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How to Grow Leaders From Within

The most effective leaders understand that building great organizations involves growing leaders at many levels. Henry Givray, president and CEO of SmithBucklin Corporation, takes this responsibility seriously: In 2011, he established the SmithBucklin Leadership Learning Forum, an intensive, high-impact 12-month program offered as a gift for small group of top performers in the company. The program exposes students to leadership concepts, principles and guidelines to stimulate and inspire individual learning and personal growth.

"As a CEO who also aspires to be a true leader, my overarching goal is to build a great, enduring company," Givray says. "One of the foundational requirements in the journey toward greatness is to build leadership capacity and performance throughout the company; that is, grow leaders from within."

After several years of contemplation and development, Givray launched the intensive Leadership Learning Forum as a purposeful, disciplined and sustainable approach to creating a growing community of leadership students and champions who model desired behaviors and practices. The program's content is based on the leadership framework and its underlying principles and concepts that Givray has been developing over the years. He is also the lead facilitator for all sessions.

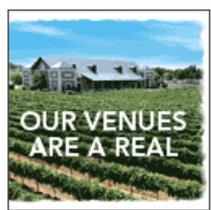
Each fall, Givray invites 15 to 20 junior, mid-level and senior staffers to apply for the program. The application process includes personal interviews and written responses to questions. Those accepted into the program participate in a day of orientation and eight two-day, off-site sessions throughout the 12-month period. In addition, students spend four to eight hours per week on reading, homework and preparation between sessions.

The program "relies heavily on active facilitation, advance reading, invited guests, homework assignments, lecturettes, exercises and activities," Givray says. "These elements provoke, stimulate, provide context, illuminate ideas and create an environment for reflection, self-discovery, learning and growth via open dialogue, sharing, debate and mutual problem solving."

Givray says that the first two years of the program have yielded observable, tangible growth and corresponding impact and results from current and graduated students. Even though those invited to participate are already recognized as top performers, Givray is not surprised that ten students have achieved substantial promotions. Givray is confident in the program's far-reaching and long-term impact on individual students, on SmithBucklin and on SmithBucklin client associations.



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