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Leadership in Action

A Customer's Experience

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Our Leadership in Action (LIA) course is an experience that changes the way people perceive not only their roles, but themselves too. The team tasks involved will encourage a cycle of action, reflection, conceptualisation and experimentation, provided by a powerful learning environment in which you receive individual attention from facilitators. Becoming a more effective leader is something that only you can achieve, but we can provide the very best tools for you to reach your potential with.

Richard Jackson, the founder and CEO of Aroq, an online publisher of global industry-specific business information for executives, shares his experience of attending the LIA, and the impact it had personally and professionally for both him and his staff.

1. Why did you decide to attend LIA?

I had been founder and CEO of Aroq for almost 17 years with little management or leadership training. The courses that I had previously attended were classroom based, and whilst I took some value and learning from them, they weren't transformational. I liked the sound of Leadership in Action programme with its focus on leadership rather than management - and its use of experiential learning and 360 feedback from work colleagues.

2. What was the experience like?

Challenging, rewarding and ultimately transformational on both a personal and professional level. The course opened with a short PowerPoint presentation on leadership and then it was straight into the leadership experience. Without wanting to give anything away, I quickly let go of any fear and jumped into the tasks. The four days seemed to fly by and with the rapid feedback and learnings I left a different, hopefully better, person.



3. What did you learn?

So, so, much. The first stage was the 360 feedback - which let me know how my peers and team felt about me. It was a little bit scary when first sending out the link to ask for feedback, but what came back gave me great insight into how I was doing some things well and other things not so well. In particular, I seemed to be good at getting people fired up and motivated, but then kept meddling with their work and getting involved when I needed to step back; what I saw as help, they saw as interference.

During the programme I had ample opportunity to see this dynamic in action as I applied myself to the tasks and then received feedback. By the end of the week, I had made a sea-change in my own way of managing and leading people, and I could see its impact in the final task. I didn't just gain from my observations of my own behaviour and traits, but also others.

I learned not to focus purely on the task, but also on the people. I learned that it is important to listen to everyone - as it is not the case that the loudest voice is the most correct. I learned how my skills in persuasion and passion for a task can help motivate others - and how then stepping back and giving people space to do their bit was so much better and more effective than my previous tendency to constantly step in and 'help'. It is not an over-statement to say I left the course a changed person.

4. What impact did it have on you? Did it change how you ran your organisation?

Massive impact - transformational. I learned that I could lead through vision and that letting go of detail and letting others focus on their goals was my most effective leadership style. I let go of my ego and realised the importance and joy of working with and in a high performing team.

As I left the course, I phoned each of my managers to tell them I thought they were amazing, that I trusted them and that I would come up with a vision for the business and let them deliver it. I also apologised for being interfering and promised to stop from that moment forward. When I got back into the office I quickly signed up my most senior managers to the next Leadership in Action event, recognising that it was one of the greatest learning experiences of my life, and that the accumulative benefits of the entire senior management team attending the same programme would hugely benefit how we worked together and have a positive impact on the organisation.



5. Why did you decide to put all your senior managers through it?

The LIA is not a course where you come away with a few tips or new ideas or skills. It promotes vertical learning which involves changing your thinking. It helps you address your issues, admit to your weaknesses, be authentic, be more aware of and play to your strengths. You leave confident and able to be who you really are in the workplace. After the programme you are able to recognise and deal with the emotions that are driving you at any moment, ditch those protective personality traits and open up to people - confident in who you are.

6. How did the company benefit from putting all senior managers through the programme?

Those that went through the course were more able to be honest with each other at work. If there was an issue, it was raised in a respectful way and there was no drama. The team really were pulling in the same direction and this meant the business performed better than ever. Morale increased and, similar to my experience, many of the managers left the programme having gained new perspectives and confidence in dealing with many aspects of their lives, not simply those aspects related to their business and careers.

To learn more about the Leadership in Action programme

📞 Call - 0800 018 5597

✉ Email - enquiries@quanta.co.uk



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Quanta Training Ltd | 8-10 The Moors | Worcester | WR1 3EE

Tel: 0800 018 5597 | Fax: 01905 619636

quanta.co.uk