



How one bank used strength-based training to motivate and challenge its managers

WEARY OF WORKSHOPS

When carried out effectively, corporate training does wonders for working professionals. It enables them to gain knowledge, acquire skills, view things from a fresh perspective, and renew drive and spirit. But when employees find themselves going through the same training format year after year, the experience can become tedious and ineffective. This is why learning and development teams put great effort into keeping things fresh for learners: they constantly look for ways to engage them, by employing modern techniques and applying global best practices, in order to avoid indifference or resistance to training.

Reinvigorating Management

One bank found itself facing this particular challenge, with its branch managers having lost all enthusiasm for the annual training programs they had undergone repeatedly. They had grown tired of workshops and demotivated by training because they felt it focused on shortfalls in performance.

More worryingly, the beginning of a negative culture among the branch network was starting to be felt, with work lethargy and pessimistic attitudes filtering through from branch managers to their teams. Given the strong influence of branch managers over their staff, it was important to address these issues and strengthen their positions as positive role models.

A DIFFERENT TRAINING APPROACH

MENTOR was given the challenge of creating a leadership development program for the bank's 84 branch managers. Given the general lack of enthusiasm, we also understood the need to lift spirits, create positive sentiment, and encourage managers to promote constructive attitudes within their teams.

We proposed a solution that dispelled any hint of negativity, steered away from traditional training formats, and offered something new to learners: Strength based training. Developed by Gallup, this approach focuses on employees' inherent abilities and determines ways to capitalize on them for the benefit of the individual and organization. It was chosen due to its positive outlook and tested model used in training thousands globally, and was executed by a Gallup certified coach at every step.

PHASE 1 - Assessment

Although the new training approach was initially met with skepticism, this soon changed due to its structured approach and positive theme. The program began in October 2017 with an individual assessment of participants, that covered 34 strength areas, highlighted the top five where the participant showed the most strength, and assessed abilities in 4 domains of leadership (Execution, Influencing, Relationship Building and Strategic Thinking). Trainees were provided with a detailed personal report.

PHASE 2 - Strength Exploration

The next phase involved a 2-day session with the coach, to explain the strength based development approach and highlight the importance of individual abilities and contributions. It instructed participants on techniques to apply personal and team member strengths and collaborate in a way for abilities to complement each other. The session also provided guidance on creating personal development plans to capitalize on strengths and employ them for the benefit of the individual, team and organization.

PHASE 3 - Personal Development Plans

Participants were then given one month to reflect on personal assessments and create an action plan to improve individual performance and team management abilities, based on natural strengths and talents.

PHASE 4 - Coaching & Review

The final phase involved a series of coaching sessions in small groups to initially evaluate action plans, then review progress on actions, share learnings, and collectively discover solutions to challenges. Following the program, participants were able to understand their own strengths, and implement ways to employ them in order to improve performance and add value. They were also able to apply their strengths in a team context and build teams around member strengths to meet specific goals.



Why It Worked

- **Fresh Perspective** - new way to challenge, train and engage participants
- **Positive Outlook** - highlight what's right instead of what's wrong
- **Personalized Approach** - individual assessment and small group coaching
- **Self-Driven** - individually motivated with coach support and guidance
- **Individual Focus** - explores role & potential
- **Actionable** - action plans & progress review

TURNING ATTITUDES

What was initially seen as an interesting training experiment was later viewed as one of the most successful training programs run in the bank to date, highly approved by **98%** of trainees due to its positive outlook, personalized view, and structured approach. The MENTOR team and coach were not only able to inspire a renewed interest in training, but to also help the bank in beginning to turn work culture within branches in a more favorable direction. The bank has potential plans to adopt strength based training for area managers as well as for branch teams in order to improve teamwork and culture.