

The Process One Leadership Project

The Leadership Project is a complex organisational simulation that maps requirements and structures similar to those encountered in everyday corporate life. Most of the project takes place outdoors and is planned and implemented by the participants. It establishes a framework that explores integrated thinking and action and demands a very high level of personal responsibility and initiative from the participants. The project objective is for several groups to earn the maximum combined profit (similarly to different organisational units) within a given time.

As soon as the consultants hand out the assignment, the participants organise themselves. They go through all the phases of a real project: they plan their time, financial and human resources, negotiate loans, purchase materials, set milestones, adjust their course if necessary and sum up the results at the end of the project.

Sales are generated by reaching stations and completing leadership challenges. These challenges are exercises explicitly related to leadership. In the course of the project, every participant in a group takes the lead role for a certain period of time.

Project costs are incurred in the form of rent for the equipment needed to solve the challenges, personnel costs, consultancy etc.

In the planning phase, the groups set their shared business objectives (sales, costs, profit) and plan how these can be achieved within the given constraints (e.g. a territory of 8km², time frame of 7 hours, communication by mobile radio). In this phase the participants are allowed to consult a map of the entire territory. Later on, each group only has a map of the part of the territory in which the relevant other group is operating. It is up to the groups to maintain contact, support each other and use their shared resources to optimum effect.

Execution is self-managed. The groups work on unaccustomed challenges outside their specialist areas both within and across teams. This means that the teams and, in particular, the acting leaders, have to deal with changes of plan (e.g. delays) and the experiences gained (e.g. the territory for a task may be different from their assumptions).

Reflection and transfer

The reflection examines critical situations from the project, and also things that went particularly well. Since the only situations under discussion are those from the Leadership Project, it is easier to accept criticism than in everyday work. Everyone can remember the concrete events. Everyone knows who reacted in what way. Since all participants play an active role in the project as both managers and employees, co-workers' and consultants' feedback as well as the participants' own estimation of their leadership performance forms the basis for reflection on the leadership sequences.

Parallels can then be drawn between these experiences and comparable situations in the participants' everyday work. In our experience, the things that become transparent and are discussed in the reflection are relevant to the participating managers in their everyday management practice, and precisely this factor enables targeted transfer.

Key data:

Reasons and objectives for training may be:

- + To develop leadership behavior and understanding
- + To get to know, practice and experience leadership styles
- + To make interface problems transparent and process them
- + To promote personal responsibility and initiative
- + To recognize differences of delegation and instruction
- + To find out employees' perceptions and expectations
- + To examine shared objectives, commitment and support

Duration

Ideally one day in the terrain plus preparation the evening before and wrap-up the morning after.

Participants

Managers or future managers

Number of participants

Ideally 10-12 participants, but at least 8

Larger groups are split up into several small groups