

Leadership Development Design Ideas

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External Opportunities

Ideas for developing leaders using External Opportunities such as volunteering, attending conferences, organizing supplier job trades, or loaning executives to non-profit organizations

- Offer sabbaticals
- Author/co-author an article
- Teach a class
- Get involved with local professional organizations
- Attend a Toastmasters class
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce and get involved
- Hold an office in a local condo or community organization
- Deliver programs and courses, or be a guest speaker at schools of all levels
- Find a mentor outside the company
- Volunteer to speak at conferences
- Speak to unions and federations
- Find a venue to teach what the company does well
- Sponsor a leaders reunion of previous employees like General Electric
- Have leaders experience challenges outside the business, such as adventure trips, philanthropic work, or other activities that reward the competencies that are valued
- Create an executive exchange program, for example a Canadian aviation company is developing an executive exchange program, like a student exchange program
- Global rotation exchange programs can be international for executives and emerging leaders recommending a six month to two year assignment; experience in another country enhances skills, enables working in a multi-cultural environment, and establishes good relationships
- Enable mid-level managers with five or more years to go on sabbatical (up to 6 months) completing a community service such as Habitat for Humanity (continue to draw a salary)
- Create an intern program, where a team has six to eight weeks to complete a designated project with a final deliverable
- Give employees one week to volunteer outside the organization in a non-profit situation to develop leaders; for example, Home Depot partners with Habitat for Humanity
- Contract work with a partnering company and spend time in a foreign country to teach leadership skills such as Winshape Foundation and Chik-fil-A
- Have future leaders volunteer to lead a strategy session for a non-profit in the community
- Use a search engine to learn the perception of your organization and compare it to the competition; make recommendations about how to make improvements
- Scan the newspaper for lecture series or other learning opportunities in your area
- Suggest that future leaders visit a bookstore, buy a cup of coffee and browse leadership books to begin to establish their personal leadership philosophy
- Leadership IQ webinars
- Volunteer for civic projects or teams, such as Junior Achievement, Boys or Girls Clubs, 4-H
- Host career fairs for local universities
- Mentor student interns

- Attend an Outward Bound (self-reflection journey)
- Start a professional community or participate in one
- Coordinate educational outreach programs to teach others on various topics
- Join a speaker's circuit touring on topics of expertise
- Accept a role in video game leadership in multi game player
- Attend ASTD and Leadership conferences
- Work toward a CPLP or other appropriate certifications
- Volunteer for charity, such as organizing fun runs
- Leaders can mentor their own children and form a discussion group about what they learned and what they need help with
- Accept a leadership role in church
- Find networking opportunities such as LinkedIn
- Speak at a local university
- Speak to other business executives
- Sponsor sporting events
- Join community boards
- Help non-profits organize events
- Take part in simulation war games
- Explore Second Life
- Speak at a grade school or high school about careers
- Host a career day for high school students
- Get involved with AIS EC - global internships
- Coordinate job sharing and job shadowing for students or community leaders
- Join Speakers Bureau and National Speakers Association (NSA)
- Share leadership expertise with customers
- Attend leadership meetings with regional and other local experts outside the organization
- Attend or host political events, such as Town Hall or voter information meetings in wards or sectors of the city, county, or state; lead focus groups, sessions, or forums as a part
- Serve on local nonprofit boards
- Lead a corporate "Fitness Challenge"; challenge other companies to expand teamwork
- Network in professional communities, "Line the Residents" experience
- Coach a children's sport team
- Create a "Young Professional" club in the community, inviting high school students or junior college students to participate to learn more about the world of work
- Hold an open forum in the community about a topic of interest; future leaders could plan and implement the event
- Find ways to share expertise with a subsidiary company
- Retail employees could shop the competition then return to the company to compare notes and create suggestions
- Create a cadre of young leaders who are willing to provide coaching outside company; coordinate the team within the company to share ideas and learn from each other's experiences
- Hold "Pair Meet Days" where pairs of new leaders meet other leaders to discuss assigned topics and then share thoughts with the larger group
- Create an internal speakers' bureau and offer skills outside the organization
- Hold a Skype discussion and or webinar

- Plan to loan a budding executive to another organization forcing them to sharpen the saw so they can impart their expertise; this should be viewed as a prestigious assignment; use public affairs to promote and encourage competition
- Arrange tours at other locations inside (other departments) and outside (suppliers or customers) the organization
- Debrief after association meetings
- Hire external coaches for HIPOs
- Leaders visit schools for autistic children; due to social skill limitations, autistic children will speak their minds and give raw feedback to leaders; this conversation becomes a win-win for both sides