

Leader Transformation in Large Industry

IntoTheNew Whitepaper by Karin Hamrin & Niklas Lindhardt

1. INTENTION AND ABSTRACT

The intention of this paper is to share our experiences and learnings from our 9 month leader transformation programs in a global R&D organization within a large automotive industry.

The Challenge: Being part of a rapidly changing and competitive industry, where electrification, digitalization and globalization lead to increasing complexity and pace of change, there is a growing need for increased ability to navigate complexity, lead thru emergence and empower teams and individuals. To meet this challenge, strengthening individual leadership was identified as a key, as a part of an organization-wide agile transformation.

The Scope: This whitepaper is based on 3 leader transformation programs run over the course of 2 years to this date. Each program running over 9 months, in cohorts of 15 attendees, in a 5000 man strong R&D organization being a part of a 40 000 man strong global company.

The Outcome: Qualitative and quantitative measures show strong, positive effects on individual leadership, leading to increased team and organizational performance. Attendees report a higher capacity for emergence, agility and empowering leadership, and also an increase in wellbeing, quality of life and strengthened private relations. The participants' subordinates experience a strong positive leadership shift.

Scientific measures prove an expansion of awareness among the participants. It has resulted in an expansion of the program to further groups and to a larger part of the company.

The Learning: Deeply transformative leader programs, focused on inner integration and development, combined with experimentation with outer initiatives, do shift and expand the awareness of attending leaders. This leads to an increase of leader capability to navigate- and cut through complexity and increases the wellbeing of both the leader and the people around her/him – in professional as well as private relations.

This novel way to expand leader capacity is a needed way to meet our increasingly complex and fast-moving outer environment. Integrating ourselves as individuals builds the capacity to co-create transformative organizational initiatives in a way that traditional leader development does not.

We hope that us sharing will contribute to spread truly developmental practices around the globe. To expand our human consciousness, to increase love toward self, others and our planet. For a more sustainable industry and world.

2. OUR CONTRIBUTION

2.1. What we aimed to give

We wanted to give a deep, experienced understanding of several research fields together with integrative practices, for each individual to be able to apply these frameworks for the growth and expansion of themselves, their teams and their organization. *

We wanted the attending leaders to see, sense and make sense of a larger range of perspectives in the interrelatedness between Self, Other and System. Thus, enabling co-awareness of how to shape a system in which both organization and people grow in sustainable harmony. **

We wanted our attending leaders to increase their Present centered awareness, opening up for emergence and navigating complexity. *

We wanted to create a safe space for attendees to meet both self and others in deep connection and mutual exploration, opening up for integration and expansion. *

Below, our intended gifts are detailed in the perspectives of Self, Other (e.g. peers, team) and System (e.g. organization).

SELF

We wanted our attending leaders to increase their understanding and integration of the interior self, their different action-logics or inner “figures”, psycho-emotional patterns and triggers, and how these play out in the exterior self in enabling or disabling ways in the day to day leadership.*

We wanted our attending leaders to get equipped with a range of emergent leadership capabilities. Not as learned tools and practices, from outside in, but emerged from inside out as a result of a deeper understanding of the emergent Self – Other – System dynamic. **

We wished for our attending leaders to embrace a larger part of themselves, in love and compassion, leading to an increased life experience and increase in wellbeing. *

OTHER

We wanted for our attending leaders to meet others more authentically in compassion with where others ‘are’, opening up to see, sense and make sense of the interior of their peers. *

We wanted the leaders’ direct reports and professional collaborators to experience a positive shift in leadership and co-creation. *

We wanted to see an accelerated growth of the leaders’ direct reports, and an increase in the capacity of the leaders’ development teams. **

SYSTEM

We wanted our attending leaders to grow their abilities to lead a complex organization, in a complex world. Listening to the organization, making sense of the complex emergent dynamics and co-create initiatives to continuously improve the relational-organizational system. **

We wanted our leaders to be able to shape a better tomorrow with their professional relations, leading to an organizational system enabling growth of human beings, organization and product/market in sustainable harmony. **

We wanted our attending leaders to grow their emergent competence and capability. Building on emergence to navigate complex environments instead of pre-made, semi-static plans. **

2.2.How we did it

We facilitate the leadership shifts needed combining a range of scientific frameworks. Or rather, synthesizing a range of scientific frameworks into a coherent whole. Merging psychology, vertical development, leadership theory, the relational organization, organizational emergence, authentic relating, presencing theory, complex systems theory, self-organizing systems and agility.

During the program, we consciously and carefully hold, and co-create a space where we together view, explore and experience life, leadership and organization from different angles. The oscillation between self, other and system in these perspectives create a deep integration that untaps the inherent power and creativity of individuals, teams and organization.

We designed the programs to run over 9 months to give time for integration, with cohorts of 15 leaders in each. Each monthly program cycle repeated the below sequence 8 times:

- Individual preparation for the full day session, with pre-recorded video clips presenting theories and models, as well as preparatory reflective practices.
- Full day facilitated live session.
- One 1:1 developmental coaching session per attendee.
- Attendee, self-governed, triad meetings with reflective/supportive guidelines provided (most triads met weekly).

Each full day explored and experienced one stage of the vertical development in depth, to meet and start to integrate that inner 'figure'. The stage was experienced both in terms of gifts, aspirations and shadows, leading to see both own triggers and disabling behaviors as well as available and hidden capabilities.

Each full day explored one aspect of personal aspiration for growth, and the corresponding shadows and internal blockers for that aspirational growth.

Each day explored how to embrace and navigate the complexity of any organizational system.

To reach the above perspectives, each day was carefully designed and facilitated, by two experienced facilitators, in an oscillation between self, other and system using visualizations, meditations and practices, self-reflection, group dialogue, pair and triad dialogue practices and mirroring.

Each practice in pairs or triads was scripted and time boxed, as a liberating structure to assist the attendees in focusing their attention on the right things. Getting directly to the core of the exploration.

As facilitators, we put a lot of value in holding the right space. A loving space of authenticity, mutuality, curiosity and vulnerability was intentionally created.

After each session, attendees got a new chapter of program material containing theory and practices to further deepen the exploration and integration of the Self.

2.3. Results in brief

We systematically collected feedback and testimonials after each session, and after each completed program. We also collected testimonials from the attendees' superiors and direct reports. This qualitative data was compiled and analyzed.

In addition to this we used the Global Leadership Profile Assessment (GLP), one of the most highly reputed developmental assessments available today, to quantitatively assess whether the program has had a measurable effect on leader awareness. All attendees took a GLP prior to, and after completing the program.

In addition to the results indirectly presented in section 2.1, the results from these two data collecting methods are presented in brief below:

- The pre- and post- Global Leadership Profile assessment validated the following: The average attendee shifted their center of gravity one stage. 100% of our attending leaders have increased their capacity to hold multiple perspectives.
- Our attendees experience an increase of life quality and wellbeing.
- Our attendees have reached a deeper understanding and integration of the Self, leading to a more authentic encounter with others, and a more effective intervention with any system they are a part of. (Thereby not said that they can change any system they are a part of. What is within their circle of impact and influence is also an insight grown in the program. As well as finding peace with the circle of concern...)

- Our attendees experience a better and deeper understanding of the relation between Self, other and system, leading to the ability to navigate and handle complexity, and co-create from emergence.
- Our attending leaders experience a heightened present-centered awareness, enabling them to sense, and make sense of the continuous flow of data and information from the Self, others and the system.
- A majority of our attendees report that they experience an increase of life satisfaction, as a result of getting to know themselves better as well as gaining an increased understanding of others.
- A majority of the attendees report that they have improved all their relations: with their peers and direct reports, with their spouses, with their children, with family and friends.
- The attending leaders' direct reports experience a significant positive shift in leadership, enabling more growth, creativity and initiative.

2.4. What we learned

Intentionally holding a space of love, authenticity, mutuality, curiosity and vulnerability is key for a transformative process.

Adopting an integrative, holistic approach where people get to meet themselves in compassion, acceptance, and love (in contrast to trying or striving to develop, expand and grow), really opens up for healing. This healing enables an expansion of consciousness that would be impeded by a strive for development.

People are really open to share, to help others grow.

People have a longing for authenticity and love also in professional life.

We have seen the power in shaping a cross functional group of leaders from an organization, and the power of creating internal networks of leaders viewing life and leadership in a holistic way.

We have learned to avoid dogmatic terms or language, or terms that are tightly associated with any specific belief (religious, political or other). Actively striving for an un-biased language opens up a space where everyone can explore their own truths.

Dialogue practices designed with a clear, timed script, create a liberating structure to hold important, deepening explorative dialogues within.

With just a little support in terms of suggested practices or reflective dialogues, the self-governed coaching triads hold a strong transformational power to the individual and the organization.

2.5. ...and what we would like to explore further

We are curious about, and will explore, how to interweave and connect the transformational program more directly with transformational, learning experiments within the organization. Thus, creating the organizational scaffold for people, organization, and product/service to grow in synchrony and harmony.

We would like to explore how to use a transformational program like this to broaden the educational and transformational initiative into the entire organization, in a more structured way.

We would like to, and plan to, explore the effects of running a program like this with participants from different organizations. Perhaps in triads. To evaluate the cross-organizational learning occurring in such a setting.

About us:

We, Karin and Niklas, hold a range of global certifications in developmental coaching, vertical leader development, the relational organization, sustainable change of social systems, vertical organizational development, self-organizing structures and so on... But this is not the primary reason why we are really successful in what we do.

Many others use this research to compete. A fit right in our Achiever paradigm. "The more developed the better", "Later is greater", "We need to develop", "We must..." And so on. The problem with this approach is that it actually seems to inhibit the very growth and development aimed for. Striving for consciousness expansion is a great hinder for the same. We learn to say the right things, but on the inside, nothing really changes. It is hurtful. And we have seen it closely.

We have found another way. A holistic way. Totally free from competition. Free from better or worse. We use this research to meet ourselves. To meet every part of ourselves with an open heart. With compassion. With love. And when we do, we start to integrate ourselves. And when we do, our consciousness open up for expansion. We grow from the inside out. Bill Torbert once said something like this in a dialogue we had on this: "Trying to expand your consciousness without integrating your earlier stages properly is like trying to climb a staircase nailed to the floor. It hurts. And it is impossible."

So, in all our work, we work holistically. And people attending our programs and workshops are actually moved. Touched. By meeting themselves. Thru others. For we are all beautiful. And deep inside, we know it!

Get in contact:

We want to spread what we by experience and validation know work within the field of personal and leader development for the emerging future.

Get in touch if you sense that our paths may cross, or if you are curious of what we can help you with.

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