leadership style and language consistent throughout the company."

Joseph admits there are a lot of options available for leadership training but cautions people not to deliver something just to check a box. "With Blanchard, we are doing more than giving people tools. We are changing mindsets. I like to say that I can tell people there is a hammer in their toolbox, but if I don't show them the toolbox and show them how to use the hammer and the other tools in the box, it doesn't matter. This is about equipping leaders with all the tools they need to meet their people where they are, with empathy and purpose. It's about helping our people be better, more conscientious leaders. The impact is significant for each individual and for our entire organization."

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