



A Leadership Program That's Right for You

👉 leadership employees management

Summary: If done well, leadership programs can foster not only the potential of employee talent, but also the potential of the organization itself. We delve into some pointers on how to make such a program successful at your institution.

In 1955, Louis R. Mobley was tapped to develop the IBM Executive School, hiring the Educational Testing Service to identify the intellectual skills needed in a great leader. But after testing some of the company's top up-and-coming talent, Mobley and ETS discovered the successful ones had virtually **nothing in common**. "ETS was so frustrated that they offered us our money back," he said.

Mobley then discovered that values and attitudes were better predictors of a leader's skills. Thus, lectures and books were thrown out, and the team brought in simulations and other experiential techniques to bring out the participants' true natures. By the time Mobley left the IBM Executive School in 1966, his students had turned IBM into the fastest-growing and most-admired corporation in the world at that time.

It's smart for community financial institutions (CFIs) to invest in a leadership program. It not only helps with succession planning, but it also fosters more loyalty and increases retention of top talent — all while improving the bottom line.

If this sounds like something worth implementing at your institution, then here are some pointers and examples from financial institutions of various sizes that your CFI can take inspiration from:

- **Tie it to your institution's strategic plan.** The leadership program should foster the kinds of skills and attributes that participants need to successfully help the institution meet its annual goals, as well as goals the board has set for the organization five years from now — and beyond.
- **Brand it distinctively.** Make sure the name fits your institution's overall brand and also offers promises to employees that can be fulfilled. One such brand is RegionsLEADS, which Regions Bank in Birmingham, Alabama created for its employees. "**We love an acronym**," says Shannon Knabb, the leadership development program manager at Regions who headed up the program development. "It makes it easy to remember, but it also really connects with what our purpose is."
- **Make it reach across business lines and departments.** Old National Bank in Evansville, Indiana created an additional CEO Council composed of up-and-coming talent from all areas of the institution. The structure enables the council members to accelerate their own career prospects while also giving the CEO and the rest of the C-suite their perspectives on strategic topics important to the institution's growth.
- **Make it comprehensive.** The leadership program at Consumers National Bank in Minerva, Ohio is highly interactive, with hands-on simulations, lively back-and-forth, and a signature program where participants collaborate to complete a project. "Don't make it a book club — anyone can read another Maxwell book," says Joshua Ondo, the program's developer. "Participants must come out feeling like they really learned something valuable."
- **Tailor the program to career level.** At the First National Bank in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the leadership and mentoring program is not one-size-fits-all. Instead, it's divided into hired/early years, career midpoint, and mentor/legacy: the right development at the right time for the right person.

- **Focus on self-reflection and whole-person growth.** Participants should be encouraged to look deep inside to find and best fulfill their purpose. Leadership programs should also cultivate the attitudes and behaviors that make not only a great leader but also a great person.
- **Make the program ongoing and keep it engaging.** Says an HR leader at a Philadelphia-based CFI: “Once people obtain that management and leadership role, we don't want the learning and the development to end, so that's phase two Visionary Leadership. [What do we do to support people](#) who have been in a leadership role for a while, and how do we continue that development process for them and looking at the best opportunity?”

CFIs should strongly consider implementing a leadership program not only to prepare for the future, but also to improve the current bottom line with better-equipped and more loyal developing talent. Take these pointers to heart to make sure your leadership program is successful in the long run.

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Treasury	Yields	MTD Chg	YTD Chg
3M	5.44	-0.01	1.02
6M	5.33	-0.05	0.57
1Y	4.86	-0.26	0.16
2Y	4.36	-0.32	-0.07
5Y	3.90	-0.37	-0.10
10Y	3.93	-0.40	0.05
30Y	4.06	-0.43	0.10
FF Market	FF Disc		IORR
5.33	5.50		5.40
SOFR	Prime		QBER
5.31	8.50		5.32

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