



**3 WAYS TO TELL IF YOUR COMPANY NEEDS  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

**ORGANIZATIONS ARE FACING****LEADERSHIP DEFICITS**

There's lots of talk these days about leadership deficits.

Part of the conversation is being fuelled by the skills gap. Another part is focused on the Boomers retiring and Millennials entering the workforce. Regardless of the reason, we can all agree that strong, capable leadership is necessary for our businesses to survive and thrive.

People have to learn leadership skills from somewhere. Typically, leadership isn't taught in high school or college. Yes, you might learn some theories but without real life examples it's hard to see how and when those theories should be applied. That's why organizations have to put some kind of leadership training in place. It allows individuals to tie together the theory they learned and the practical application they're gaining in the workplace.

According to the Association for Talent Development's 2014 State of the Industry report, only one-third of organizations focus their training on management and supervisory skills. If businesses want good leadership and management, they need to make the investment. The reason is fairly obvious - good leadership helps our companies achieve their business goals, engage employees and grow the bottom-line.

Some companies might argue that leadership training doesn't have to be pro-active. When a need arises, then you conduct training. Unfortunately, this can set your organization on a bit of a roller coaster where you have peaks and valleys of organizational effectiveness based upon the quality of the leadership team (or lack thereof) at the time.

## THE LEADERSHIP TRAINING LITMUS TEST

If you're wondering how your leadership is faring right now, here are three indicators that will tell you if leadership training might be necessary.

### 1. Employees Say So

While employees might not walk into your office and say "Get my manager some training asap!" – it's possible they will come to your office and say things like:

"My manager is playing favorites."

"My manager doesn't know what's happening in our department."

"My manager promised me an answer last week and I haven't heard a thing!"

Employee comments can be an indicator of a bigger issue. Listen to their concerns and ask yourself why they are happening.

### 2. Senior Leadership Says So

When executives can't take a day off out of fear the office will fall apart, or when some C-Suite leader gets a call on the weekend because a manager can't fix something...you can bet your reserved parking space a discussion about the quality of leadership will arise.

Also consider if you have senior executives who are planning their retirement, it's perfectly normal and in the best interest of your business to have a conversation about where the next generation of leaders will come from and how to get them ready for those roles and responsibilities.

### 3. Customers Say So

There are business executives who are afraid to grow their company because the leadership team can't handle it. There are customers who will only deal with one person in a company because they don't trust anyone else.

Whether you're a for-profit or not-for-profit, your organization needs money and/or revenue to survive. This means your leadership team must be effective in order for your business to deliver products/services and keep customers happy. Is a fear of customer expectations or a lack of innovation restricting company profits? Yes, you can look for that to become a leadership conversation.

#### **Skills Gap Negatively Impacting Business**

Organizations are turning down business because they don't have qualified employees to do the work. According to a study from the Association for Talent Development, 87 percent of respondents said the skills gap was affecting business performance in the areas of customer service, growth and service delivery.

What's interesting about the findings is that skills gap is becoming more than a definition for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects. The study refers to the "middle skills gap" and the need for organizations to invest in communication skills, supervisory skills, and problem solving.

Any of these signs are reason to think about your leadership team. Ask yourself the following question and answer it with brutal honesty, "If I didn't work here, would I still be the evangelist for this brand? Would I still buy the product/service the company offers?"

# GOOD TRAINING

## DOESN'T HAVE TO BREAK THE BUDGET

The first word that companies might think of when they consider training is “expensive.”

There are plenty of consultants who do quality work and are very affordable. At the end of this white paper, we’ve provided a guide for finding the best consultant for your organization.

It’s sad to say but there are also consultants who change their prices based upon a company’s balance sheet. If you’re a highly-profitable business, you get charged more. That’s not how it’s supposed to work. The goal should be to share our experience and expertise with clients. Is it possible that companies can find cheaper training? Sure, cheap training will always exist.

**At some point, value needs to enter into the equation.**

1. Once a person learns a theory then,
2. They can discuss how that theory is applied and,
3. Practice applying the theory in a safe environment (aka training),
4. Participants will always know the theory.

That’s the value to becoming a successful leader and manager. As the legendary B.B. King said, “The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you.”

## **APPENDIX: FINDING THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR YOUR COMPANY**

When it comes time to take action and bring leadership training into the organization, what's the best way to do it? How can you find the right leadership training for your organization? Here are a six things to consider:

### **1. Decide what skills to focus on.**

Make a list of the challenges facing your organization and prioritize them. If you try to tackle too much, it can overwhelm the training participants. Narrow it down to a few skills that will make the most impact and start with those. This is very helpful in designing the program and also can be valuable when determining your training budget.

### **2. Talk to several people.**

Any really good training provider isn't afraid of a client talking to others. Companies make the right decision for their operation and find the training provider who best aligns with their culture. Know a provider's experience, what industries they've worked in and their philosophy regarding the subject matter.

### **3. Like the methods the training provider uses.**

It's important to understand the training provider's style, any models they mention, the books they share and the activities they conduct. For example, if you're not a fan of games in training, what happens if the trainer uses games? Or maybe doing Karate as part of a teambuilding exercise? You probably want to know about that (and yes, some training providers do that sort of thing). Those conversations should happen early on.

### **4. Consider schedules and the operation.**

Work with your training provider to find a schedule that allows for an excellent program and minimal disruption to the operation. When participants are distracted during training, it's hard on everyone. A good provider should be able to work with your schedule.

## **5. Know what evaluation methods the trainer uses.**

Ask your training provider what they measure from the training program. If all they do is a Level 1 evaluation, request that they also provide a Level 2.<sup>1</sup> This helps you, the client, have a better understanding of the learning that took place. Trainers often get a bad rap for not showing enough ROI from their training sessions. These evaluations can provide helpful information.

## **6. Discuss ways for participants to practice after the training and retain the material.**

Training is an investment. Companies want to know their investment is going to stick. Training providers should work with their client companies and find ways for participants to immediately apply the material they've learned. It's the best way for participants to retain the information. Find out if the vendor offers additional options such as coaching or social learning to help reinforce the initial training.

The next time you're looking for training, we hope you find this list helpful. It can really make a difference in selecting the right training provider and getting a quality program that will benefit your organization.

**ABOUT****ITM GROUP, INC.**

ITM Group, Inc. is a South Florida based consulting firm focused on delivering workplace training in the areas of leadership and management skills, employee performance coaching, and group dynamics.

Our programs are grounded in behavioral science and have proven success in organizations of all sizes, various industries, both in the public and private sector. ITM Group has been recognized as one of the Top 100 small businesses in South Florida.

**This is what people are saying about ITM Group, Inc. and Sharlyn Lauby:**

“I have attended several of the ITM Group training workshops presented by Sharlyn and they are phenomenal. They provide relevant, practical information that can be easily implemented in the workplace. Sharlyn is adept at identifying the skills in her team that empower and motivate them to excel in their assigned responsibilities.”

**K. McCollam, SPHR, Business Consultant**

“Sharlyn is a master at what she does. Her performance has been stellar in every project she has worked on. She is an excellent speaker/presenter, a dynamic leader and is always thinking ‘outside the box’ to help organizations not only succeed but proceed to a level they never imagined.”

**B. Flynn, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, President**



**ABOUT****SHARLYN LAUBY**

In addition to being president of ITM Group, Sharlyn Lauby is an author, writer, and speaker.

Publications such as Mashable, Reuters, The New York Times, ABC News, TODAY, and The Wall Street Journal have sought out her expertise on topics related to human resources and the workplace. Sharlyn recently published her first book, “Essential Meeting Blueprints for Managers,” which is available on Amazon. And her personal goal in life is to find the best cheeseburger on the planet.

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