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**A THEORY AND IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF A LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AT A FINANCIAL SERVICES  
ORGANISATION**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the  
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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION:**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Signature: Signature removed

Date: 10 May 2013

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University of Cape Town

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concept of leadership is diverse and complex. Organisations that strive to be successful often turn to their leaders to drive efficiency and performance and to create a competitive advantage using human capital. There has been a noticeable shift in the past decade with regards to what constitutes an excellent leader. The most effective leaders are more focused on people than on outcomes, and are committed to the wellbeing and satisfaction of employees.

The South African business environment has somewhat influenced the way organisations operate. Changing legislation and an ethnically diverse workplace means that leaders have to be equipped to manage change and transformation. This adds to the skill set that an effective leader should possess. Given the ever-changing nature of the business environment, there is pressure on leaders to remain charismatic and adaptable, and to ensure the same for their teams.

The Leadership Development Programme evaluated as part of this research was implemented at a leading asset management organisation in Cape Town, South Africa. The programme was developed internally and has been in existence for six years. Although the programme is viewed in a positive light, these opinions are mostly based on perceptions, rather than research; and therefore the evaluation attempted to gather sound evidence in support of the programme's perceived effectiveness. The programme aims to increase the leadership knowledge, skills and abilities of the participants and in turn create excellent leaders who are capable of driving organisational efficiency and performance.

There were two parts to this evaluation: a theory evaluation and an implementation evaluation. The evaluator extracted programme assumptions from the stakeholders during informal interviews at the start of the evaluation. These assumptions were used to elicit the programme's theory. The theory evaluation set out to determine whether the Leadership Development Programme was capable of producing the intended objectives. The evaluator scrutinised relevant social science literature to determine if the training interventions and the activities therein were able to increase the leadership

skills and knowledge of the programme's participants. The evaluator also investigated whether this increase in knowledge, skills and abilities was likely to be transferred to the workplace, and thereby produce a more capable leader.

The implementation part of the evaluation assessed whether the programme was implemented to the desirable group within the organisation, and whether the desirable group actually completed the programme. The evaluation also addressed the participants' perceptions of the programme and how capable they felt to engage in a transfer of knowledge. Programme records were used in conjunction with an online questionnaire that was hosted by the University of Cape Town's information management site, VULA. During the implementation evaluation the evaluator assessed service delivery, service utilisation and organisational/peer support.

The evaluator found that the programme was based on literature that was plausible and realistic, and consequently there is an increased likelihood that the programme objectives will disseminate throughout the target audience. Furthermore, the participants demonstrated a readiness to engage in a transfer of learning which strengthens the ability of the programme to meet its goals.

On the whole, the evaluation results were positive as the programme's theory was sound and the participants were able to transfer the skills learnt on the programme to the workplace. This is where the real benefit lies for the implementing organisation. The evaluator made suggestions on how to improve the consistency of the programme in the future, and these included the implementation of a monitoring framework and a more streamlined process when selecting vendors to deliver each training intervention. This research report provides a solid overview on the theory and implementation elements of the programme, and may be used as the foundation to gather data that will enable an outcomes or impact evaluation to be completed in the future.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The following research report documents an evaluation conducted on a Leadership Development Programme (LDP) implemented at a South African financial services organisation. This chapter begins by providing a literature review on the concept of leadership followed by a description of the evaluand.

### **Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Leadership is a complex phenomenon and is a fundamental component of success in an organisation (Bass, 1990; Leskiw & Singh, 2007; Scott & Webber, 2008). The need to produce and maintain excellent leaders should therefore be a priority for businesses that strive to be successful. Organisations that have a positive reputation to uphold have to remain sensitive to the damage that ineffective leadership may cause. Ineffective leadership can destabilise even the most reputable organisation, which may result in detrimental effects (Scott & Webber, 2008). To maintain a competitive advantage a business will need to continuously improve its vision and innovation (Rooke & Torbert, 2005) as well as regard leadership development as a strategic business initiative. Businesses that prioritise the development of leaders will be better prepared for future challenges, especially when ensuring that potential successors are suitably groomed as future leaders (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). If an organisation wants to be dynamic it has to put a premium on flexibility, responsiveness, decisiveness and speed (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003). This requires openness to change, quick response times, the ability make important decisions when faced with adversity and the ability to act fast in the face of a challenge. Effective leaders demonstrate these attributes and encourage others to do the same.

The development of leaders should be treated no differently to the development of processes, systems and procedures (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). In order to develop these individuals one should ask ‘what makes an effective leader?’ Effective leadership is impossible without a strong sense of direction (Scott & Webber, 2008). Collaboration on ideas and strategies is also essential. It is imperative for leaders to work with the natural energy of the people they lead and be sensitive to each individual (April, 1999). Although each leader will be different, an organisation that invests in

leadership development should aim to develop those characteristics that are universally inherent in effective leaders, while adding a personal element that compliments their organisation.

Leaders develop in environments where they are able to grow and implement their ideas without hindrance (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). Although leaders may be working towards slightly varied objectives, the culture of the organisation should tie these together and create a unanimous style of behaviour. Good leadership practices should support both teaching and learning and should encourage teams to collectively engage in conversation and dialogue and reflect on business processes (April, 1999). Through generating awareness of values and goals, employees are encouraged to align their personal goals with those of the organisation. Thus the organisation in which the leader works plays an influential role in their development process. Similarly, the environment in which the organisation and leader operate can influence certain leadership behaviours and styles. The South African environment is no exception.

### **The South African Environment**

The business context in South Africa is racially and ethnically diverse and leaders have to be prepared to deal with the challenges that this presents. Since the emergence of South Africa as a democracy, the country's economic, political and social policies have undergone significant changes (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2002). The fall of apartheid resulted in South African organisations having to modify various business practices as a result of new labour legislation. In particular, South African organisations were exposed to the global economy, forcing them to improve their competitive edge both locally and internationally (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2002). The changes to the South African economy introduced obstacles and challenges that affected multiple business operations (Scott & Webber, 2008). Restrictive labour legislation was at the forefront of these challenges. Changes to business processes in response to the new legislation were mandated, highlighting the need for effective leaders to manage this change in South African organisations (Sirianni & Frey, 2001). Leaders in South Africa have also been faced with tremendous challenges in dealing with government's transformational agenda (Leonard & Grobler, 2006) and have been

forced to assume the responsibility of ensuring individuals are adaptable in an attempt to encourage acceptance of and adherence to new legislation.

The leader is inevitably responsible for ensuring that their immediate team (and, by extension, the greater organisation) operates in alignment with South African legislation. Bearing in mind the often unpredictable nature of the South African business environment, leaders have many roles and responsibilities and these pose a range of challenges, making effective leadership a highly complex construct.

### **The Functions of Leadership**

Leaders are expected to remain charismatic, inspire and excite their employees, and empower them to achieve great results with extra effort (Bass, 1990). A leader holds the responsibility of bringing the external environment and the internal priorities of the organisation together (Burke, 2002; Day, 2001). A leader also has the responsibility of providing direction and vision for the future (Cacioppe, 1998a). These functions will contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation by encouraging incremental developments that add value to the organisation. The correlation between leadership and a healthy, innovative organisation is profound (Durlak & Du Pre, 2008; Prewitt, 2003). Not only do leaders reinforce the sharing of organisational and personal values, but they also reinforce the importance of commitment and engagement in attaining goals (April, 1999; Day, 2001). Effective leaders have been described to value the input from their teams to such a degree that each member feels individually accountable for the outcomes that prevail, and is hence committed to doing their best at all times (Bass, 1990; Cacioppe, 1998a; Dexter & Prince, 2007). When individuals are engaged, the workplace becomes a more positive and stimulating environment. It is a function of the leader to maintain engagement levels and increase them when necessary (Cacioppe, 1998b). The relationships and levels of communication and understanding between leaders and employees ensure that each team or business unit moves simultaneously and in a shared direction. Once a substantial level of engagement and commitment is achieved, the leader is able to concentrate on realising the full human potential of their team (April, 1999). A relationship cannot be symbiotic if there is little or poor communication and therefore a primary responsibility of a leader is to use

communication as a strategic tool in navigating corporate complexities (Leonard & Grobler, 2006).

According to Bass (1990), two predominant types of leaders exist, namely transactional leaders and transformational leaders. This report highlights the preference of transformational leaders versus transactional leaders; and provides insight as to why the former is the leadership style of choice in many innovative organisations (Bass, 1990; Collins & Holton, 2004; Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003; Stead, 2005).

### **Transactional leaders**

Transactional leaders engage in transactions with their employees (Bass, 1990) and their actions are clearly linked to the outcomes that they produce. This type of leader achieves responsibilities by fulfilling a clear set of objectives that are linked to different elements of a job. Given the limited allocation of time for activities outside of one's defined role, the transactional leader has been known to impede the degree of flexibility in the employee-manager relationship (Bass, 1990). Flexibility is the key to success if an organisation intends to keep up with the continuously changing global and local environments (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003). Flexibility depends on accountability and responsibility, and the leader nurtures these characteristics in their subordinates (Collins & Holton, 2004). Transactional leadership may sometimes fail to facilitate the necessary open channels of communication needed to develop a symbiotic relationship (Bass, 1990). This type of leadership is often based on transactions, which are by nature pre-described, and the leader often relies on a 'checklist' process to ensure that outcomes and targets are met. Although key focus areas are not ignored, transactional leaders seldom produce excellent results and therefore may be viewed as a prescription for mediocrity (Bass, 1990).

### **Transformational leaders**

Transformational leaders are defined as being charismatic, inspiring, intellectually stimulating and emotionally fulfilling (Bass, 1990). This type of leader stimulates the interests of individuals and aligns these with the interests of the organisation. A virtue

of the transformational leader is the focus on facilitation as opposed to the management of subordinates (Leonard & Grobler, 2006). The transformational leader has great power and influence over their team (Bass, 1990) and is able to enhance inspiration and excitement. This creates a solid foundation of trust and instills pride and commitment within a team. A solid team foundation evokes positive emotional and physical responses from team members, which in turn promotes action and ownership. A transformational leader is able to show an employee new ways of looking at old problems (Bass, 1990), providing intellectual stimulation and adding value to the employee-leader relationship. Transformational leaders often engage in active learning strategies (Zuber-Skerritt, 2002), as these tie in with their level of energy and their preference for facilitation rather than pure management. The action learner is able to respond sensibly to problems in modern organisations (Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). Action learners take ownership of their problems and their solutions, and are thus more involved in and committed to the overall wellbeing of the organisation. Action learning can therefore be viewed as a significant element of transformational leadership within an organisation (Cacioppe, 1998a). A core concept of action learning is that it encourages creative and innovative thinking (Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). This is often linked to an effective leader and inevitably a high performing team.

As highlighted in the above two paragraphs, the virtues that transformational leaders create in the individuals they lead have positive effects on the incremental development of an organisation (Bass, 1990). As the name states, leaders who adapt these qualities are forward thinking, focused on growth and development and driven by innovation. The strong human elements in this type of leadership, together with the fundamental characteristics of this type of leader, are powerful tools for promoting organisational change. It is change that keeps an organisation innovative and this is only fully achieved if leaders are able to effectively manage the process (Day, 2001).

### **Leading through Organisational Change**

Organisations may be regarded as living systems in which change occurs on an ongoing basis (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2002). Given the unpredictable nature of organisations, the ability to manage change effectively should remain an operational

priority. Producing intentional change is a matter of deliberately creating a new reality or set of social structures within an organisation (April, 1999). Effective leaders are those who can respond to change, who are committed, and have strong attention to detail (Day, 2001). Dialogue during change is crucial as it builds independent thinking, openness and insight (Cacioppe, 1998a). Leaders have the primary function of promoting and enabling incremental developments that will enhance the vision of the organisation, and in doing so, encourage a greater collective readiness for change (Collins & Holton, 2004). In saying this, the role of the leader falls under the spotlight during change within an organisation. Innovation is a virtue in the transformation process as it promotes ownership at each level of the decision-making process which keeps employees conscious and aware of their movement and development (Lorri Manasse, 1985). It is therefore evident that change is continuous in the financial services industry and this highlights the need for leadership development in this sector to effectively manage this change (Sirianni & Frey, 2001). The implementing organisation of this evaluation has identified the need to invest in human resource development initiatives such as leadership development with the presumption that effective leadership will add significant value to the operational efficiency of the organisation.

### **Implementing Organisation**

*The information presented below was derived from informal interviews with the programme managers (documented in the Method Chapter).*

The LDP is a training programme housed within a financial services organisation in Cape Town, South Africa. Having grown substantially over the last 36 years, the organisation is at the forefront of asset management. Exceptional internal business practices and the superior performance of their Collective Investment Schemes (Unit Trusts) are two fundamental factors contributing to the success of the organisation. Teams within the organisation are managed by independent-minded and individually accountable leaders who are committed to the success of the organisation and are passionate about its growth. The organisation has maintained its competitive edge by continuously developing internal business processes, systems and procedures. These developments have been directed at simplifying the administrative and operational

processes and ensuring that teams are able to function at an optimal level. The development of processes, systems and procedures has made it possible for employees to meet and exceed performance benchmarks and has ultimately contributed to the success of the organisation. Developments have also been in response to the changing external trends that stem from both the international economy and the South African economy. Individual accountability is one of the implementing organisation's fundamental values. Being accountable for your decisions and actions requires practise and is a skill that leaders need to develop within their respective teams. In order to be confident when making decisions, leaders have to feel empowered with knowledge. It cannot be assumed that this knowledge is learnt in the process of carrying out day-to-day operations; it should be taught in formal training interventions. Initiatives that address diversity, transformation, leadership, organisational development and sustainability form a fundamental part of business strategy and senior directors have acknowledged the importance of these strategic Human Resource (HR) initiatives. The business aims to ensure that the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) of each employee are consistently developed, maximising efficiency and output. It is therefore evident that the growth of the organisation has resulted in an increased need for a consistent supply of excellent leaders.

Leadership positions throughout the organisation were initially created as touch points in an attempt to maintain a sense of control in the expanding organisation. These positions were initially filled by top-performing employees. Touch points are points of contact and control in each unit or department that create reliable communication channels throughout the organisation. They form a link between teams, departments, senior directors and decision makers. As the business grew, more leaders were appointed and the value placed on these employees simultaneously increased. With this growth, the importance of effective leadership was realised and the decision was made to formally invest in leadership development. This resulted in the implementation of the LDP.

### **The Evaluand**

The LDP is a three-year programme that was introduced in January 2006. The objectives of the programme are to increase the KSAs of current business leaders;

create a consistent pipeline of excellent leaders; and improve the efficiency of teams throughout the organisation. The achievement of these objectives is expected to result in increased engagement levels of employees; improved manager-employee relationships; enhanced communication and greater commitment throughout the organisation.

The programme is targeted at all individuals within the organisation who are team leaders/managers. Department heads and line managers identify and nominate team leaders who are potential candidates for the programme. These nominations are sent to the Talent Management Committee for review. Senior directors, including the Chief Operating Officer, manage the committee. The committee then makes a collective decision as to which candidates will be invited to participate in the programme. Nomination is based on alignment to company values and individual performance. Short-listed, nominated employees are invited to attend a briefing session about the programme to better understand the aim, content and level of commitment expected. Individuals then choose whether they would like to partake in the programme. Participation is not compulsory but it is strongly recommended for an employee who has been nominated. Once an employee has committed to participate in the programme they are expected to achieve a 100% attendance rate. If they are absent on two or more occasions in any one calendar year they may be asked to leave the programme (commonly referred to as the '2-strike' policy). This decision is at the discretion of the programme manager and the Chief Operating Officer.

### **The five elements of the LDP**

The LDP is made up of 23 courses that are presented over a period of three years. There are one or two courses presented during most calendar months of each year. Every course is facilitated by a professional in the form of a workshop, seminar and/or training intervention. The programme is centred on what the organisation views as five essential elements (5 Es) of excellent leadership, namely: Example, Energy, Engagement, Edge and Execution. Each of the 5 Es is given a core meaning and a list of associated behaviours. 'Example' is to lead by example and to live by the organisation's values. This encourages leaders to think about the behaviours they want to role model and to be consistent in practising them. 'Energy' is about relishing

challenges and exuding enthusiasm. It is also about maintaining dedication to the goals of one's team and encouraging employees to persevere when faced with a challenge. 'Engagement' is to connect, understand, focus, recognise and grow the people in one's team. 'Edge' is the ability and courage to make tough decisions when faced with a challenge and to stick to these decisions and defend them with confidence. 'Execution' is to get things done when circumstances are chaotic or unexpected, and to overcome obstacles and complete all tasks that have been started.

Various training interventions based on the 5 Es are presented each year, with the level of divulgence increasing progressively over the three-year cycle. Participants are expected to gain a significant level of understanding of the above concepts and transfer this knowledge back to the workplace. Table 1 illustrates the observable behaviours that each of the five elements is expected to create.

Table 1

*Observable Behaviours for the 5 Es of the LDP*

Element of leadership	Observable change in behaviour
1. Example	Increased role modelling Coach from personal experience Build trust within the team
2. Energy	Maintain a high level of positive energy Articulate a compelling vision for the team Celebrate success
3. Engagement	Match people to suitable roles Empower others Listen
4. Execute	Deliver outcomes Use initiative Hold others accountable for their delivery
5. Edge	Make decisions responsibly Make unpopular decisions Maintain an open and enquiring mind

As seen in Table 1, each of the five elements has the objective of developing a specific set of KSAs which will collectively improve the effectiveness of the leader. The programme develops the KSAs of the participants over the full three-year duration and only on completion of the programme will the participants realise the full benefit of the programme. Figure 1 illustrates the simple causal theory of the LDP. A thorough analysis of the plausibility of these elements will be undertaken as part of this research.

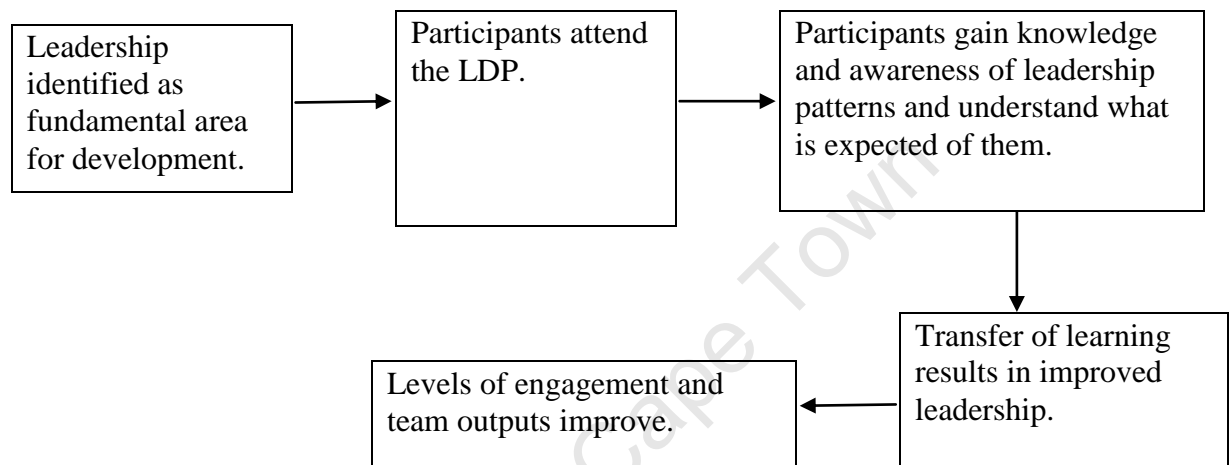


Figure 1. Causal theory of the LDP.

### The programme activities

The programme uses both in-house and off-site venues to present the different training interventions. There is a pre-work component for most interventions and participants are expected to come prepared with their own objectives and what they would personally like to achieve. These objectives are shared with fellow participants. Commitment sheets are also completed by each participant and serve as a formal commitment to completing each course within the programme. On completion of each year of the programme, participants are expected to give a 15-minute presentation to the class on what they have learnt; and to share their insights and experience of the 5 Es with fellow participants. This acts as an indication of the application and interpretation of each of the 'E' concepts, and illustrates any behavioural changes that the participant may have encountered. The organisation recognises that each leader has a different personality profile and will therefore action each 'E' in a unique way. Each element is assigned specialised and relevant courses that are designed to evoke

the desired knowledge, attitude and behavioural changes relating to that specific element of leadership. The programme is designed so that knowledge and understanding of each element develops progressively throughout each year. In year three participants are expected to practise the lessons they have learnt in their daily roles and act as role models within the organisation. Table 2 illustrates the different training interventions conducted over the three-year programme.

Table 2

*Training Interventions Presented During the LDP*

Year	Name of intervention	Objectives/Description of activities
1	Example	Senior managers share valuable insight on their leadership journey.
	Peer Learning Group	Encourages peer learning.
	Citizenship	Principle-centred, character-based approach to personal effectiveness.
	Situational Leadership	How to master flexible leadership approaches.
	Coaching for Performance	Identifying coaching techniques that leaders can use to unlock employees' potential.
	Q12 Survey	Measure engagement levels.
2	Problem Solving	Teaches analytical skills and effective approaches to problem solving.
	Understanding Industrial Relations	Practical introduction to common legislative challenges.
	HR Practices	How to effectively identify and manage top performers.
	Ethics and Example	How to deal with ethical dilemmas in the organisational context.
3	Effective Communication	Practical ways of mastering the art of effective communication.
	Facilitation Skills	Teaches effective facilitation skills that can be used to extract maximum value from conversations and dialogue.
	Team Dynamics and Development	How to effectively diagnose a team's problem and develop an action plan.
	Innovation and Creativity	Explore the four main types of innovation, namely: strategy, product and services, processes and delivery.
	Argument Structuring	How to effectively structure arguments that will ensure more effective presentations when dealing with conflict.
3	Client Service in Action	Improve the superb levels of client service within the organisation.
	Resilience Training	How to identify and practise sustainable resilience approaches.
	Change Fit	Equip participants to be more open to change
	Strategic Thinking and Planning	Practise basic strategy and scenario-planning skills.
	Good to Great	How to move towards leadership excellence.

## **Overview of the LDP**

The training interventions illustrated in Table 2 were designed with the intention of effectively developing the leaders at the implementing financial services organisation. Each intervention is based on one of the five elements of leadership. The LDP includes both active and reflective learning strategies and incorporates problem-solving approaches. These strategies include realistic and real-time challenges in the learning process (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). This approach to development can result in good leadership being taught and nurtured (Scott & Webber, 2008). The LDP encourages participants to interpret the material in their own way and thoroughly engage with the content. Individuals that are engaged throughout the programme will develop more holistically and the skills acquired will translate into sustainable and observable behavioural changes (Cacioppe, 1998b; Lorri Manasse, 1985). Although the design of the training interventions seems suitable, a plausibility analysis is required on the underlying programme theory. This research aims to conduct a theory evaluation of the LDP as well as an implementation evaluation to determine how effectively the programme is being implemented. Before discussing the evaluation scope and questions related to this research, a review of past leadership evaluations is documented.

## **Evaluating Leadership Development Programmes**

An evaluation should be tailored to a specific set of circumstances so that the evaluation is capable of yielding a credible and useful answer (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004). The involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation process is thus imperative. Regardless of the method used, programme evaluation should aim to assist key stakeholders in improving the programme. Various models exist for evaluating different programmes, for example: Rossi et al. (2004) five-step model; Phillips' (2005) Return of Investment and Brinkerhoff's (2003) Success Case Method. However, leadership qualities and characteristics are generally evaluated through perceptions (Sirianni & Frey, 2001). Diverse approaches have been developed and discarded (Werth, Markel, & Forster, 2006) and organisations are commonly faced with the difficulty of quantifying leadership behaviours. A popular model used to evaluate LDPs is Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four-level Hierarchical Framework which

focuses on four levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behaviour and results (Kirkpatrick, 1959; McLean & Moss, 2003; Sirianni & Frey, 2001). Due to a lack of evaluation competency, organisations usually only evaluate their leadership programmes using one level. In other words, data collected is based on the likes and dislikes of the programme participants. There are, however, some documented evaluations of leadership programmes that investigated the behaviour and outcomes of these programmes. These evaluations are summarised below.

Sirianni and Frey (2001) evaluated an internally developed leadership development programme at a financial services organisation. The programme included 13 leadership modules that were rolled out bi-weekly over a nine month period. The need for the programme arose after an internal survey revealed that employees felt that they were not valued, training and development were lacking, and succession planning was relatively non-existent (Sirianni & Frey, 2001). Based on the needs assessment, the LDP was drafted and piloted. Senior management requested an evaluation of the programme in order to determine if it should be continued as an internal function (Sirianni & Frey, 2001).

Four data collection methods were used to evaluate the programme: participant feedback forms; regional scorecard results (indicated the employee's level of service quality); employee satisfaction surveys and annual employee turnover statistics. Participants completed feedback forms after the sixth and final module, gathering mid-point and end-of-training ratings. The feedback survey was used to determine whether the participants perceived the content of the programme to be valuable and to ask for suggestions. These forms asked the participants to rate the programme on a scale of one (no value) to ten (extremely valuable) and the average rating was 8,71. The evaluation hence found the programme to have a positive impact on participants and the organisation, and 100% of the participants perceived the leadership modules to be beneficial (Sirianni & Frey, 2001). The results also indicated that the participants engaged in a transfer of learning and displayed increased job satisfaction, which resulted in decreased turnover (Sirianni & Frey, 2001). This is known to have a positive impact on an organisation. Although the organisation was not in South Africa, it is an international organisation with a presence in four continents across the globe. Kirkpatrick (1959) noted that participants who have a positive reaction to

training programmes are more likely to transfer this knowledge to their jobs. A transfer of knowledge was evident in the above evaluation, adding value to the implementing organisation and ultimately increasing the return on investment.

McLean and Moss (2003) evaluated a national leadership development programme also using Kirkpatrick's (1959) evaluation framework. The programme was rolled out over an 18-month period and had the primary objective of developing effective leaders for the industry; in this case the Canadian agri-food industry. Kirkpatrick's (1959) framework was found to be appealing in organising the evaluation process and the framework enabled a productive formative evaluation process that demonstrated participant satisfaction and learning with the programme (McLean & Moss, 2003). Extensive surveys were administered to participants as part of the evaluation process and these were clearly designed to elicit a reaction from participants about their learning, behaviour change and impact as a result of participating in the programme (McLean & Moss, 2003). With regards to learning, participants indicated that they thought they had developed their knowledge, skills and networks through partaking in the programme (McLean & Moss, 2003) and were able to provide specific examples of a transfer of learning. With regards to behaviour change, participants claimed to have changed their leadership practices as a result of taking part in the programme. Although participants could give examples of specific behaviour changes they had made, one needs to understand that these types of claims are subjective. The evaluation was therefore not able to conclusively demonstrate that the behaviour changes and the resulting impact on the organisation took place exclusively as a result of participation in the programme (McLean & Moss, 2003). This limitation is common in LDPs, where causality is extremely difficult to isolate.

Boaden (2006) examined the impact of a leadership development programme in Manchester, United Kingdom, also using Kirkpatrick's (1959) hierarchical framework. The programme was made up of half-week blocks of teaching every two to four months; service improvement projects; and a support website (Boaden, 2006). The evaluation was both formative and summative and the findings indicated that the programme had been successful in impacting on personal and organisational contribution, adding significant value to the implementing organisation. Data on reaction level one (Kirkpatrick, 1959) was gathered throughout the programme in the

form of feedback questionnaires and verbal reports. At the end of the programme participants were asked to reassess the programme so that a comparison of the immediate and delayed reactions could be made (Boaden, 2006). Data for level two and three (Kirkpatrick, 1959) was gathered via a project that participants had to produce detailing their developments in knowledge and how these have translated in changed behaviours (Boaden, 2006). Participants were also required to provide a presentation on their assessment of the benefits of the programme for the implementing organisation and its cost-benefit ratio (Boaden, 2003). This provided data for level four (Kirkpatrick, 1959). A variety of improved transactional skills and improved transformational leadership characteristics were evident, as well as significant personal development (Boaden 2006). The evaluation also found the programme to be consistent with the evolving paradigms of leadership development.

The evaluations summarised above illustrate a trend in LDPs being perceived as beneficial by the programme participants and in turn being perceived as beneficial by the implementing organisations. Although the contexts in which the above evaluations were conducted are varied, the programmes all had the objective of developing effective leaders and were successful at achieving this objective. The evaluations indicated a positive response by participants to the programme, and suggested that the participants had engaged in a transfer of learning. This is where the tangible benefit lies for the respective organisations.

### **Evaluation Scope and Questions**

In order for a programme to achieve its intended outcomes, two conditions are necessary: firstly, the key assumptions underlying the programme need to be plausible and secondly the programme needs to be implemented effectively (Bickman, 1987; Rossi et al., 2004). These aspects of a programme should be evaluated prior to conducting an outcomes evaluation (Bickman, 1987; Donaldson, 2007; Funnel & Rogers, 2011). This research therefore aims to assess the viability of the LDP's programme theory as well as evaluate whether the programme was implemented to a high standard.

Programme theory has many definitions. One such definition is that programme theory explains why a programme does what it does and provides the link between the programme's activities and the programme's outcomes (Rossi et al., 2004). It may also be seen as the explicit model of how a programme contributes to a set of specific outcomes through a series of short and medium-term outcomes (Funnel & Rogers, 2011). Similarly, it has been described as the plausible and sensible model of how a programme is supposed to work (Bickman, 1987). In order to evaluate theory, the evaluator needs to articulate the theory in a form that is suitable for analysis (Donaldson, 2007). Theory evaluations consist of a thorough analysis of the plausibility of the theory used to develop a programme (Bickman, 1987). A common outcome of programme evaluation is to recognise the need for programme modification, and this includes the need for modifications to the programme's theory (Rossi et al., 2004). Theory evaluations therefore provide the evaluator with the level of plausibility of the programme theory, which suggests whether the activities will result in the desired outcomes, or whether modifications need to be made.

Implementation may be described as the components of a programme during delivery (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). In other words, it details what the programme consists of when it is being delivered to a particular audience. Implementation evaluations provide information about programme performance to stakeholders (Rossi et al., 2004). Substantial research has been done on strengthening the belief that the level of implementation affects the outcomes obtained from the programme (Donaldson & Lipsey, 2006; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Rossi et al., 2004). An implementation evaluation investigates the extent to which the intended targets actually received the programme (coverage); the level of organisational support, which focuses on whether a programme is using its resources to accomplish its tasks; and the programme's service delivery, which is the extent to which the programme is actually delivered to the intended participants, or the portion of the programme that the participants actually receive (Rossi et al., 2004).

The evaluation questions guiding this implementation and theory evaluation for the LDP are as follows:

### **Theory plausibility**

1. Is the 5 Es leadership design of the LDP plausible according to social science research and literature?
  - a. Are there other content areas required for an effective leadership programme?
  - b. Are there any mediator or moderator variables reported in the research that affect the relationship between a leadership programme's activities and its intended outcomes?

### **Service utilisation**

2. Is the training reaching the intended target population?
  - a. What are the demographics of the leaders who participate in the programme?
3. Are the enrolled leaders completing all training activities?
  - a. What is the attrition rate?
  - b. If there is attrition, what are the reasons for this?

### **Service delivery**

4. Does the programme encourage application?
  - a. Do programme participants perceive their working environments to be conducive to a transfer of learning?

### **Support**

5. Do the leaders have enough support during the course of the programme?
6. Are there points of contact (supervisors/peers) that leaders may use for mentoring and support after the programme?

## **CHAPTER 2: METHOD**

### **Data Providers**

#### **Programme managers**

At the start of this evaluation research, the evaluator required detailed information about the LDP. Informal face-to-face interviews were held with the programme managers to elicit the programme description reported in Chapter 1. The evaluator set up these interviews at a time convenient for the stakeholders. The evaluator also conducted informal interviews during the course of the year to obtain additional information about the LDP as and when the need for this information became apparent.

#### **Programme participants**

Sixty-four leaders that completed the LDP in 2009, 2010 and 2011 made up the sampling frame for the evaluation research. These participants were in leadership roles in numerous areas of the implementing organisation, or were nominated to attend the programme in exceptional circumstances (as outlined in Chapter 1). Convenient sampling was used in that only the participants who responded to the questionnaire were included in the evaluation (n=17). Table 3 indicates the demographics of the sample.

#### **Secondary data**

Secondary data in the form of programme records and attendance registers were used to answer the evaluation questions pertaining to service utilisation. These documents were provided to the evaluator by the programme stakeholders and Human Resource administrators at the implementing organisation.

Table 3

*Demographics of Sample*

Year of completion	Sex	Race	Age
2009	M	Indian	38
	M	Coloured	29
2010	F	White	40
	M	Coloured	34
	M	White	29
	M	White	36
	M	Coloured	34
	F	Coloured	50
	M	Non SA	53
	F	Coloured	35
	M	White	44
2011	F	White	30
	M	Coloured	32
	M	White	40
	F	Coloured	31
	M	White	30
	M	White	28

**Procedures**

The following section details the procedures used based on the evaluation questions in this evaluation. Data was collected once ethical clearance was obtained from the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee.

**Procedure to develop the programme theory**

In order to elicit the underlying assumptions of the LDP, the programme managers were interviewed between the months of March and June 2012. During these informal interviews the programme managers were taken through Donaldson's (2007) steps for developing programme theory. These steps include:

1. Engaging the stakeholders

Informal interviews were conducted with the programme managers to understand the nature of the programme and to gather information about the LDP. The evaluator also described the evaluation that would be conducted and allowed stakeholders to express concerns or to ask questions.

2. Developing the first draft

The evaluator asked detailed questions about the programme's objectives and scrutinised the causal relationships that the stakeholders suggested. The evaluator then channelled the different ideas presented by the stakeholders into developing a causal framework for the programme.

3. First draft

The information gathered during the informal interviews was used to develop the first draft of the proposed programme theory. This draft was revealed to the stakeholders and the evaluator determined whether the model accurately represented the stakeholder's opinions.

4. Plausibility check

The evaluator examined the plausibility of the framework by investigating its alignment with social science research and literature. The evaluator researched the concept of leadership as a whole and checked the plausibility of the different elements of the framework.

5. Final model

Once minor changes had been made to the initial framework, the evaluator finalised the programme theory and presented this model to the stakeholders.

### **Detailed procedure to assess plausibility**

In order to assess the plausibility of the LDP's programme theory, the evaluator scrutinised relevant social science literature. The main aim of the literature review was to determine whether the content of the LDP is in line with generic leadership development programmes. In addition, the activities included in the LDP were assessed to determine whether these enabled learning to be effective. Lastly, the linkages between the content and the activities were evaluated to determine whether these could result in the required behavioural changes in the programme participants,

and whether these behavioural changes were capable of producing the desired outcomes of the programme.

### ***Literature search***

To investigate the plausibility of the programme theory, the evaluator scrutinised social science research and literature. An electronic literature search was done using the following databases: Google Scholar, EBSCO Host, JSTOR and Emerald. The following key words were used individually and collectively (AND/OR): *leadership development, leadership development programmes, leadership development principles, leadership development content, effective strategies, activities, training interventions, South Africa, best practices, evaluation, leadership development theory, leadership development evaluation, evaluation techniques and financial services.*

### **Procedure to investigate service utilisation**

In order to answer the evaluation questions pertaining to service utilisation, secondary data analysis was conducted. Attendance records were used to assess the demographics of the individuals who completed the programme during 2009, 2010 and 2011. This information was examined to determine whether the programme reached its intended target audience (fidelity). In addition, the attendance records revealed who dropped out of the programme and the reasons for this attrition.

### **Procedure to answer evaluation questions pertaining to service delivery**

#### ***Data collection materials***

The online questionnaire used in this evaluation was adapted from Holton and Bates' (1998) Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI). This scale was selected due to its ability to measure Human Resource Development (HRD) initiatives via a fully specified evaluation model that meets the criteria of good theory and model building (Holton & Bates, 1998). The scale has four constructs: ability, motivation, environment and secondary influence for learning outcomes and organisational outcomes (Holton & Bates, 1998). It has been argued in Kirkpatrick's (1959) Four-

level Hierarchical Framework that any failure to achieve programme outcomes is blamed on the failure of the intervention without consideration that the failure may be due to moderating variables (Holton & Bates, 1998). The LTSI takes these moderating variables into account when evaluating HRD initiatives and hence provides a more detailed and accurate evaluation framework.

Selected items from this scale (based on relevance to the LDP) were included in the questionnaire. The evaluator's discretion was used to select which items to include. The questionnaire assisted the evaluator in answering the evaluation questions pertaining to service delivery. The questionnaire consisted of 28 items split over seven sections (See Appendix A for the questionnaire). The items required participants to rate their level of agreement with various statements on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The details of the questionnaire are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Details of Online Questionnaire*

Title of section	Section	Number of items	Example of question
Perceived content validity	A	3	What is taught in the LDP closely matches my job requirements.
Transfer design	B	4	The activities and exercises the LDP trainers used helped me recognise how to apply my learning on the job.
Opportunity to use	C	5	The resources I need to apply what I learnt on the LDP are available to me after the training.
Motivation to transfer	D	4	I believe the LDP helped me to do my current job better.
Perceived capacity for transfer	E	3	My workload allows me time to try the new things I have learnt on the LDP.
Peer support	F	3	My colleagues encourage me to use the skills that I have learnt in the LDP.
Supervisor support	G	6	My line manager sets goals for me that encourage me to apply my training in the LDP on the job.
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>28</b>	

### ***Procedure to administer the questionnaire***

VULA, which is the University of Cape Town's information management system, was used to develop and host the online questionnaire. The link to the questionnaire was mailed electronically to all 64 participants who completed the programme in 2009, 2010 and 2011. The implementing organisation provided the evaluator with a list of all participants' email addresses. Participants were given an overview of the evaluation in the email and were assured of the anonymity of the results. The questionnaire was live for a period of three weeks and after the first and second week all participants were sent additional emails reminding them of the evaluation and encouraging them to participate in the survey. Participation was voluntary.

### **Procedure for questions pertaining to support**

The online questionnaire was also used to answer the evaluation questions pertaining to support. The same procedure applies as per the section entitled 'Procedure to answer evaluation questions pertaining to service delivery'. The last two sections of the questionnaire (peer support and supervisor support) were used to answer the evaluation questions.

### **Data Analysis**

Completed questionnaire responses were collated and captured into Excel for data analysis. Items that were negatively coded were reverse coded into the positive (items 18, 19 and 25).

## CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

The results presented in this chapter will follow the format of the evaluation questions and will be presented under the following headings: theory plausibility, service utilisation, service delivery and support.

### **Theory Plausibility**

Programme theory may be seen as the construction of a plausible and sensible model of how a programme is supposed to work (Bickman, 1987). It clarifies the causal assumptions that connect the programme activities with the programme outcomes. Theory-driven evaluations should identify the assumptions built into a programme and should show where these assumptions may break down (Cornell, Kubisch, Schorr & Weiss, 1995). These assumptions are usually causal hypotheses (Field & Louw, 2012) that propose how programme activities will translate into the intended outcomes of the programme. A benefit of theory-driven evaluation is highlighted in the ability to differentiate between theory failure and programme failure (Bickman, 1987). Thus, theory evaluations prove worthy to stakeholders when making important decisions about a programme's effectiveness (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). Donaldson's (2007) steps were followed to elicit a programme theory diagram for the LDP. These steps were presented in the method chapter of this research report. Figure 2 (on the next page) illustrates the programme theory elicited for the LDP. This is followed by the results of the literature analysis. The literature pinpointed the following essential components of effective leadership development programmes:

- Key themes that should be incorporated into the content of leadership development programmes.
- Programme activities that facilitate a change in behaviour in alignment with the programme's objectives.
- The importance of the trainer in capitalising on learning.
- Elements of an effective leadership development experience.

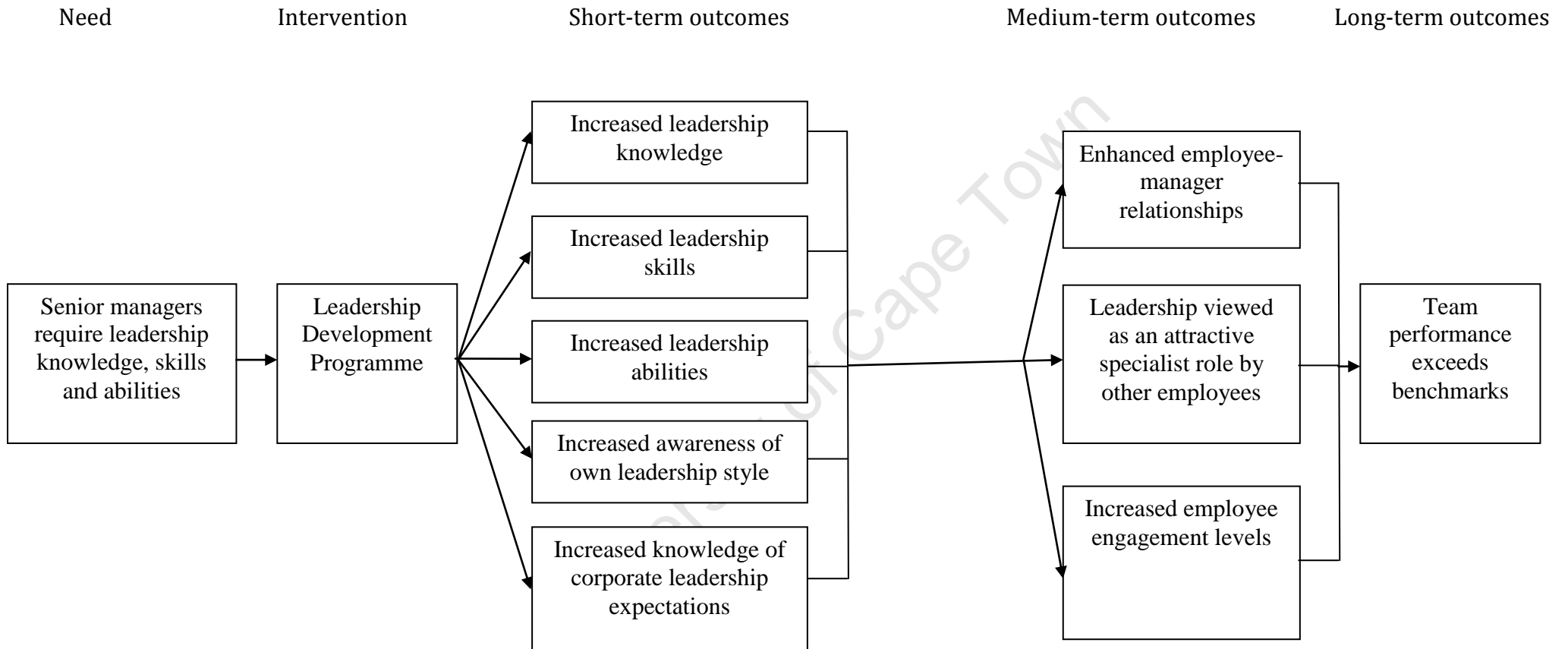


Figure 2. Programme theory of the LDP.

## **Key themes of leadership development programmes**

There has been a noticeable shift in the content of LDPs over the past decade, and this is due to the increasing importance of the role of a leader within an organisation (Boaden, 2006; Day, 2001; Dexter & Prince, 2007; Werth, Markel, & Forster, 2006). It has been argued that an effective leadership development programme should consist of three major themes: contribution to the strategic business direction; building leadership and team skills; and self-development (Cacioppe, 1998a). Contribution to the strategic business direction would form part of the strategic vision of the organisation. Strategic vision should be a responsibility of leaders given the diverse nature of the workplace (Collins & Holton, 2004). The changing workplace has led to leadership development undergoing a shift in learning approaches and design in order to cater for the increased number of leaders required to guide an organisation through transformation (Firer & Stainbank, 2003; Leonard & Grobler, 2007). A key challenge in leadership development is to recognise elements of individual and team behaviours that are embedded in the culture of the organisation and that affect individual and group learning (Sharlow, Langenhoff, Bhatti, Spiers & Cummings, 2009). The themes presented above align leadership development programmes with an organisation's culture.

### ***Contribution to strategic business direction***

In order to contribute to the strategic business direction, a leadership development programme should emphasise the key strategic objectives that are fundamental to the success of the organisation (Cacioppe, 1998a). These objectives may be derived from the organisation's mission statement and are often reinforced in the organisation's values. There is an increased need for strategic thinking in order to avoid complacency within an organisation (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). The ability to think strategically is taught on most leadership development programmes. This style of thinking will transfuse within a team and positively influence team dynamics.

### ***Building leadership and team skills***

Building leadership and team skills is a process that takes time and needs consistent exposure to knowledge and best practices (Mumford, Marks, Connelly, Zaccaro, & Rieter-Palmon, 2000). These skills may be developed through project work, problem-solving team exercises, role-play and development centres (Cacioppe, 1998a). In order to build leadership and team skills, a programme should relate theory to practice through the giving of examples and frequent opportunities for discussion, debate and reflection (Dexter & Prince, 2007; Sharlow et al., 2009). Reflection is recognised as an integral element of learning, especially for leaders (Cacioppe, 1998a). Building team skills contributes to better team processes that in turn create a more efficient team. Collectively, improved leadership and team skills foster commitment and enthusiasm to work towards a common goal. Development is a progressive process and should focus on practical and theoretical examples (Mumford et al., 2000). Simpler and more structured development exercises illustrating key organisational goals have proven more beneficial than technical and complex programmes. This is true for both leadership and team skills.

### ***Self-development***

Self-development may be described as those processes in which a leader learns about themselves, and learns skills that help them lead their team more effectively and contribute more significantly to the success of a business (Cacioppe, 1998b). Self-development exercises include 360-degree feedback, coaching, group feedback, personality questionnaires and learning journals (Cacioppe, 1998a). During these exercises, individuals are encouraged to engage in deep self-reflection and maintain awareness of their skills and competencies. Self-development is expected to encourage the participants of a programme to engage thoroughly in the content of the programme and therefore enhance the overall learning experience (Mumford et al., 2000). Emotional intelligence has become an increasingly popular tool for cultivating effective leadership skills, and this construct is often improved through self-development (Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2000).

## **Critique of leadership development themes**

The implementing organisation's values are identified and analysed extensively during most interventions on the LDP. The organisation has five values, all of which play a fundamental role in driving the culture of the business and in developing business strategy and direction. The organisation's values are:

- Client focused
- Performance drive
- Long-term orientated
- Independent minded
- Individually accountable

Participants receive continuous exposure to the values and strategic objectives of the implementing organisation throughout the LDP. With the encouragement of the trainer, participants are expected to align their leadership styles with the vision and values of the organisation (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). This means working towards a common goal that will benefit the individual and the organisation simultaneously. The organisation places a strong emphasis on its values, and therefore all five of the underlying principles of the programme are centered around the values.

Leadership development programmes should not be too theoretical and should focus sufficiently on problems that leaders actually face (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Lorri Manasse, 1985). The LDP provides participants with opportunities to practise problem-solving techniques during each year of the programme and uses action-learning strategies to encourage contribution and involvement from all participants. Action-learning activities provide opportunity to apply and improve the application of new learning (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). Having said this, the LDP maintains a good balance of theory and practice. Participants are given ample opportunity to learn about the problems that exist within the organisation, and use these real cases as examples when practicing new skills.

The value of leadership development activities lies in their relevance to the workplace (Boaden, 2006; McLean & Moss, 2003; Mumford et al., 2000), and consequently

there needs to be a clear link between the training and each participant's job. During the LDP, participants engage in role-playing exercises that mimic the workspace. In this regard, the practice that participants get is an accurate reflection of the challenges that they can expect to face. It is important that a programme meets both individual and organisational needs (Dexter & Prince, 2007; Mumford et al., 2000). The LDP encourages participants to focus equally on personal and professional growth throughout the programme, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience and adding value to the strategic direction of the business. However, the themes underlying a leadership development programme will only be beneficial if the activities used to teach participants are optimally designed (Sharlow et al., 2009).

### **Programme Activities**

The theory of action of any particular programme illustrates what activities or combination of activities need to take place in order for a programme to facilitate a change in behaviour that will produce the programme's outcomes (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). These activities make up the programme's theory of change and are used to construct programme theory. Activities may be regarded as the building blocks that enable progress to be tracked (Rossi et al., 2004). A primary function of the LDP is to improve the leadership KSAs of the participants and to subsequently improve the performance of teams across the organisation. Table 5 illustrates the five constructs of the LDP and the core meaning of each construct. All programme activities relate to one (or more) of the five constructs listed below.

Table 5

*Constructs of LDP: Core Meanings*

Concept	Core Meaning	Explanation
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead by example</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistently practise behaviours that one wants to role-model and mentor others based on one's personal experiences.</li> </ul>
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relish challenges with enthusiasm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintaining high levels of positive energy and celebrating success; persisting in the face of adversity.</li> </ul>
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Connect with and help others grow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empowering and creating opportunities for others, listening and showing appreciation for each person's effort.</li> </ul>
Edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Courageous decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Judging a situation carefully and maintaining a curious mind; learning from mistakes and asking for help when needed.</li> </ul>
Execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completion of all tasks started</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delivering on promises and focusing on outcomes; planning and finding resources to get things done.</li> </ul>

It is argued that the content of development programmes should acknowledge participants' prior learning and experiences, and learning needs should integrate with participants' career aspirations (Scott & Webber, 2008). For this reason, programme activities should be innovative and professional and should result in action that can make a positive difference to the organisation. The five underlying constructs of the LDP were developed internally by organisational development managers and were based upon the organisation's values and mission statement. In this regard, each construct was aimed at ensuring the organisation grows in line with its vision. Adult learning activities such as active, interactive and reflective learning are essential in all development programmes (Scott & Webber, 2008), and for this reason the LDP has incorporated these activities in each intervention.

### **Implementation: Facilitators**

Leadership needs to be thoroughly understood before it can be improved or mastered (Markel & Foster, 2006). Development programmes such as the LDP should not only focus on what constitutes an excellent leader, but should explain why and how the collection of certain characteristics and behaviours creates an excellent leader

(Boaden, 2006; Lorri Manasse, 1985). The learning facilitator has the important role of aiding the understanding of what leadership is, which enables the participants to internalise and adopt those practices and characteristics that are appropriate (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). The level of experience of the trainer may be significant in influencing the effectiveness of the training programme (Collins & Holton, 2004). Internal and external trainers facilitate the interventions on the LDP. Vendors are invited to present their courses to the organisational development managers and senior business directors. They are provided with information regarding the five different content areas of the programme (the 5 Es leadership model), and are given an opportunity to offer an intervention suitable for the LDP that would achieve the specific objectives for a particular intervention. Selection is based on the careful judgment of the programme stakeholders and only the most reputable vendors are considered in this process. Vendors are appointed based on their teaching style, training methods and the content base offered. The implementing organisation conducts thorough reference checks before considering a vendor. It is evident that the facilitator is as important as the content and the learning methods in delivering a worthwhile learning experience (Cacioppe, 1998b). The implementing organisation is not restricted by financial constraints when selecting vendors and hence makes decisions based entirely on the quality and expertise of the vendor.

A successful facilitator will need to use effective learning strategies and styles in order to benefit the participants of a programme in an optimal way. Training can differentiate an organisation from its competitors (Valle, Castillo, & Rodriguez-Duarte, 2008), and therefore the LDP plays an important role in ensuring the implementing organisation retains its position as a market leader. The choice of facilitators is vital in ensuring that the appropriate training interventions are delivered and that the interventions are conveyed in the most constructive way. Programme stakeholders are aware of this link and thus place a premium on sourcing and using only the most reliable and efficient facilitators. However, it was identified that the process of selecting vendors at the implementing organisation is relatively informal. Although the careful judgment of programme stakeholders is used (some of whom are experts in the field of leadership development), the desired content area of each intervention is not formally documented, and each vendor may offer interventions that are slightly varied. This may result in the programme being inconsistent over a period

of time which is not ideal for any development programme. If there is inconsistency, participants and their development may be jeopardised.

### **Elements of an effective leadership development experience**

It is difficult to identify exactly what knowledge and skills learnt in LDPs contribute to organisational performance (Collins & Holton, 2004). Furthermore, evaluation of training is difficult because line managers often look for increased performance and not increased learning, which is the first step in the programme's theory of change (Berge, 2008). The following seven key elements were identified by Cacioppe (1998a) and are thought to improve the learning experience and enhance the effectiveness of an LDP. These key themes are outlined below.

#### ***Action learning***

Zuber-Skerritt (2002) describes action learning as learning from concrete experience and critical reflection on that experience. Action learning involves hands-on and practical exercises (Cacioppe, 1998a). The fastest and most sustainable learning occurs when people are engaged in finding solutions to real problems through action learning (Leskiw, & Singh, 2007). The LDP includes numerous action learning techniques in all three years of the programme. Simulations, role-plays and presentations (all of which are action learning techniques) are used to give participants an opportunity to practise the skills learnt and solve real problems while in the comfort of the learning environment. Knowing one's own action logic can be the first step towards developing a more effective leadership style (Rooke & Torbet, 2005). This enhances the importance of action learning techniques as it gives leaders the opportunity to develop their leadership styles with the assistance and input of trained professionals.

#### ***Observing models of leadership***

A great deal of learning occurs through one individual watching another (Cacioppe, 1998b). Although the number of participants each year is relatively small, there are opportunities for participants to learn from each other and this is encouraged by

delivery methods such as role-playing and delivering presentations. Here, participants actively watch what others do and how others behave and can learn valuable lessons about corporate leadership. In addition, third year participants mentor first year participants, which is an effective way for new leaders to learn from more experienced and senior leaders within the organisation. Leaders have been known to model their own leadership style after that of their immediate supervisors (Bass, 1990). In this regard, getting input from senior business directors is extremely beneficial as this encourages participants on the LDP to model their behaviours against those of the organisation's most respected leaders.

### ***Improving skills and relationships***

This includes both the development of personal skills and work-related skills that can contribute to the success of the organisation. A programme should teach its participants something that was not known prior to the programme's commencement and should enable all participants to perform their jobs better (Leskiw & Singh, 2007; Mumford et al., 2000). Personal skills are those that are directly transferable to home life (Cacioppe, 1998b). These skills add value to the leader's total profile by creating a more rounded individual. The LDP includes active and reflective learning techniques and encourages the development of personal skills as being equally important to work-related skills. Throughout the programme, participants are expected to grow both personally and professionally, and each intervention is designed to stimulate this growth. The visionary capacity of a leader is fundamental to their professional and personal success and vision grows with improved skills and relationships (Day, 2001; Lorri Manasse, 1985; Scott & Webber, 2008).

### ***Improving self-knowledge and self-worth***

It is commonly thought that improving self-knowledge is a good basis for true leadership development (McLean & Moss, 2003; Werth et al., 2006). Understanding and knowing oneself are extremely important in one's ability to lead others. Although self-knowledge and self-worth are not easily taught, the LDP encourages participants (through personal reflection and observation) to get to know themselves better, and there is a strong focus on personal growth throughout the programme. Time that is

specifically intended for reflection is allocated to participants on all the training interventions. This allows participants to reflect on what they have learnt and to absorb the content covered. Emotional intelligence, which is built upon self-knowledge and self-worth, has become increasingly popular as a measure for identifying potentially effective leaders (Palmer et al., 2000). Emotional intelligence may therefore be used as a tool for developing effective leadership skills.

### ***Global focus***

Given the expansion and changing nature of the South African economy it is important for the LDP to develop leaders who are global-minded. Organisations across the world are becoming interdependent and leaders are required to keep up-to-date with international trends. The implementing organisation is a market leader in the financial services sector and aims to continually improve its business processes and align these with international standards. This is evident in the resources allocated to the LDP and the support that the programme receives from executive directors.

### **Networking**

The LDP allows leaders from all departments to meet, network and build relationships. Given the size of the organisation, this opportunity is extremely valuable, as participants may not have otherwise had such an opportunity. Networking allows leaders to share stories, advice and experiences, thereby strengthening relationships throughout the organisation. Communication is an essential tool used within the change process (April, 1999). Given the ever-changing nature of the South African workspace, networking allows leaders to communicate, which provides them with the opportunity to learn about changes in other areas of the business and to be more open to transformation.

### ***Re-shaping mindsets***

Programmes such as the LDP should contribute something new to the field of leadership development, and should prioritise growing existing knowledge and coming up with new and improved ways to lead others (Cacioppe, 1998a). In this

regard re-shaping one's mindset is seen as a key learning theme in improving the effectiveness of a development programme and contributing to organisational performance. Through constant exposure to best practices, the LDP encourages participants to come up with new and better ways of solving problems and encourages a shift in mindset when dealing with day-to-day situations. Leadership development must address real-world challenges and incorporate opportunities for participants to work together (Scott & Webber, 2008). This allows for the creation of new ideas and encourages strategic and innovative thinking.

### **Social science research and past evaluations**

A leadership development approach is orientated towards building capacity in anticipation of unforeseen challenges (Day, 2001). This highlights the importance of programmes such as the LDP in preparing an organisation for change. The themes, content areas and delivery mediums discussed in the first part of this Chapter were drawn from social science research and literature. The evaluator found these to be in line with the LDP and discovered that there were frequent overlaps between common practice and the evaluand. Based on the information presented above, one can deduce that the content that makes up the LDP is capable of developing leadership-related KSAs; and the learning activities conducted will complement the development process. This suggests that the LDP is based on theory that is sound and that the programme's theory of change is adequate in achieving the programme's objectives.

The effectiveness of leadership development programmes varies widely with learning outcomes remaining a primary focus (Collins & Holton, 2004). It is argued that training is appropriate when an individual's performance would be improved with additional skills and knowledge (Berge, 2008). This is a fundamental objective of the LDP: to increase the leadership-related KSA's of the programme's participants. Leadership development is further enhanced when social networks within the organisation facilitate individual and collective growth and development (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). The benefits of investing in leadership development are widespread, and although the effectiveness of these programme's vary, the LDP is thought to be plausible and capable of achieving it's objectives. Four categories of organisational

benefits of leadership development programmes are presented below: (Dexter & Prince, 2007)

- Contribution to better processes and project management.
- More effective team work.
- Developing networks and collaborative learning.
- Improved self-management.

The benefits presented above are common in effective leadership development programmes, and since the LDP's theory is plausible, the likelihood of these benefits disseminating throughout the implementing organisation is evident.

### Service Utilisation

#### What are the demographics of the programme participants?

The demographics of the leaders who participated in the programme are presented in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6

*Demographics of Programme Participants*

Year	Number of participants	Male	Female	Average Age
2009	21	11	10	35
2010	24	13	11	36
2011	19	14	5	33
	<b>64</b>	<b>38</b>	26	35

Table 7

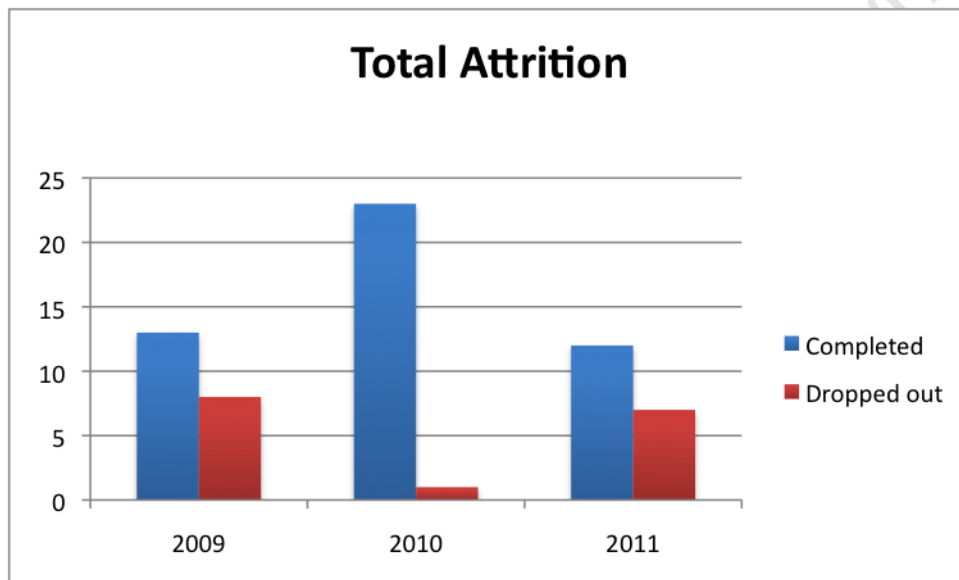
*Racial classification of Programme Participants*

Year	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Non South-African
2009	0	10	3	8	0
2010	1	8	2	12	1
2011	0	5	1	12	1
	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>

As one can see, the majority of leaders who were invited to attend the LDP during 2009, 2010 and 2011 were White, with Coloured leaders being the second largest ethnic group to attend the programme.

### **What is the attrition rate of the LDP?**

Seventy five percent of leaders who started the programme in 2006, 2007 or 2008 completed the programme three years later (48 out of 64 leaders). The attrition rate of the LDP is therefore 25% (n = 16). Of these 16 dropouts, 8 leaders dropped out in 2009, 1 leader dropped out in 2010 and 7 leaders dropped out in 2011.



*Figure 3.* Total attrition of the LDP.

### **What are the reasons for attrition in the LDP?**

Two reasons were identified by programme stakeholders to account for the attrition of the LDP from 2009-2011. Either participants changed roles within the implementing organisation (moved into a non-leadership role and therefore dropped out of the programme) or they left the company. Information pertaining to the reasons for attrition was derived from informal interviews with the programme managers, who retrieved the information from programme records.

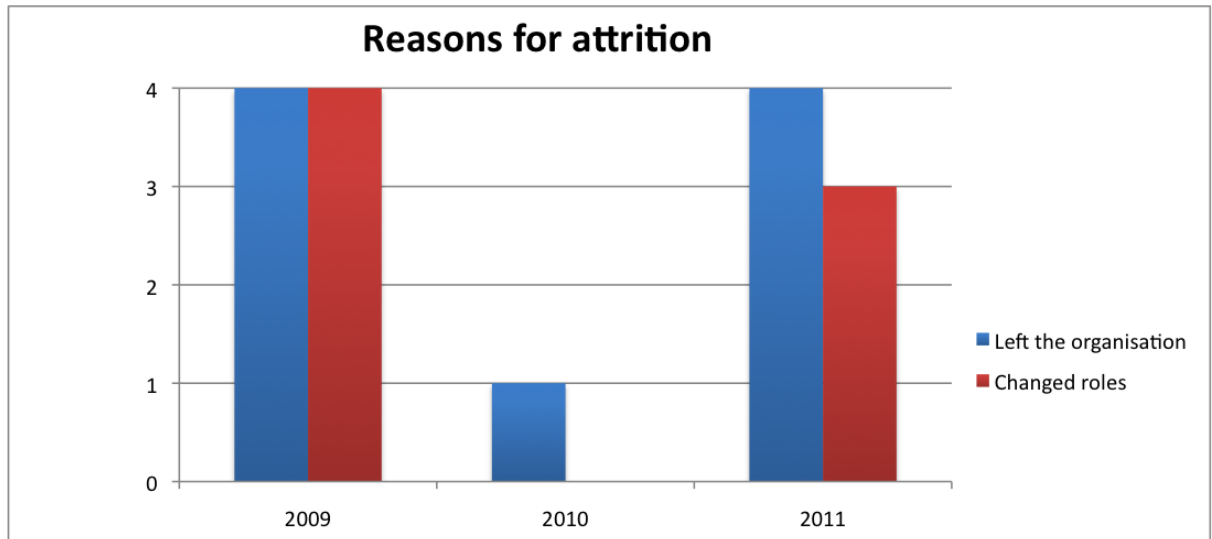


Figure 4. Reasons for attrition.

## Service Delivery

### Does the programme encourage application?

The online questionnaire was used to determine the results for the evaluation questions pertaining to application. Transfer of learning can be described as the process whereby a participant transfers and uses the knowledge and skills learnt on the training programme in his/her leadership role (Donaldson, 2007; Funnel & Rogers, 2011). Thus, the learning is transferred from the training environment to the working environment. The seven tables that follow (one for each section of the online questionnaire) illustrate the means for each item on the scale.

‘Perceived content validity’ may be described as the relevance of the actual content covered in the programme and how valid this information is when comparing it to the requirements of a leadership role. Table 8 illustrates the mean scores for ‘perceived content validity’.

Table 8

*Perceived Content Validity Scores*

Scale item	<i>X (SD)</i>
1. What is taught in the LDP closely matches my job requirements.	4.2 (0.6)
2. What is taught in the LDP closely matches the culture of the implementing organisation.	4.4 (0.7)
3. I like the way training seems so much like my job.	3.8 (0.8)

The means illustrated in Table 8 represent positive responses to this section of the questionnaire. This indicates that participants perceived the content covered in the LDP to be aligned well to their current positions and required competencies for the job.

The section pertaining to ‘transfer design’ indicates whether the programme is designed in a way that allows for and encourages participants to use the learning gained from the programme in their leadership role. Table 9 illustrates the means for the second section of the questionnaire, ‘transfer design scores’.

Table 9

*Transfer Design Scores*

Scale item	<i>X (SD)</i>
4. The activities and exercises the LDP trainers used helped me know how to apply my learning on the job.	4.1 (0.3)
5. My line manager encourages me to engage in a transfer of learning.	4.0 (0.7)
6. Since completing the LDP, I have been able to apply the skills learnt on the programme to my current role.	4.1 (0.5)
7. Since completing the LDP, I have been able to apply the knowledge learnt on the programme to my current role.	4.1 (0.4)

Again, all items in this section of the scale had a mean above 4, indicating that the LDP was perceived to be designed and presented in such a way as to support a transfer of learning.

The ‘opportunity to use’ section of the questionnaire indicates the opportunities that exist for participants to use the knowledge and skills gained in the workplace. This is directly related to the ‘transfer of learning’ section and the scores are illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10

*Opportunity to Use Scores*

Scale item	X (SD)
8.The resources I need to apply what I learnt on the LDP are available to me after the training.	4.1 (0.4)
9.There is sufficient flexibility in my job description that allows me to adapt my leadership style as I acquire new knowledge.	4.2 (0.7)
10.I get opportunities to use this training on my job.	4.2 (0.5)
11.Our current staffing level is adequate for me to use this training.	4.1(0.5)
12. I have time in my schedule to change the way I do things to fit my new learning.	3.9(0.8)

The ‘opportunity to use’ items also scored well, with only one item in this section having a mean below 4. This indicates that participants value what they learned on the LDP and felt there were ample opportunities to use the training in their leadership capacities.

Section 4 ‘motivation to transfer’ indicates whether the participants felt motivated and/or encouraged to engage in a transfer of learning. This motivation may be derived from the participant’s supervisor/line manager or the participant’s own internal desire to use the learning to enhance their growth. The ‘motivation to transfer’ scores are depicted in Table 11.

Table 11

*Motivation to Transfer Scores*

Scale item	X (SD)
13. I get excited when I think about trying to use the skills that I have learnt on the LDP in my job.	3.8 (0.4)
14. I believe the LDP helped me do my current job better.	4.4 (0.6)
15. When I left the LDP training, I couldn't wait to get back to work to try what I have learnt.	3.8 (0.6)
16. I am more likely to be recognised for my work if I use this training.	3.9 (0.7)

Although the means represented in Table 11 are relatively high, only one item scored a mean of above 4 and therefore this section scored slightly lower than the previous three sections of the questionnaire.

The 'personal capacity to transfer' section illustrates whether the participants believe that they will be able to use their learning in the live environment. Use of the knowledge is directly related to each participant's personal capacity to do so. The results of this section are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

*Personal Capacity for Transfer Scores*

Scale item	X (SD)
17. My workload allows me time to try the new things I have learnt on the LDP.	3.9 (0.7)
18. There is too much happening at work right now for me to try and use this training.	3.4 (0.9)
19. I wish I had time to do things the way I know they should be done.	2.5 (0.7)

*Note.* Items 18 and 19 were recoded to be positive.

The lowest scoring item in this section of the questionnaire was item 19. This item is

directly related to time and suggests that participants of the programme feel pressured by time constraints. This may potentially limit or restrict their behaviour. Although the item had a mean of 2.5, which does not give reason for concern, stakeholders should be investigating realistic and suitable solutions to the limitations of time.

## Support

### Peer and supervisor support

The following section illustrates the findings that relate to the research questions regarding ‘peer and supervisor support’. These two sections had the lowest collective means of all seven sections of the questionnaire. This indicates that although the participants value the content of the programme and are confident in their ability to use the knowledge and skills learnt, there is a lack of confidence in the support offered by supervisors and peers. Table 13 and 14 illustrate the scores for the ‘peer and supervisor support’ sections of the questionnaire.

Table 13

#### *Peer Support Scores*

Scale item	X (SD)
20. My colleagues encourage me to use the skills that I have learnt in the LDP.	3.7 (0.8)
21. My colleagues appreciate me using new skills that I have learnt.	3.8(0.6)
22. My colleagues are patient with me when I try out new skills at work.	3.7(0.6)

Table 14

*Supervisor Support Scores*

Scale item	X (SD)
23. My line manager sets goals for me that encourage me to apply my training in the LDP on the job.	3.8 (0.9)
24. Training facilitators were available if I had course-related questions during the LDP.	4.0 (0.6)
25. My supervisor will object if I try to use the LDP training on the job.	4.4 (0.7)
26. My supervisor shows interest in what I have learnt on the LDP.	3.4 (0.6)
27. My supervisor lets me know I am doing a great job when I use my training.	3.6 (0.7)
28. My supervisor helps me set realistic goals for job-based performance, based on my training.	3.3 (0.6)

*Note.* Item 25 was recoded to be positive.

The findings illustrated in this chapter may be interpreted to indicate a perceived overall satisfaction with the LDP. It must be noted that the online questionnaire was based on participants' perception of the programme. Table 15 illustrates the composite means for each section of the online questionnaire used in this evaluation.

Table 15

*Summary of Scores: Online Questionnaire*

Title of section	Composite Mean
Perceived content validity	4.1
Transfer design	4.1
Opportunity to use	4.1
Motivation to transfer	4.0
Perceived capacity for transfer	3.3
Peer support	3.8
Supervisor support	3.7

With means ranging from 3.3 to 4.1, it is evident that those participants who participated in the research were satisfied with the programme. It is interesting to note, however, that the 'supervisor support' and 'peer support' scores were the lowest two scoring sections of the questionnaire (although it is important to note that these two sections still have statistically high means). This indicates that although the participants enjoyed the content of the programme and were confident in their ability to use the knowledge gained, there could potentially be significant benefits if the participants received more support from their peers and/or supervisors. Furthermore, the perceived capacity for transfer scores were lower than most sections on the scale, indicating that programme managers need to investigate the scope available to participants for implementing changes to leadership patterns in the working context.

The last part of the questionnaire offered participants the opportunity to give additional feedback on the programme. This was a free text field and participants did not have to complete this section. Eight participants completed this field and the responses to this section are listed in Table 16.

Table 16

*Participant Comments*

Response	Comment
1	<i>Excellent training that has helped me to grow as a leader and a 'people' manager.</i>
2	<i>I understand the difficulty in finding the time to apply the concepts taught in LDP, particularly in Ops. That being said I feel people should make time, very much like you would if you were studying a Masters or an MBA. I think the issue here isn't so much the space people have but more their commitment to leadership. The reality is if you apply these concepts you will reduce the effort required to achieve the same results thus becoming a more effective leader so it is in your best interests to ensure you apply your learning before you lose them.</i>
3	<i>The more training that was covered provided the ability for me to use small lessons learnt on a regular basis.</i>
4	<i>The LDP course significantly improved my understanding and commitment to the organisation's culture, showing me that the organisation is committed to values which are also important to me.</i>
5	<i>The organisation has a great Leadership Development Programme. The only missing link is follow-through or continuous coaching to develop the skills needed to apply what you've learned. The programme gives you insight into what you need to change or improve but not everyone has the ability to implement and that might be a competency that needs to be developed.</i>
6	<i>It is difficult to find time to apply, but probably requires more discipline than time.</i>
7	<i>Most of the modules were great, the challenge will always be to fit them to the specific scenarios that crop up</i>
8	<i>I've really enjoyed the LDP course. I'll encourage staff to go on these workshops. They're beneficial in the workplace but also in your personal life.</i>

Table 16 illustrates that the participants' overall impression of the LDP was positive and that the programme was well received. Minor issues were expressed, such as the lack of post-programme support, but the overall response was positive. Recommendations, including post-programme support, will be covered in Chapter 5 of this evaluation.

## CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings of the evaluation and the relevance of these results for the implementing organisation. The following topics will be discussed: theory plausibility, implementation (service utilisation) and application of the programme (service delivery and support).

### **Theory Plausibility**

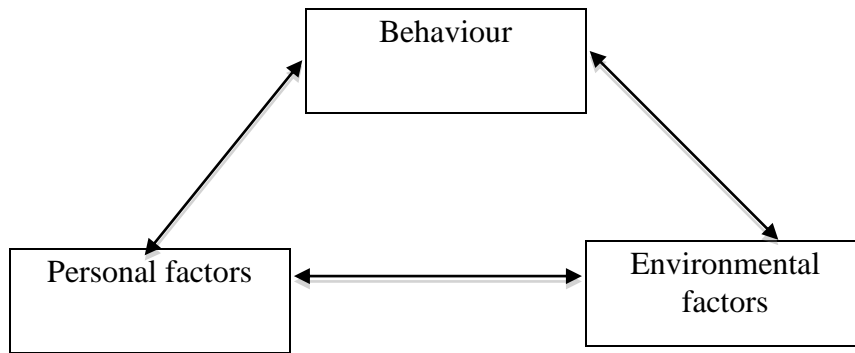
The use of programme theory has become commonplace in the field of evaluation (Donaldson, 2007). Not only are theory evaluations used to improve and produce knowledge and feedback about a programme; they are also used to determine the merit, worth and significance of evaluands (Donaldson, 2007). A programme should change a situation from what it otherwise would have been (Funnell & Rogers, 2011) and the programme activities should facilitate this change. A plausible programme theory should explain how the activities would produce the desirable changes in the participants or the situation under scrutiny, as this will result in the achievement of the programme's objectives.

The theory underlying the LDP was evaluated in the previous chapter and the evaluator identified that the programme activities were aligned to relevant social science literature, indicating an increased likelihood that the content would be disseminated to the target audience as expected. The programme's primary objectives are to increase the leadership-related KSAs of the participants, to increase the awareness of one's own leadership style as well as what the implementing organisation expects from its leaders. The different interventions that are conducted during the LDP are thought to be capable of achieving these primary objectives; as the themes, content and learning styles incorporated in the interventions were seen to be in line with social science literature and were used in other successful leadership development programmes. Furthermore, the primary objectives of the programme were also seen as being capable of producing the secondary objectives: enhanced relationships within teams and increased engagement levels across the business. These objectives are likely to result in performance exceeding the benchmark. In saying this, the evaluator deduced that the likelihood of the programme activities

producing learning outcomes in line with the objectives of the programme is evident, and the LDP is hence based on theory that is relevant and plausible.

Although the plausibility of the theory has been scrutinised, one needs to be aware of the underlying factors that affect and influence human behaviour. These factors have the potential to influence the effectiveness of a programme, regardless of the plausibility of the underlying theory, and should therefore be thoroughly understood by the stakeholders. A programme with a plausible theory will be unsuccessful if the participants do not actually change their behaviour, given that a change in behaviour is a fundamental link in the programme's theory of change. There are two popular models which help one understand those factors that affect and influence human behaviour. Given the nature of leadership, it is crucial that the LDP is aligned with these factors. The two models are discussed below.

The Social Cognitive Theory Model (Bandura, 2001) illustrates that behaviour is influenced by both personal and environmental factors and that socio-structural factors affect behaviour through psychological mechanisms. Although the evaluator has suggested that the LDP's theory is plausible and in line with relevant literature, one cannot ignore the personal and environmental factors that may influence leadership behaviours and should take note of any mediating factors that influence the way a leader may behave. The model is centered upon the belief that the human mind is generative, creative, proactive and reflective, and not just reactive (Bandura, 2001). Programme participants should want to be agents of change, and should strive to intentionally bring about organisational change by transforming the way they lead their teams. The Social Cognitive Theory Model is illustrated in Figure 5.



*Figure 5.* The Social Cognitive Theory Model (Bandura, 2001).

Another important element of the model is agency. Agency enables people to play a part in their self-development (Bandura, 2001). Consciousness is also emphasised, and may be defined as the very substance of mental life that makes it manageable and worth living (Bandura, 2001). In order to change one's behaviour, there needs to be a strong sense of agency and consciousness. Given the nature of the LDP, and the strong reliance on a transfer of learning, a behaviour shift is fundamental for the short, medium and long-term objectives of the programme and therefore the underlying elements of Social Cognitive Theory Model need to be considered.

Another way of thinking about behaviour and those factors that affect and influence the way humans behave is Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The TPB (Ajzen, 1991) implies that general attitudes and personality traits are implicated in behaviour, and that intention is a central part of understanding human behaviour. Intention includes those motivational factors that influence behaviour and expose how hard an individual is willing to try and change a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The model suggests that behaviour is influenced by both intention and ability. Thus, what a leader wants to do and what a leader is capable of doing are two dominant factors that will influence leadership behaviours. Ability may be thought of as perceived behavioural control. This is an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest. A primary objective of the LDP is to increase the leadership-related KSAs of the organisation's leaders. The programme theory rests upon the assumption that these KSAs will result in a change in each participant's leadership behaviour, resulting in enhanced relationships within teams and increased engagement levels across the organisation (secondary objectives). These secondary objectives are believed to ultimately improve team efficiency and performance across

the organisation (long-term objective). It is again evident that a change in behaviour is a central part of the LDP's theory of change, and the two models presented above should be taken into consideration when adapting or expanding the programme. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is presented in Figure 6.

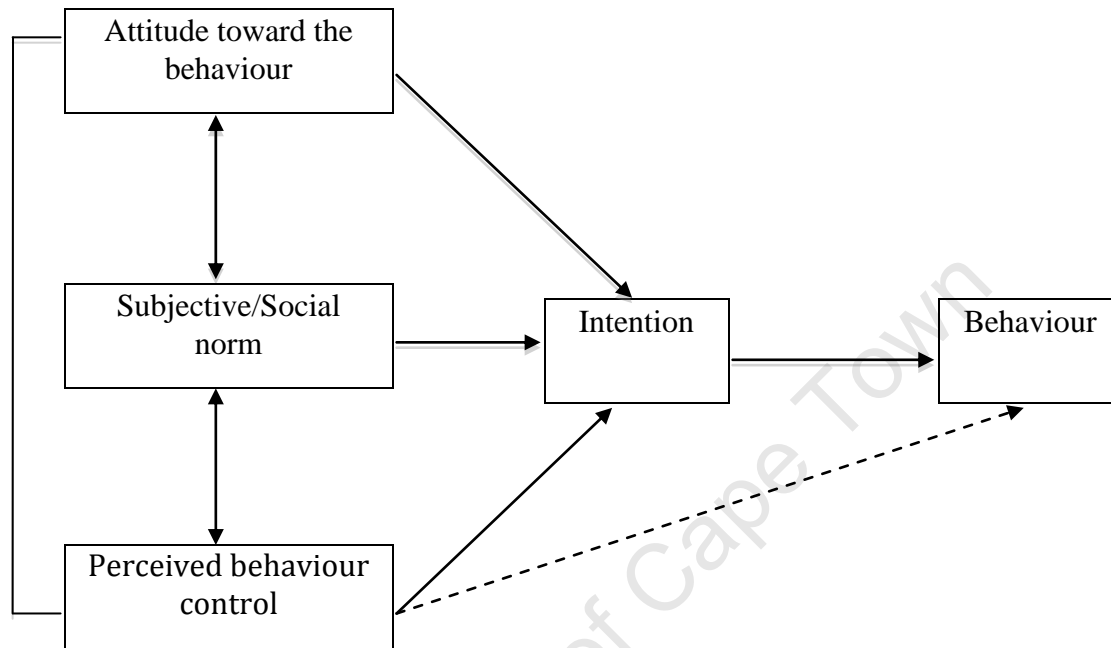


Figure 6. Model of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Another important element that has the potential to affect and influence human behaviour is vision. Vision may be defined as an essential quality of a leader, and may act as a guide to a better future and as something that molds meaning for the people of an organisation (Lorri Manasse, 1985). One of the primary traits of a leader is to produce results, and to guide an organisation through change while focusing on consistent improvement. Visionary leadership therefore often translates into organisational excellence (Lorri Manasse, 1985) and this culture of vision needs to be embedded in the organisation. Through group learning, the LDP should strive to create a shared vision which is in line with the collective vision of the organisation. This will ensure that all leaders are moving in the same direction and towards a common goal.

While the programme's theory, activities and expected outcomes are aligned to social science research, there is evidence to suggest that plausibility is irrelevant without

application and a transfer of learning. This variable (a transfer of learning) is thus a mediating factor that was considered and incorporated into the design of the programme and its theory. Both the Social Cognitive Theory Model and the Theory of Planned Behaviour illustrate how different variables affect and influence human behaviour. Since leadership is a highly personal construct and is comprised solely of varying human behaviours, these two models are significant in promoting one's understanding of what may encourage a leader to engage in a transfer of learning and move towards excellence. A transfer of learning was added to the original stakeholder perspective in an effort to increase the likelihood of success of the programme.

If one takes into account the factors that both facilitate and hinder a change in behaviour, then learning interventions can incorporate these factors and improve the overall success of the programme. It was realised that the stakeholder's original factor 'leadership viewed as an attractive specialist role by other employees' is not linked to the actual behavioural changes that resulted in the evaluation achieving its objectives. For this reason, the evaluator excluded this factor in the final model of the programme's theory. The revised programme theory, including the mediating variable 'transfer of learning', is illustrated in Figure 7.

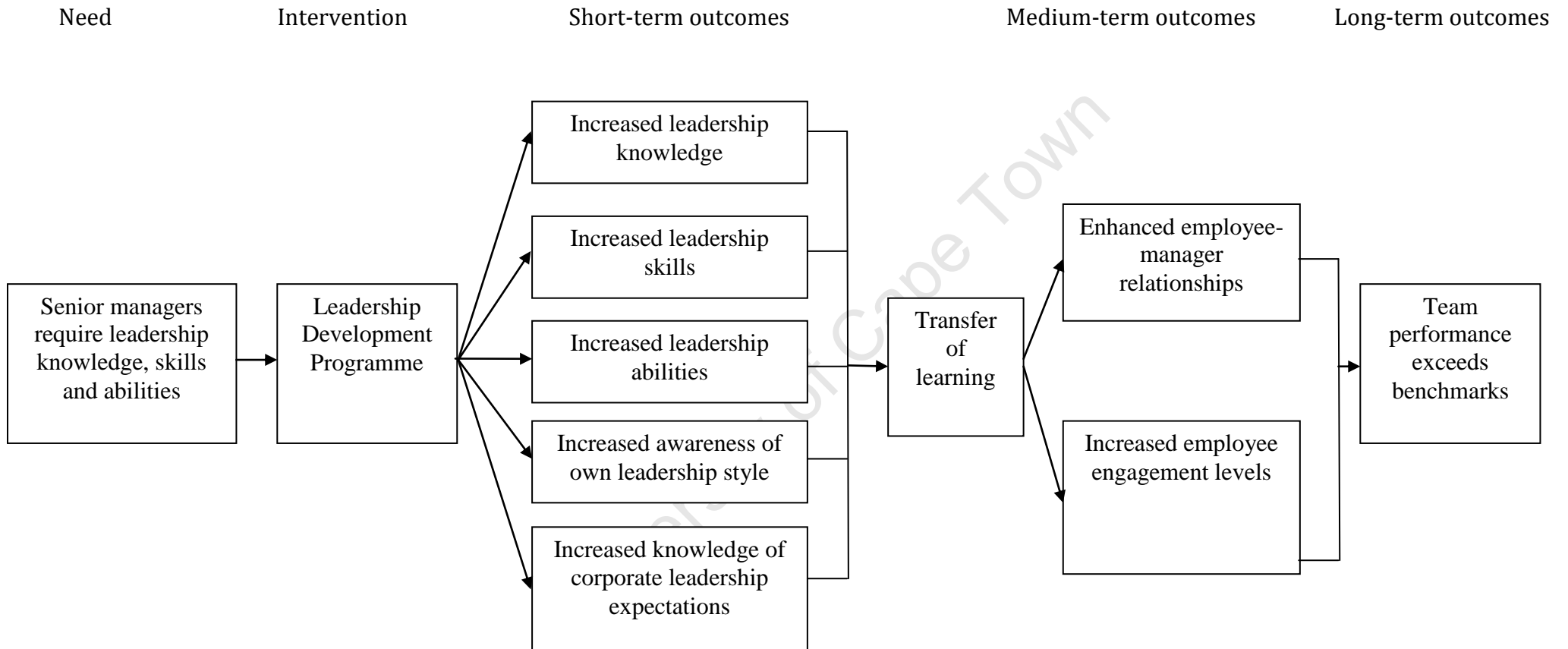


Figure 7. Revised programme theory of the LDP.

## **Implementation**

Implementation refers to what a programme consists of when it is delivered to the participants (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This includes all the components or activities that make up a programme, and in this case, the various training interventions that were delivered over the three year programme. An implementation evaluation generally provides information about programme performance to stakeholders (Rossi et al., 2004). The results presented in Chapter 3 illustrate that the programme was implemented to leaders within the organisation and therefore reached the intended target audience. Employees who are promoted to leadership roles and are invited to attend the LDP are identified by senior directors as being capable of driving change and improving overall efficiency and performance. These leaders are seen to be capable of improving team outputs across the organisation, which is in line with the long-term objective of the programme: team performance exceeding benchmarks.

It has been argued that the level of implementation affects the outcomes obtained in a programme (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Given the fact that the LDP was rolled out to the intended target audience, and that there were no reports of interventions not taking place when they should have, the evaluator can deduce that the level of implementation was acceptable. This improves the likelihood that the programme will achieve its objectives. Another important element of implementation is attrition. Attrition, defined as the loss of outcome data due to non-completion or drop-out (Rossi et al., 2004) has the potential to cause selection bias in the results of an evaluation. There were no significant trends in the attrition of the LDP, and therefore there are no concerns as to why participants dropped out of the programme. The reasons identified to account for the programme's attrition are valid and do not suggest dissatisfaction with the programme. Biased results are hence not a concern for the implementing organisation.

Another way to evaluate implementation is to look at whether a programme was implemented as planned. There was not sufficient data pertaining to the intentions of the programme stakeholders with regards to the implementation of the programme. As mentioned in Chapter 1, vendors were given freedom to deliver interventions that were aligned to the objectives of each course and the underlying 5 Es of the

programme. However, there were no formal documents that specified exactly what the stakeholders intended for each intervention. Based on this, the evaluator cannot comment on whether the evaluation was implemented as planned, as insufficient data restricted the evaluator's ability to comment on this.

### **Application of the Programme**

A programme with a sound theory will not produce the desired outcomes if the learning is not transferred to the workplace. This transfer of learning is where the most significant benefits lie for the implementing organisation. A way of promoting excellence in an organisation is to ensure that behaviours are checked and adapted regularly to suit the fluctuating environment, and to ensure that all members of the organisation are continuously learning. This helps an organisation keep up to date with local and international business trends, and avoid complacency. Since leadership is a highly complex construct, ongoing learning will be beneficial to the implementing organisation as it will promote the further development of one's leadership skills after completion of the programme. In addition, the comments received via the online questionnaire indicated that there was interest in post-programme learning, and this may be achieved through the adaptation of a learning organisation.

### **Learning organisations**

It has been argued that the most successful organisations are those that invest in continuous learning. Ongoing learning promotes growth and development by constantly aligning oneself and an organisation with best practices both locally and internationally. The importance of a learning organisation has been thoroughly researched and documented by Senge (1993). Given the dynamic nature of leadership, a learning organisation is one in which leadership development would strive.

A learning organisation is an organisation where there is shared vision, and this creates a force of impressive power (Senge, 1993). Learning organisations facilitate the learning of all employees (Prewitt, 2003) and encourage them to believe in a shared vision. A shared vision binds individuals together through a common aspiration. The benefits of creating a shared vision are closely related to excellence

(Lorri Manasse, 1985). Learning organisations are continuously changing organisations; as with learning comes change and with change comes learning. The five underlying principles upon which the LDP is based attempt to create this shared vision amongst participants of the programme, who are the organisation's exemplary leaders. Apart from creating the drive to retain one's place in the market, or to outperform a competitor, a shared vision creates excitement that has the potential to lift an organisation out of the ordinary and move towards greatness (Senge, 1993). The intention to create a shared vision amongst the organisation's leaders underlies all activities of the LDP. Each course, using a variety of delivery methods explained in Chapter 1, attempts to connect the leaders and inspire them to believe in and form strong collective bonds with the organisation, driving a joint vision and creating a learning organisation. Given the increase in competition within the financial services sector, creating a learning organisation will place an organisation in a favourable position within the market.

### **Transfer of learning**

The intention of the online questionnaire used in this evaluation was to answer the evaluation questions relating to service delivery and peer/supervisor support; and to understand if the participants felt confident in engaging in a transfer of learning. The highest scoring sections of the questionnaire were 'perceived content validity', 'transfer design' and 'opportunity to use'. These sections all had a composite mean of 4.1. This suggests that the programme was seen as beneficial for developing leadership skills (valid content) and designed in a way that encourages a transfer of learning ('transfer design'/ 'opportunity to use'). Leaders, no matter how talented, enter into leadership roles as novices (Mumford et al., 2000). This highlights the need for leaders to be developed and to be able to transfer this learning to the workplace. The most significant benefits of an LDP are realised when a leader practises their skills more effectively in the context of work itself (Day, 2001). Again, this is directly related to a transfer of learning.

The fact that the questionnaire sections pertaining to a transfer of learning were the highest scoring sections is positive for the implementing organisation. This suggests that the participants are willing to engage in a transfer of learning, and because of this

the benefits of the programme are more likely to diffuse throughout the organisation. There is evidence to suggest that focusing on behaviour change will lead to changes in the tangible outcomes of a programme (Boaden, 2006) and a transfer of learning is what will bring about a change in behaviour. By transferring the knowledge learnt on the programme to the workplace, the leader will have to demonstrate a noticeable change in behaviour. Upon doing this, the benefits of the programme will increase significantly. As participants indicated a willingness to engage in a transfer of learning, the implementing organisation is likely to realise the benefits of the evaluation through the achievement of the short, medium and long-term objectives.

### **Organisational and peer support**

‘Peer support’ and ‘supervisor support’ were the lowest scoring sections of the online questionnaire, both of which scored a composite mean of 3.7. Although these scores are still high in relation to the scale’s midpoint of 3, one should be aware that they were the lowest scoring sections. Given the personal nature of leadership and the reliance on support from peers and supervisors, the implementing organisation should be careful of participants’ perceptions about support. There is evidence that the involvement of senior leaders in the development of leadership skills is effective (Cacioppe, 1998b). This emphasises that support from one’s supervisor is essential during the development phase. Great leaders are often great teachers (Cacioppe, 1998b) and support plays an important role in enabling leadership development. Constant learning has been identified as an important characteristic of leadership, and often enables one to recognise their limitations (Lorri Manasse, 1985). Support from peers and supervisors aids learning through shared experiences and situations, and again highlights that this is an area that should be given attention. Furthermore, the idea that mentoring offers significant benefits for leaders was highlighted by Stead (2005). Support from one’s supervisors may take the form of mentoring, in which relational learning can take place. Mentoring may involve professional, personal and corporate development, all factors which contribute to the roundness of an individual and allow them to become better leaders. It is possible that should support from peers and supervisors be increased, the effectiveness of the LDP as a whole may increase.

Overall, the LDP was well implemented to leaders who are viewed as being capable of driving change and efficiency throughout the organisation. Similarly, the responses to the online questionnaire were positive and suggest that participants found the programme to be beneficial. From this, the evaluator can conclude that the LDP is likely to achieve its objectives, as the target audience attended the programme and were willing to transfer this learning back to the workplace. The theory underlying the programme, which illustrates that the activities covered in the programme are capable of producing the desired outcomes, strengthens the idea that it is possible for the LDP to achieve its objectives and should therefore continue to be rolled out across the organisation.

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## **CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Recommendations**

The LDP has consistently impressed senior directors at the implementing organisation since inception. Although the perception of the programme's success is positive, there is limited objective data to prove this. The programme has been in existence for the past six years and has received generous funding and support from the organisation. Although no formal evaluations of the programme have been done previously, programme managers are confident that the programme is adding significant value to the organisation and that the leadership skills developed through the programme are improving the efficiency of teams throughout the organisation. Even though the perceptions of the programme are positive, the evaluator has identified a number of areas of the LDP that exposed room for growth and these have been translated into recommendations and are explained in this chapter.

### **Selecting vendors**

The process of selecting vendors to deliver the learning interventions on the LDP is relatively informal. Although the stakeholder's careful judgment is used, there is a lack of documented requirements and content areas for each intervention. The level of experience of the trainer may be significant in influencing the effectiveness of a programme (Collins & Holton, 2004), and hence the formalisation of this process may contribute to the effectiveness of the LDP. The evaluator recommends that in order to create a more streamlined process and to ensure consistency in the future, a formal document be created pertaining to each of the underlying constructs of the LDP (the 5 Es) that lists in detail exactly which content areas should be covered in each particular intervention. With such a document, the process of selecting vendors would be simplified and this would improve the consistency of the actual content of the programme.

## **Participant feedback**

As previously mentioned, the effectiveness of the programme to date has been measured relatively subjectively. Measurement has predominantly been through word of mouth, leader meetings and dialogue, feedback sheets and informal feedback conversations. The feedback sheets that are completed at the end of each training intervention provide some insight into the perceptions of the participants with regard to enjoyment, pace, facilitator ability and content. However, different feedback sheets are used for different interventions and some of these are more in-depth than others. It is recommended that the implementing organisation designs one thorough feedback sheet that can be used at the end of all training interventions, standardising the participant feedback procedure and including universal measures of participant enjoyment, engagement and satisfaction.

## **Organisational and peer support**

As illustrated in the results chapter of this research report, the participants that completed the online questionnaire expressed that there could be an increase in the level of support received from peers and supervisors upon completion of the programme. The evaluator recommends that the stakeholders and senior directors pay close attention to this and remain open to feedback and criticism regarding peer and supervisor support. The evaluator also recommends that this information be documented and stored in order to gather information about the post-programme process and ultimately improve and formalise this process. The value that this will add to the organisation is potentially significant; as leaders will continue to develop after completing the programme this may enhance the overall effectiveness of the programme.

## **Monitoring Framework**

Programme process monitoring is described as the ongoing documentation of key elements of a programme's performance that assess whether the programme is operating as intended (Rossi et al., 2004). Some process variables are important to measure because they are expected to lead to desired outcomes; others are measured

because they allow the evaluator to analyse how the programme operates, for whom, and with what resources (Weiss, 1998). Monitoring, therefore, inevitably allows an evaluator to explain why a programme did or did not work and provides valuable feedback to key stakeholders about a programme's performance (Rossi et al., 2004). The evaluator recommends that the organisation begins to monitor (track) the programme's activities in order to gather detailed data about the programme's performance and effectiveness and the physical improvements made within the implementing organisation. This can be done through the introduction of a formal monitoring framework, which will require detailed data collection (Weiss, 1998). The monitoring framework will include creating a formal content and intention map in order to assess the programme's coverage (Rossi et al., 2004). If one was able to evaluate the implementation of the programme more accurately, this could reveal potential flaws in the programme's theory that were assumed to be implementation flaws (Bickman, 1987). Ultimately, a monitoring framework will allow a more detailed, structured and accurate evaluation of the programme to take place in the future (Rossi et al., 2004). This may include an outcomes/impact evaluation.

An outcomes/impact evaluation measures the extent to which a programme produces the intended improvements in the area it addresses (Rossi et al., 2004). This type of evaluation is extremely beneficial for an organisation to determine the cost-benefit ratio of a programme and to establish objective evidence of the programme's effectiveness; as opposed to shared beliefs, opinions and perceptions. Results based monitoring (which would enable an outcomes/impact evaluation) is a powerful tool that can be used to help stakeholders track a programme's progress and demonstrate the impact of a programme (Kusek & Rist, 2004). This type of monitoring moves beyond inputs and outputs and focuses more on outcomes and impacts. Through the introduction of a monitoring framework, the evaluator will give the stakeholders the opportunity to express a clear statement of the targeted change in circumstances, status, level of functioning, behaviour, attitude, knowledge, or skills (Patton, 2008). This will ultimately allow for a more accurate and objective evaluation of whether the programme was successful or not.

As illustrated above, the benefits of developing a monitoring framework for the LDP would be beneficial to the implementing organisation. Not only would it allow for a

more streamlined evaluation to be done, it would also allow the organisation to identify the tangible benefits of the programme throughout the organisation and whether the cost-benefit ratio is as favourable as management perceptions suggest.

### **Limitations**

The evaluator identified a number of limitations that somewhat restricted the evaluation of the LDP. These limitations are presented below.

Owing to the lack of sufficient pre-programme data, the evaluator was not able to comment on whether the programme was implemented as planned, as this descriptive pre-programme data did not exist. In order to do a thorough implementation evaluation in the future, the evaluator would need to know exactly what the stakeholders intended to cover in terms of activities, content and simulations. The benefits of a full implementation evaluation are widespread and hence the evaluator was limited in this regard.

The number of online questionnaire responses received was low. Of the 48 participants who completed the programme and were invited to participate in the research, only 17 responded to the online questionnaire. Statistical analyses were thus limited and the results of this evaluation should be received with caution. As convenient sampling was used, participation in the research was voluntary and the evaluator had little control over the number of responses received. Although effort was extended to encourage participation in the research, the response rate was unfortunately low.

Given the small number of participants who completed the online questionnaire, it is possible that these participants are of similar dispositions, which may account for the lack of variance in the questionnaire data. One should be aware that there is room for bias when dealing with individual perceptions and this should be taken into consideration when analysing self-report data. This is a limitation in all research as evaluators are not able to select which participants form part of their studies. Although it is a universal concern for evaluators, the number of responses in this

evaluation was particularly low and, again, this means that the results of the questionnaire should be received with caution.

The reliability and validity of the online questionnaire used for this evaluation was not assessed. The scale was adapted from the Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI) Scale (Holton & Bates, 1998) and only those items relevant for this evaluation were included in the questionnaire. The evaluator was not able to assess the reliability and validity of the scale due to the low response rate.

## **Conclusion**

The field of leadership is vast and complicated and is filled with literature from numerous theorists and academics dating back centuries. The global economic expansion has resulted in leadership being continuously reassessed and best practices changing over the past decade (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2002). Although there are some fundamental elements of effective leadership that have not changed, a large portion of the dominant characteristics of an effective leader have shifted (Leonard & Grobler, 2006). The attention of leadership excellence has focused on softer human emotions and there is an obvious preference of transformational as opposed to transactional leadership (Bass, 1990). There is an ever-increasing trend for leaders to be more gentle, approachable and nurturing, and this is in conjunction with the growth of emotional intelligence and the growing importance of employee wellbeing (Cacioppe, 1998a). The distinction between leadership and management has also become clear and these two terms have grown apart significantly (Bass, 1990; Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

As is evident from the results of this evaluation, the LDP is considered to be a theoretically plausible and suitably implemented programme that is thought to have contributed to the overall success of the organisation (through the contribution to team efficiency and performance). Participants indicated that they enjoyed being on the programme and the findings demonstrated that participants perceived the content and learning styles to be enjoyable, beneficial and engaging. Although there are some areas that can be improved, participants and stakeholders view the programme in a positive light and the programme should therefore continue to be implemented at the

organisation. The role that leadership plays in driving an organisation towards excellence is profound. The increase of efficiency in teams throughout the organisation, driven by excellent leaders, has added and will continue to add significant value to the organisation in the future. Given the competitive nature of the organisation and the desire to remain a market leader, the development of leadership skills is invaluable and should continue to remain an operational priority.

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## APPENDIX A: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE



Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in this study. The study is being conducted as part of a Master's research project at the University of Cape Town. Please note that your participation is voluntary and the research has been approved by the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee.

The aim of this research is to investigate the Leadership Development Programme (LDP) that you completed in 2009, 2010 or 2011. The questionnaire consists of 28 questions and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire does not ask for any identifiable information and thus all information provided is anonymous.

Please feel free to contact me (details provided below) should you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Yours Sincerely,

Ciani Gordon

[ciani.gordon@gmail.co.za](mailto:ciani.gordon@gmail.co.za)

072 124 7916

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Please rate your level of agreement for each of statements below based on your training experiences of the Leadership Development Programme (LDP). This questionnaire is anonymous so you are able to provide honest answers for each of the questions. Please answer all questions with the context of when you were a part of the programme and not necessarily how you feel right now. The response options range from 1 to 5; where 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 represents strongly agree. For example:

*I enjoyed the Leadership Development Programme*

1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	<del>Agree</del>	Strongly Agree

### **Section A - Perceived content validity**

1. What is taught in the LDP closely matches my job requirements.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. What is taught in the LDP closely matches the culture of the Allan Gray.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I like the way the training seems so much like my job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

### **Section B - Transfer design:**

4. The activities and exercises the LDP trainers used helped me know how to apply my learning on the job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. My line manager encourages me to engage in a transfer of learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Since completing the LDP I have been able to apply the skills I learnt on the programme to my current role.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Since completing the LDP I have been able to apply the knowledge I learnt on the programme to my current role.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

**Section C - Opportunity to use:**

8. The resources I need to apply what I learnt on the LDP are available to me after the training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. There is sufficient flexibility in my job description that allows me to adapt my leadership style as I acquire new knowledge.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. I get opportunities to use this training on my job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. Our current staffing level is adequate for me to use this training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. I have time in my schedule to change the way I do things to fit my new learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

**Section D - Motivation to transfer:**

13. I get excited when I think about trying to use the skills that I have learnt on the LDP in my job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. I believe the LDP helped me do my current job better.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. When I left the LDP training, I couldn't wait to get back to work to try what I have learnt.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. I am more likely to be recognised for my work if I use this training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

**Section E - Personal capacity for transfer:**

17. My workload allows me time to try the new things I have learnt on the LDP.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. There is too much happening at work right now for me to try and use this training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. I wish I had time to do things the way I know they should be done.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

**Section F - Peer support:**

20. My colleagues encourage me to use the skills that I have learnt in the LDP.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

21. My colleagues appreciate me using new skills I learned in training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

22. My colleagues are patient with me when I try out new skills at work.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

**Section G - Supervisor support:**

23. My line manager sets goals for me that encourage me to apply my training in the LDP on the job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

24. Training facilitators were available if I had course related questions during the LDP.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

25. My supervisor will object if I try to use the LDP training on the job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

26. My supervisor shows interest in what I have learnt on the LDP.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

27. My supervisor lets me know I am doing a great job when I use my training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. My supervisor helps me set realistic goals for job performance based on my training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

29. Would you like to give any additional feedback about how your work environment enabled / hindered your application and/or transfer of leadership skills and knowledge?

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**Section H – Demographic Information** (for descriptive purposes only)

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:

 Female Male

Race:

 White African Asian Indian Coloured Prefer not to answer

Job title: \_\_\_\_\_