

Achieving Business Results Through Leadership Development at Sealed Air Corporation



Sealed Air Corporation (SEE) is a global leader in the packaging sector, headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, with 15,500 employees globally. It partners with customers in more than 100 countries to solve their most critical packaging challenges. SEE prides itself on developing innovative solutions that leave the world, the environment, and communities in a better place.

The Challenge

SEE was in the middle of divesting of one of its largest divisions and was looking to strengthen its leadership pipeline by increasing engagement and retention of high-potential leaders. SEE assembled an internal Global Learning Council composed of cross-functional business and HR leaders to approach this challenge. It aspired to develop a compelling employee value proposition that would position the company as a highly desirable place for career growth. SEE sought to create a cadre of leaders who embody its organizational value of collaboration and who are strong, independent thinkers.

The Solution

Sealed Air approached AchieveForum to develop a high-touch solution for 20 mid-level leaders representing 10 countries and six functional areas. Working collaboratively with SEE's Global Learning Council, AchieveForum created a comprehensive solution, organized around three phases:

1. Conduct an assessment of the learning needs of the organization
2. Design a comprehensive learning journey with clear business outcomes aligned with SEE's global competencies and strategic priorities
3. Facilitate a year-long experience for leaders across the business's functions and regions

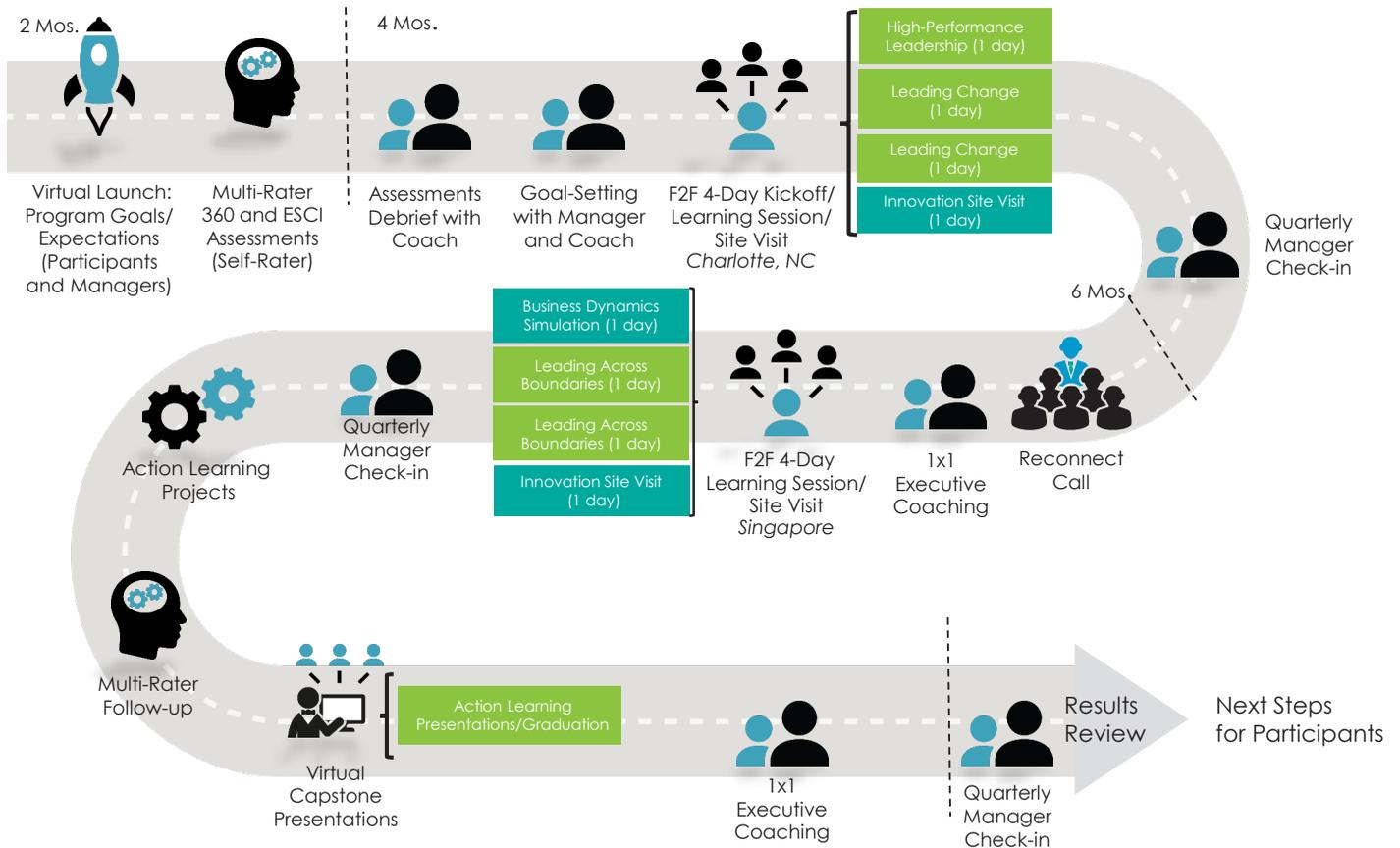
The SEE Leadership Development Program

AchieveForum consultants created a bespoke multi-modal learning journey that would transform SEE's leaders' capabilities in a number of areas critical to the future success of the company:



In close consultation with Sealed Air, our team crafted a 12-month learning journey that included pre- and post-360 assessments, in-person training based on AchieveForum’s leadership development content, executive coaching, business simulations, action learning projects, manager check-ins, and a final capstone to drive sustainment of the new skills and behaviors.

The SEE Leadership Development Learning Journey



A Spotlight on: Action Learning Projects

One of the critical success factors in the journey was the action learning projects. The projects provided a platform in which participants could **collaborate, network, and enhance their knowledge of the organization** while working on real-work projects that are valuable to the business.

Working in teams of five or six members, and supported by an executive sponsor, a team leader, and the facilitator, participants applied their newly acquired leadership skills to significant SEE business challenges. After 3 months, they were tasked with delivering virtual presentations to the full cohort and executives.

The results were overwhelmingly positive. Participant comments revealed “**better cross-functional understanding of challenges,**” “**a more holistic approach to solving problems,**” and “**an opportunity to tap into multiple networks of people.**” A team leader provided glowing feedback on the group: “What they produced in 3 months helped to move projects along in a way that otherwise would have taken over a year.”

The Impact

SEE and the AchieveForum team were clear about the intended outcomes from the beginning. They challenged learners to step out of their comfort zones to learn and grow. We spent time up front defining what success would look like and how it could be measured. AchieveForum’s measurement consultant carried out a detailed analysis of the program’s effectiveness, collating data and capturing qualitative stories to help build a picture of how the cohort was developing. The results were impressive.

Post-Classroom Evaluation

The Facilitator was given a score of 6.6 out of 7. Feedback noted that he demonstrated a high level of expertise in the topics covered, helped participants make connections between the program content and their work environment, and kept engagement levels high by eliciting audience interaction and facilitating meaningful discussion.

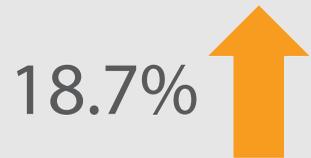
“Worthwhile investment” was rated 6.7 out of 7 and “learning effectiveness” 6.4 out of 7, showing that participants had learned new knowledge and skills in the program.



On average, participants estimated that 80 percent of the knowledge and skills they learned in the program are critical to their success on the job.



The classroom sessions earned a net promoter score of 75, with most participants rating the sessions an overall 9 or 10.



Estimated improved performance due to the SEE Leadership Development Program: 18.7 percent performance gain.

What about this program was most useful?

“The opportunity to connect with people from different business units and cultures”

“Becoming more motivated to be a change agent”

“Practical concepts and tools for leaders”

“Time to reflect and link the program to my challenges”

Follow-Up Survey Results

Sixty days after the classroom sessions, having had time to return to the daily workflow, the cohort was asked again to rate the program. Again, the results were extremely pleasing.



Of the various elements, the classroom session was considered to be the most impactful (6.6/7), followed by the action learning project (6.3/7) and the assessments (6.2/7).

The 360 feedback ratings showed that the highest net gains were seen in “influencing others,” followed closely by “leading change” and “adopting a global mindset.” All of these are important shifts for Sealed Air to see in its leaders.

Estimated improved performance due to the SEE Leadership Development Program: 23.5 percent performance gain (versus 18.7 percent at post-program survey).

Alongside the quantitative data, we gathered candid stories from the participants to get at how their behavior had changed and what impact they had seen as a result.

Here are just a few of those stories.

On demonstrating emotional intelligence:

I had a situation just recently that required me to pull someone back in line for actions they took that were not acceptable. Previously I would have written an email explaining the situation and what action needed to be taken. This course made me reconsider how I deliver the message to this person so we get a win/win situation. Before jumping into action mode, I asked the person to explain what they were trying to achieve by doing this. This turned what could have been a very badly received message and strained relationship into a positive outcome.

On engaging the team:

I realized that I was having to “know too much” and was not letting the team members themselves discuss and come up with answers and responses. I am continually learning how to change this, but would not have made this realization had I not gone through the program.

On developing team members:

The biggest learnings I have used from the program are the tools to develop my employees (not providing too much value; making time even when things are busy). Overall they have given my employees a lot of self-determination, and I think their skills will be developed so that they can progress in their careers.

On collaborating with other groups:

Most of what I learned will help me collaborate more effectively. One of my biggest challenges is working with other departments and breaking down silos. As much as we try to break down barriers, silos still exist. I particularly like the tools we were shown for working with other departments, overcoming hurdles, and dealing with obstacles or naysayers. Effectively working in and with cross-functional teams will be the way our company succeeds in the future. The tools, road map, and examples from the program were top-notch!

On building adaptability:

One specific tool that I now use all the time is building adaptability and managing the internal monologue. Putting a frame around my inner voice when something unexpected or undesired happens helps me to control not only my thoughts but also my behavior and body language. I am therefore able to filter more, and not let my team bear some of the consequences.

What's Next for Sealed Air Corporation?

The program has been a great success, and business leaders are excited to see how the cohort sustains their new approach as they grow into more senior roles. Participants' experience of value is made clear by the impact measurement exercise; and the benefits to the organization for the long term look especially promising.

How worthwhile was this investment?

96%

Participants rated it 96% worthwhile immediately after the program.



90%

Participants rated it 90% worthwhile 2 months after the program had ended.



Ready to achieve leadership success?

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At AchieveForum, we empower people to lead successfully in turbulent business landscapes. From in-person instruction to digitally enabled experiences, we are the human touch that drives leadership success, not just leadership know-how.