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Lisa C.

Chief Human
Resources Officer



CHALLENGE

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Lisa, C., Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at a leading company in the clinical research industry, identified a significant gap in the company's leadership development efforts. Part meeting a need as the pandemic subsided, part being proactive to develop leaders who would eventually need to step into bigger roles, there was some urgency around getting a program that would deliver significant value to a wide range of employees of different backgrounds and experiences.



KEY RESULTS

17 out of 76 (22%) participants across three cohorts have been promoted since completing Velocity's Emerging Leaders Program, and the company now has a robust pipeline of high-potential leaders to pull from for promotions.



CASE STUDY

Amidst the challenges brought by rapid industry changes and the aftermath of a global pandemic, Lisa C., Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at a leading company in the clinical research industry, reflected on what the organization was doing to accelerate leadership readiness. “The answer was simple,” she said. “It was nothing. So I knew exactly who to call.”

Having worked with the team at Velocity Advisory Group in a previous role, the CHRO had a rich history with the advisory firm and knew that the Emerging Leaders Program would be a good fit for their goals. Lisa mentioned that she continues to work with Velocity year after year because the firm is authentic, genuine, and always delivers. She trusted that Velocity’s experts could help her create a structured, formal, and intentional approach for developing future leaders over the next five years.

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THE SOLUTION: EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM + EXECUTIVE COACHING

Focusing on high-potential employees poised to take on senior leadership roles at some point in the future, Velocity tailored their Emerging Leaders Program for the organization.

The program combines tangible and critical leadership topics over the course of five workshops with practical application, including capstone projects that allow participants to address real business challenges. “They’ve been enlightening for us for enhancing some of our internal business processes,” Lisa said of the capstone projects.

The first cohort in 2021 tackled real-life issues that managers were having with remote work and leading teams, creating impactful leadership toolkits for new leaders to leverage. Included in the recommendations were how to optimize tools and communication styles, plus dealing with a lot of change and some internal processes that are often overlooked. The sentiment at the end of the cohort presentations was that the amount of work that went into these toolkits would’ve cost easily \$300,000 with another consulting firm.

“The cohort we just had [in early 2024] took a look at our competency model, which was three years old, and made a ton of enhancements and refreshment recommendations because the models were a bit dated,” she said.

Using the capstone to tackle existing issues within the organization allows the future leaders to step into the shoes they’ll have to eventually fill, while demonstrating the skills they’re acquiring.

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The coaches are very credible because they’ve held real business roles and see it from the inside. Now they’re sitting on the outside and coaching people on the inside. It makes a world of difference.”

Lisa C.



Key components of the program include leadership concepts like psychological safety and the Delegation Model, having effective coaching conversations, how to manage *and* lead, navigating change, and enhancing team dynamics using Velocity's proprietary Birds framework — a unique take on the traditional DISC styles.

"We utilize the Birds beyond Emerging Leaders," she added. "It's kind of like a decoder ring, a way for people to understand actions without assigning intent." The Birds is a popular workshop across Velocity clients, but within this organization in particular, it's always one of the favorite aspects of the program.

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Each participant at the organization is also paired with one of Velocity's experienced executive coaches. "They all want to keep their coaches after they graduate," she said. "There's a psychological safety where they can talk to their coach outside of the company world, and the coach can pull through topics and themes for further exploration as well ... they find so much value in the relationship."

Lisa believes that part of why the coaches are so effective is because they aren't strictly academic coaches who have learned business principles from a book, they've been there. Velocity's coaches have run businesses and can sit across from their coachees and understand what they're feeling. "The coaches are very credible because they've held real business roles and see it from the inside. Now they're sitting on the outside and coaching people on the inside. It makes a world of difference."

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THE RESULTS

The Emerging Leaders Program has been a resounding success, with three cohorts and approximately 76 participants completing the training so far.

“This is now the pool of people that we want to pull from for promotions,” Lisa explained. “They not only learn the skills, but they feel ready for it. They know the company invested in them a year or two before they got their chance and they have been able to intentionally shape their leadership style versus ‘oh my gosh, I got promoted – now what?’”

22%

**of Emerging
Leaders participants**
have been promoted since
completing the program

CONCLUSION

The success of the partnership between Velocity and this organization in executing the Emerging Leaders Program underscores the critical importance of not just leadership development initiatives, but leadership programs that are tailored for the needs of the business.

“Velocity always asks a ton of questions about your business and where you are as a company before making a program recommendation,” Lisa said. “I love that because the big consulting firms of the world have their playbooks and you just get the same thing as everyone else, just with your logo slapped on it.”

By focusing on individual growth, practical application, and a deep understanding of the business context, the organization has significantly enhanced its leadership pipeline, ensuring readiness for whatever the future may hold.

ABOUT VELOCITY ADVISORY GROUP

Velocity Advisory Group is an experienced advisory firm committed to helping clients accelerate organizational success through leadership development, executive coaching, cultural alignment, and strategic execution. Having led 800+ organizations in more than 25 industries through transformation and strategic change since 2009, we excel at supporting clients to achieve clarity, confidence, and better decision-making.

By emphasizing personalized consulting and building trusted partnerships, we deliver tailored solutions for each clients’ unique needs that unleash the untapped potential within their organization.

Contact us today or visit VelocityAdvisoryGroup.com to learn more about how we can help develop your high-potential leaders.