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Client Story

Upskilling Leaders

Cascades offers sustainable, innovative and value-added solutions for packaging, hygiene and recovery needs. The company employs approximately 10,000 women and men who work in almost 80 facilities in North America. Cascades paper mill wanted to update their leadership training program for frontline supervisors and looked to Blanchard® for help. "I was familiar with SLII®, so I knew the content would be right for us, but we needed to design a comprehensive virtual learning experience to roll out to our supervisors throughout North America," said Marie-Josée Lemaire, senior organizational development advisor at Cascades. She partnered with the Blanchard team to create Leadership LAND—a six-month learning journey that combined the learning experience with activities, peer networking, coaching, and focused application in both formal and informal contexts.

"We wanted participants of the program to focus on our targeted competencies while exploring their own individual development goals, their team development goals, and the impact they have when aligned with organizational goals," says Lemaire.

The Learning Journey

Cascades used Blanchard facilitators to deliver the learning journey in both French and English. To prepare participants for the learning experience, they held a 90-minute program launch.

“The CEO, Mario Plourde, opened the session to explain the importance of the learning—not only what it meant for participants’ personal success but also how it aligned with team and organizational success. It was inspiring for people to hear our commitment to the program from our CEO,” continues Lemaire.

The ultimate design included content from several Blanchard programs including:

- **Self Leadership**—teaches individuals the mindset and skillset they need to become empowered, proactive self leaders who take control of their own success.
- **Building Trust**—teaches how to build trust in the workplace and how to repair it when it’s been broken.
- **Conversational Capacity**®—teaches people how to have constructive dialogue, especially when challenging situations arise.
- **SLII**®—teaches leaders how to empower their people to succeed by offering the right amount of direction and support needed on specific tasks.
- **Team Leadership**—teaches skills to improve collaboration, innovation, and effectiveness of teams by leveraging the strengths of team members and addressing challenges effectively.
- **Coaching Essentials**®—teaches managers how to effectively coach their direct reports, not just manage them, to increase productivity and create an environment of trust and autonomy.
- **Leading People Through Change**®—teaches participants how to identify and address the predictable stages employees will go through during any change initiative.

“We introduced the components of the journey, explained how to get the most out of the learning, and got them excited about collaborating with peers throughout the organization.”

The journey consisted of six modules delivered in three phases. Each phase included two six-hour modules delivered in three two-hour virtual sessions. A 90-minute group coaching session was held at the end of each phase along with 60-minute peer networking sessions and an email that provided content from *The New One Minute Manager* book. Participants were also able to access additional materials online through Blanchard Exchange to help master the skills including conversation starters, articles, videos, forms for one-on-one meetings, and more.

Phase 1: The Power of Me

In module one, participants learn the importance of being empowered and committed to achieving their results. They learn about assumed constraints and points of power from Self Leadership and how to have proactive conversations with their managers to get the direction and support they need to be successful. Module two teaches the importance of building trusting relationships with team members and colleagues. Participants learn the four elements of the Building Trust program and begin to understand the impact of their behaviors on building or eroding trust. They also learn how to have balanced, productive conversations using skills from the Conversational Capacity program.



Phase 2: The Power of We

Module three presents the SLII® model, which teaches managers how to diagnose the development level of their direct reports in order to offer the appropriate amount of direction and support on specific tasks. SLII® provides the foundational leadership language that carries throughout the learning journey. Participants learn how to manage team dynamics in module four by learning the mindset and skills needed to optimize the performance of the team. The Blanchard Team Leadership program teaches managers how to navigate complex issues, resolve conflicts, and identify development opportunities for team members.

Phase 3: The Power of Change

Blanchard's Coaching Essentials program provides the content for module five. Participants learn the coaching process and specific coaching skills of listening to learn, inquiring for insight, telling your truth, and expressing confidence. They practice the skills and process using custom scenarios specific to Cascades. In module 6, participants learn the five-step model for managing change from the Leading People Through Change program. This high-involvement, collaborative process helps managers resolve concerns and increase the buy-in and commitment of their teams throughout any changing environment.

Results of the Learning Journey

"Feedback from participants has been positive. It has been gratifying to see how quickly people embraced the learning. I hear people using SLII® language and see tools and graphics posted on their walls," says Lemaire. "They are really using the content to become better leaders. There is even a waiting list for people who want to go through the program."

The most exciting surprise was watching the graduates meet after the training to coach each other. "This has never happened before, but the graduates took the initiative to start their own networking sessions to coach each other. They created their own sustainment method.



As other cohorts complete the program, they are being invited to the sessions, too. They are building relationships with colleagues throughout North America. It is so rewarding to watch this happen," concludes Lemaire.

When Blanchard and Cascades were building the learning journey, special attention was paid to the needs of the audience. "It was critical to clarify the needs of the people we would be training and to tie the learning to corporate initiatives," says Lemaire. "Cascades uses the lean manufacturing process, and the communication skills they learned in the program connect so well to that process. Having productive conversations is a key component of lean manufacturing. Our people have a common language now, and it has changed the way they work. They connect on a deeper level that helps us continue to improve our relationships and our business results."

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