



# 7 HIDDEN PITFALLS IN YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

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# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Companies are spending enormous amounts on leadership training and education (\$366 billion globally in 2018), but often the ROI does not justify the expense.

Too often, leadership training programs, retreats and workshops don't lead to the organizational culture change that is necessary to produce high-performance teams and accountable workforces.

**Did you know that:**

**40% of a company's performance is negatively affected by a poor leader**  
**\$1M is the cost of poor leadership to a company with annual sales of \$15M**  
**77% of organizations report a leadership gap**  
**67% of millennials are looking for a new job**

Clearly, successful leadership development programs are needed now more than ever. Organizations, HR professionals, L&D consultants, OD specialists and CXO's need to assess the programs they are putting in place and make sure they are aligned, proven, and will drive results.

A great course, great facilitator, and great training program are essential but they're just the tip of the iceberg.

It's important to take a look below the surface and be aware of the 7 hidden pitfalls that are often ignored when organizations begin to create their leadership development programs.



# Pitfall #1

## Underestimating The Time Required

Attending the training is just getting on the plane. Runway time to get up to speed, off the ground and to full altitude is essential and often underestimated. Programs that don't allow for onboarding and pre-program education as well as time for transformation are likely to fail.



### AVOID THIS PITFALL

The lead up to a successful program launch should include a company wide communication plan to inform all employees about the program. The communication plan should explain the good that is expected to come of the program, not just for the participants but for the employees at large, the customers and the suppliers. During the program, the amount of time needed to learn, practice and truly transform is highly underestimated. Some initiatives will take several months after the training to yield an ROI so be realistic and patient. The good news is that the ROI for good development programs is similar to earning compound interest from the bank - it multiplies exponentially over time.

# Pitfall #2

## Not Making It About Them

People have to believe in what they are being taught and they have to want to practice it. When the training is framed as benefitting productivity, performance, and engagement and not the individual's career and skills, employees lose interest.



### AVOID THIS PITFALL

Tune into everyone's favourite station 'WII FM: What's In It For Me' and articulate to each participant how this course will personally benefit them. (Them, not the shareholders, not the client, or the company.)

## Pitfall #3

# Ignoring Work-Life Balance

Life is complicated, and the leadership program your employees are eager to be a part of is only one part of their busy lives. It takes energy to try new things and people will often burn out and give up before they have succeeded when we don't pay attention to helping them balance their mental and physical health, as well as their other work responsibilities.



### AVOID THIS PITFALL

Try to assess the whole person and their responsibilities prior to beginning the program. Don't overwhelm participants with several new work responsibilities at one time. Encourage rest, good nutrition, and exercise to keep people healthy. Be open to talking about how the program is affecting their lives, both positively and negatively.

## Pitfall #4

# Not Planning For Setbacks

Trying new things means making mistakes which can be discouraging, embarrassing or disheartening on many levels. It takes courage to learn and grow, and not informing participants that setbacks are expected leaves them feeling like they are failing.



### AVOID THIS PITFALL

Anticipate setbacks, communicate your expectations, and continue to encourage the participants to keep practicing and keep working things through with their coach. If employees see that there are consequences associated with making mistakes, you can expect them to disengage which will lead to greatly reduced ROI from your training initiative. Plan for setbacks, they are a part of your program's success.

## Pitfall #5 Not Giving Participants Authority

When participants aren't given the authority to implement their learning, they become disengaged and unconvinced that the training will affect change. When this happens, ROI plummets.

### AVOID THIS PITFALL

People must know that they have full backing to do what they are being trained to do. Participants need the authority to implement the learning. If programs are expected to transform leaders and teams, the ability to put the learning to use is essential.

## Pitfall #6 Executives Don't Set The Example

If the executives don't care, why should anyone else? What message does it send if their behavior contradicts what is being taught? The company culture needs to support the learning and practice phases of acquiring the new mindset and skillset, but often executives invest in training with a "Fix My People" point of view.

### AVOID THIS PITFALL

Before embarking on a training course, ensure that the buy-in of the executive team is well in place. When a company's purpose, vision and mission are clear and that that clarity is shared throughout the leadership team and their ranks, ROI is much higher.

## Pitfall #7

# Not Building Professional Coaching Into The Initiative

Leadership training programs that don't include professional coaching (either from external coaches or certified internal coaches) don't benefit from validated and appropriate coaching tools and techniques. Professional coaches have proven capabilities in the use of assessment, feedback and coaching tools, and broad experience and expertise in organizational change and leadership development, which accelerates the learning journey.

## AVOID THIS PITFALL

Leadership programs should be focused on coaching as a leadership style and also give the participants the ability to practice these skills. Skills should be practiced not only through real life experiences on the job but also by including professional 1-to-1 coaching in the curriculum. Experience both practicing their coaching skills and being coached by a professional is the gold standard for long term transformation and performance enhancement.

## BONUS RESOURCES

Want to learn more about leadership development programs, employee engagement, and workplace culture? Check out these bonus resources:

[A Peek Inside A Successful Leadership Development Program](#)

[Employee Engagement Strategies: A 4-Part Series](#)

[Psychometric Assessments for Leadership & Recruitment](#)



# DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM THAT WORKS

According to LinkedIn's 2018 Workforce Learning Report, a staggering **94% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their careers and provided development opportunities.**

But leadership development that doesn't take these 7 hidden pitfalls into consideration won't provide the employee engagement, retention and performance that companies are looking for when they consider investing.

With the right planning, leadership development programs can produce incredible ROI and build your employees to be resilient and agile in times of change.

Want to talk about setting up YOUR successful leadership development program? Get in touch:



[www.corryrobertson.com](http://www.corryrobertson.com)  
[www.talkwithcorry.com](http://www.talkwithcorry.com)  
1-514-220-2832

## **Corry Robertson, PCC** **Founder / CEO, The Coaching** **Academy for Leaders**

Corry Robertson is a leading global expert on organizational culture, engagement and retention in the tech industry, with a client list that includes Fortune 100 companies.

Corry has built a reputation for helping technical leaders understand people management in an 'engineering culture'. Over her 20+ year career, Corry has helped hundreds of organizations develop high-calibre leaders and expand rapidly without diluting the culture.

Corry is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) with a background that includes certification in Change Management, Reinvention, Conflict Management and Resolution, Conscious Leadership, Psychometric Assessment, Lumina Spark and DISC, Performance Improvement and Management Training as well as holistic methodologies including Reiki and Naturopathic Medicine.

Having coached leaders in some of the world's most influential organizations, Corry's passion is to deliver results, build strong corporate cultures, and make change work.

