

Sodexo' Leaders Embrace a New Strategy

Does a spectacular growth curve *have* to level off? One of the world's largest companies, Sodexo had built its success mainly as an on-site provider of food services for large corporate clients as well as schools, hospitals and entertainment venues.

For Sodexo, executive development is one key to keeping the company on the rise. To insure continuing growth, Sodexo staked a claim to a whole new marketplace of its own creation, not just by expanding the scope of its offerings, but by becoming a provider of value-added solutions for all non-core and near-core activities within client businesses. In essence to improve the quality of daily life for all the people the company serves.

A Leadership Development Program That Takes Leaders Outside Their Comfort Zone

The new strategy challenged the company's 300 Group Senior Leaders worldwide to push beyond their traditional comfort zone as a food-and-facilities management services provider with thriving but essentially isolated service components. Sodexo's learning and development organization then turned its attention to the next level down in the organization. The goal: engage this critical population of 1,000 senior managers around the world, demonstrate to them the value of Sodexo's ambitious new strategy, and show them how to make that strategy into reality.

The Transformation: a CLIMB to Next-Generation Performance

The Sodexo Management Institute designed a sophisticated development initiative called CLIMB (Change, Leadership, Implementation, Behaviors), then worked with BTS to develop new techniques to bring CLIMB to life.

The finished program architecture employed the Group Senior Leader community in a key delivery role and included e-learning curricula, self-assessments, peer coaching, virtual team assignments, face-to-face sessions and international virtual meetings. Strategically placed at the heart of the program was a customized, competitive simulation called VirtuoSo—built to integrate and test participants' successful application of the newly acquired knowledge.

The Future of Sodexo and Results-Based Leadership Development Program

Sodexo's growth curve continues to rise, and milestone after milestone proves that CLIMB is working. Self-assessments are providing even more specific information on the program's results: In initial feedback, 84 percent of the participants ranked their learning experience as "highly effective" for their development and increased

understanding of the new strategy. Engagement has increased by seven points overall for those senior leaders who have been through the program compared to those that have not, and executive learners have shown strong support for the new training methodology. This wholehearted adoption of blended and distance learning will be key to the company's continued growth.