

BUSINESS SUCCESS STORY

The Leadership Challenge® - Kicking goals
with an in-house World Cup* Initiative
Part One

'business en motion' moves businesses
and leaders ahead through change

Company Name
business en motion

Type of Company
Professional Services

Address
Middle East and Australasia

PURPOSE

Debbie Nicol, Managing Director 'business en motion', designed, developed and implemented an organization development change initiative that aimed to integrate the concept of leadership into a company's competencies on all levels.

THE SITUATION

A global logistics and shipping company anticipated a very high demand for international transportation of resources for the 2022 World Cup. For the largest sporting event to be held in one of the world's smallest countries, challenges abounded. Increased innovation, teamwork and partnerships, trust and accountability were needed. In essence it was time to shift from management to leadership.

SALIENT POINTS

03 The Opportunity

07 The Approach

**08
11** The Results

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The Leadership Challenge® Kicking goals with an in-house World Cup* Initiative

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The Leadership Challenge®

Kicking goals with an in-house World Cup* Initiative

Part One

Month 10 of a 24 month Initiative

*The World Cup is the global quadrennial football championships. Given strict media regulations, this will now be referred to as WC.

02 Context

Debbie Nicol, Managing Director 'business en motion', designed, developed and implemented an organization development change initiative that aimed to integrate the concept of leadership into a company's competencies on all levels. Along the way, a 2nd and equally-important issue emerged, that being how to transition the company from siloed inefficiency to team-based productivity. It was deemed that leadership was an appropriate strategy to also address this issue. At the time of writing this business success story's findings, 10 months into the initiative, the results have exceeded all expectations.

03 The Opportunity

A global logistics and shipping company anticipated a very high demand for international goods transportation for the 2022 WC in Qatar. It also recognized that the upcoming WC event was to be like no other; after all it was to be the largest sporting event in one of the world's smallest countries.

With the vast array of logistical challenges this presented, the company believed that in order to win WC business, **they would need to 'up their game'** in the two-year lead up to 2022 by adapting more professional and progressive means. Their partnerships had to add more value, and their outlook towards the way business is done needed an overhaul. Implications for that meant that...

- The senior team would need to:
 - demonstrate an 'evolution' into the realm of leadership and change
 - focus on innovative solutions to attract more business
 - be prepared to work more as a true team, removing all existing silos
 - focus on more partnerships, both internally and externally
 - bring all layers of the organization with them, supporting and owning change
 - be the figure heads of change to the individual contributors of the company
- The middle management needed clearer priorities from the senior team, and wanted to be actively involved, something the senior team had not previously prioritized with their 'management' style.

- The individual contributors needed full understanding of priorities as well as new skills to change the way they were working. They were willing and able to be led towards a different direction.

Additionally, at the time this business opportunity and challenge was being explored, an embargo existed with most borders being closed over a long-standing socio-political dispute, which brought the external environment onto the list of challenges.

These combined factors demanded that major systemic behavioral change was required over the 730 days preceding the event in order to be a credible and in-demand supplier, one that was perceived by the market to be 'professional and progressive'.

The above was our own interpretation of the problem, yet a leadership assessment of the senior level of the organization through the research-based Leadership Practices Inventory showed clearly that the senior level of the organization was working in a 'getting things done' mode, and directing their teams to do so while there was little indication of how the activity was contributing, where it was heading or even what mattered most along that journey. This had the Company operating along a spectrum from complacency to reactivity, not conducive to a positive, sustainable and competitive business environment. Great opportunity for change existed.

04 Key Resource

A key resource used to help leaders achieve what they set out to do as part of this initiative was The Leadership Challenge®, the work of Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner who as co-authors of the book with the same name have devoted 35 years of their working lives to helping people reach their potential. The result of their work is The Leadership Challenge®, a research-based leadership methodology which consists of 5 Leadership Practices and 30 Leadership Behaviors that lead people to their potential, in the eyes of those around them.



The premise of the research findings is simple: the more often one applies these behaviors, the more effective their leadership will be in the eyes of those around them.

The Leadership Challenge® is at the core of this initiative due to its simplicity of use and direct application to the company context.

‘business en motion’ has served this Company on a global level for over 15 years. Each local company on the ground chooses its own suppliers, and ‘business en motion’ had served many 1 - 2 day initiatives on the basis of a very proactive Company Manager being in place in the Qatar branch. He personified many of the fundamentals of The Leadership Challenge®:

- The best leaders are the best learners
- Leadership is indeed everyone’s business
- Leadership development is self-development, and an on-going process while also a strong believer that...
- Leadership is a choice in the moment; we can choose to do something - or not.

When he approached us regarding this need, we envisioned a change initiative, one that embedded measurable, trainable and learnable behavioral change deep into the fabric of the organization’s culture. The scope was broad, the 24-month timeframe seemed realistic and any initiative was to include the entire organization. Full accountability had to be factored into the layers of the organization; this was not about us, but about ‘them’ because ‘they’ are the facilitators of business. We also needed to ensure that whatever was introduced for the WC was to have ongoing benefit well beyond the final kicked goal. Sustainable impact was a key KPI for the project.

Phases have included:

1. Discovery and Clarification

- a. After three to four informal discussions between the Company Manager, the HR Director (who was to be our eyes and ears on the ground, as well as hold a valued ‘change team’ role) and myself, it became evident we needed to capture and define the exact reality in a way that would also steer us towards an appropriate, targeted and feasible solution.
- b. We set up a Strategic Think Tank; this thinking and development process let us into the executive sponsor’s head. We explored, we dug deep and we uncovered while creating a Strategy Map that was to become of our 4 guiding documents. It represented a holistic and systemic approach for this organizational change. ‘business en motion’ was assigned responsibility for the 1st perspective of ‘learning and growth’ which consisted of four strategic objectives; it was to enable all the other changes required in the strategy map. We were tasked to design a framework to approach the proposed future in the most efficient and effective manner.
- c. When it was verbally suggested that The Leadership Challenge® could be an appropriate methodology to provide this initiative with substance, both the

Company Manager and HR Director joined an open iteration of The Leadership Challenge® Workshop hosted by 'business en motion'. By the end, they were convinced the 5 Practices and 30 Behaviors to be both simple, yet profound; a language embedded into a leadership methodology that the people of the organization would have every chance to adopt, while also being one that aligned to many of the existing culture's goals.

2. Design phase

- a. 'business en motion' excels in designing and facilitating systematic organizational development frameworks, and this opportunity was no exception. Yet no previous framework was going to be robust enough for the depth of this specific need (problem) of the organization, given its history and current circumstances.

Throughout the design phase, priorities and needs quickly formed into:

- A multi-level system of change allowing the entire organization to become involved across a variety of modes (this was where the strategic objectives of the Strategy Map became integrated)
 - A Matrix structure within the framework of 3 layers + 4 vertical arms, with the original three layers adopting four vertical arms:
 - Knowledge Arm
 - Application Arm
 - Self-development Arm (LPI Action Plan)
 - Team Arm
 - Multiple forms of activities including group work, individual work, team work, digital, manual exercises, communication meetings, social events etc were ingrained
 - Evidence of ownership and accountability were integrated as the core of any and all measurement; all Senior-level experiences had to be passed onto the direct reports by the Seniors, with these efforts being measured as to the effectiveness of their own commitment before moving to the next activity
 - The Leadership Challenge® methodology anchored the framework as a strategic leadership and change initiative
 - Monthly themes repurposed the content of The Leadership Challenge® into application opportunities
- b. The Company Manager believed in collaboration and did not want to impose *any* initiative that was not going to gain support of the people. The Design phase incorporated a high-level overview to the 12 senior people who would indeed make or break this initiative. We needed to know there was a level of 'anxious excitement' in the team.
 - i. The meeting provided a 'big picture' of what we had in mind, with not too many nitty-gritty details. We needed to know this was a business initiative

they saw the need for, and were willing to commit to before we received corporate approval.

- ii. Over the next two weeks, the Company Manager then sat with each individual (12 people) to hear what they had understood and appreciated, and to also gauge their level of commitment.

The conclusion was that we should proceed even though varying levels of understanding existed. It was noted that none opposed the initiative.

06 Head Office Approval

A profound lesson was experienced at this milestone.

No matter how important the finer details are to you, these will not hold the same level of significance to people far removed, such as those in the Head Office. This 'provision of too much information' slowed us down a little, yet approximately 6 weeks later we hit the go button with full support from Head Office for the 24-month business initiative ahead of us (Internal WC).

07 The Approach

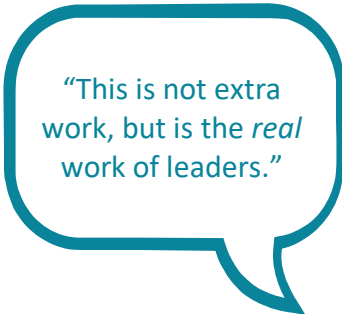
We had the seniors on board, yet needed to create excitement across the whole organization. We wanted them to be watching the seniors kick this off and hold them accountable for at least the first 10 – 12 months, before the next level became directly involved.

- a. Much planning went into this.

In conjunction with one other business consultant with vast Olympics and WC Experience, the meeting, aptly structured and set by the HR Director, showcased the reality of the WC's challenges and what that meant for the company. This lead us into 'the why' a learning and change initiative was required.

We translated the framework's intention into simple language, 'decorated' it with a YouTube video that demonstrated the desired behavioral change and introduced one new terminology that is continuing to be with us throughout the whole 24 months. It was a great hit, and has continued to energize ongoing meetings to this day. We know that because we continue to measure.

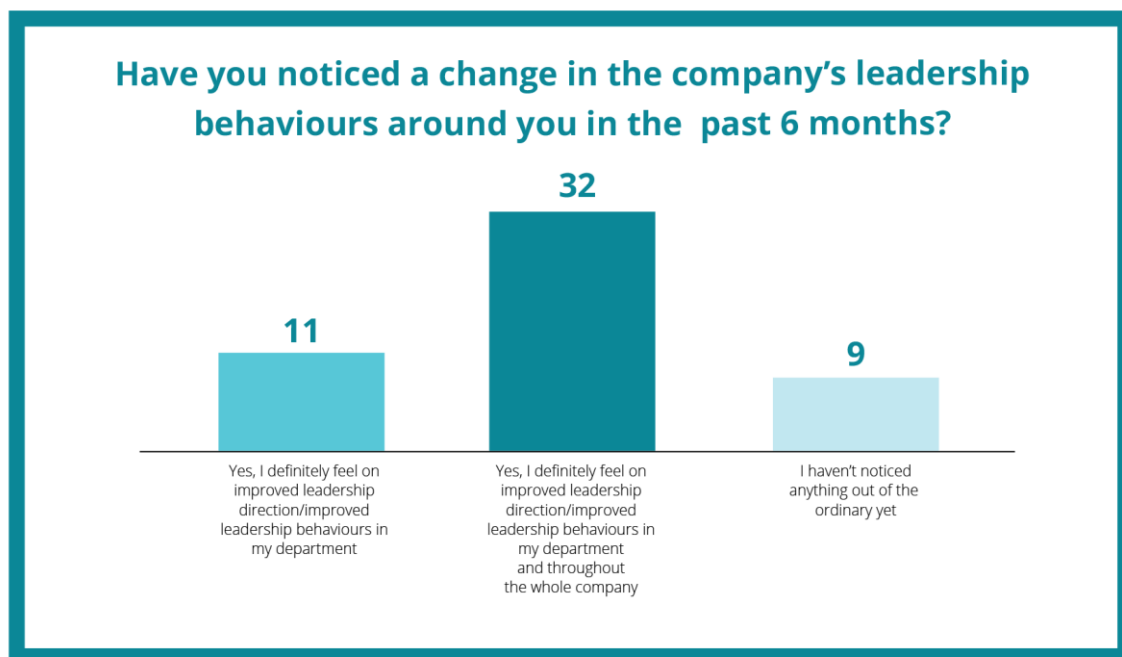
- b. The seniors attended an online version of The Leadership Challenge® Workshop. They were actively engaged from a traditional attendee standpoint, yet we could sense they were not ready for what was to come.



“This is not extra work, but is the *real* work of leaders.”

The combination of their background experiences told us they expected to attend, participate and return to work with no real change. When the first application exercise was shared thereafter, silent dismay was ‘heard’ believing there was to be no extra work as a result of this initiative. One of the greatest aha’s we’ve seen was after the first 2 months of activities, one evolving Department Head declared that this is *not extra work*, but is our *real work (to be leaders)* that we have not been performing in everyday work. That soon became the understanding for all.

- c. One of our activities is taking workshop content into workplace application exercises to include their team members in support of both the Knowledge and Application Arms as the monthly activity with the next level of the organization. We have gently increased the creativity of each activity, ensuring each is nurturing all four arms of the initiative simultaneously, to dramatically increase the rate of change on the ground. This integrated approach is having profound impact on results. One such example would be when they were to move to the next step on both their Departmental Visions and the Organizational Vision through the creation of a story of hope which was then to be applied in-house. Not only did this exercise have them showing evidence of the 3 uses for visions that our future needs, but also working with those from other Departments while feeling vulnerable. Big movement happened with that specific monthly activity, in the Knowledge, Application and Team arms.
- d. As a result of the original The Leadership Challenge® Workshop for the 12 senior members, each individual had created an action plan for their own professional development, nominating which behaviors they as individuals want to increase the frequency of. They each spent 2 hours receiving a one on one detailed debrief of their LPI report, and decided the implications of that on their Action Plan. Once finalized, the Action Plan was then populated with further ideas of action, and every 6 months (Month 6, 12 and 18) each will have a progress meeting with me, as the Certified Master of The Leadership Challenge®. The range of approaches to this has been quite broad, with the most basic being a simple spreadsheet, through to another who has almost created a complete dashboard.
- e. We have followed the framework for 10 months now, and the most recent cross-organization meeting asked the question to all of the company’s people who are not in the senior level: Have you noticed a change in the company’s leadership behaviors around you in the past 6 months?



We had 70 people in the meeting who were eligible to vote (out of a possible 80), with a 53% result showing positive change is being felt, compared to 11% who indicated no change was felt, leaving 36% who were silent during the vote. We aim to increase this again in the next meeting. We saw the results as extremely positive because previously the word 'leadership' would not even have been recognized by most. Unfortunately, history had the organization living and working in the land of siloed management.

08 Milestones

Many milestones have been reached within the first 10 months of this program, with the major ones listed below:

- i) Immediately after The Leadership Challenge® Workshop, some of the senior members volunteered to assist the company staff meeting by being guest presenters

This was a huge step in the right direction, as it was never considered their job to do anything beyond their own department's tasks.

- ii) The realization that leadership *IS* our job, our responsibility, and a commitment they are not taking lightly

When providing the overview of this initiative, we made a dedicated statement that they would not inherit additional work through this initiative. When the activities started appearing for them to complete with their people, many silently stated that this was in conflict with what we had promised. As always, there was one early adopter who realized that the activities were not extra work, but represented the work of a leader that they had never carried out previously. This early adopter started voicing that opinion to his colleagues when the internal negative talk started, and thanks to him, the entire 12 participants have accepted that our activities *are indeed* their leadership responsibility.

- iii) Increased willingness to utilize the Head of HR as a business partner and confidante with the monthly work for this initiative. Greater confidence in the role of HR as a strategic enabler is evident.

HR had previously been a transactional functionality. We found a great opportunity to reposition the role of HR into a strategic role due to:

- a. The capability and interest of the current HR leader
- b. The choices of behaviors she wanted to increase the frequency of
- c. Success with the initiative's framework was dependent upon having a strong and strategic confidante for the 11 other participants.

Not only is she holding that role well, but communicating to myself and the Company Manager trends that she is seeing which she feels signal future development opportunity and 'moments' or people who deserve recognition (things that we would not be privy to otherwise, but should not go unrecognized.)

- iv) The ordinarily-mundane and commonly-endorsed practice of 'let's have a coffee' (virtual or f2f) has been introduced, something most global business people take for granted, yet non-existent for these people who previously existed firmly in silos.

This has become a huge milestone that people are now actively seeking out, be it with people they don't get on with or those they do. Huge aha's are being shared and learned, and at least two business ideas are bubbling away as a result of discussions.

- v) A major turning point was the self-admission that the Senior team were not adopting the behaviors for themselves that they were asking their own people to adopt! This was a broadly consistent message which concerned the majority of them, which lead to the emergence and addition of the TEAM arm vertical being added to our framework.

Problem /Challenge	Applying Leadership to our own departments, But not to our own teamwork (Senior Level)				
	Not adopting 'leadership' (The lessons of MTW and ISV so far) to ourselves				
AREA OF FOCUS	1. Lack of Shared Vision	2. Discomfort with Change	3. Lack of Openness	4. Separation	5. Independent Business Structure
BEHAVIOR THAT REDUCES THE CHANCE OF...	Build a shared language	Adopt a practice of stepping out	Share / respect failures and challenges Shared priorities	Drive connection (physical space & personal bonding)	Priorities other than money (eg. Values)
	Interaction	Commonality	Shared Priorities	Interaction	Commonality

The pursuant activities opened up 5 major barriers that now are integrated into all other monthly activity.

- vi) While the vision we had at the top of the original Strategy Map during the planning phase was 'accurate', we discovered that there was no understanding of what that meant in relation to 'how we were to behave' and therefore no emotional buy-in existed.

We had to involve them in re-creating a vision 2.0, which has had huge impact. The 'sharedness' of shared visions has emerged wholeheartedly. Thereafter, when it came time to fine tuning what had been collaboratively created, the input around the table was like nothing seen before. Indeed, the outgoing Company Manager labelled that meeting as a turning point where feedback and input extended the vision, and was free-flowing.

- vii) Breakthrough – two completely siloed Departments have opened into a major collaboration

We are seeing immense change in the relationship between two Department Heads, who now have introduced updated systems to increase 'interdependency' across one customer's portfolio. They are now considering the 'how to' of sharing team members which will have huge consequence for customer efficiency and internal costing. We hope to use this example as inspiration for other departments.

An unexpected turn of events occurred 10 months into the project, where the Company Manager was promoted into a regional role in Asia, and a new incoming Company Manager was assigned. The willingness of the incoming Company Manager to both:

- attend an open iteration of The Leadership Challenge® Workshop and
- invest time on this project with the outgoing company manager and 'business en motion' to contextualize this project has been commendable. Additionally, this has added credibility to his settling in process, in the eyes of senior team members.

"We are making progress, the people are developing, results are improving and we're having fun too!"

The final words from the departing Company Manager to 'business en motion' are captured, a message I'm proud to share here: *The key is that we are making progress, the people are developing and we are seeing the results in our business – and the people are excited about it. So often people are excited but no real value comes, but this is my parting gift – real value in our progress while we are all having fun doing it.*

Short Term measurements exist

- Involvement and completion of monthly activities
- The adoption of new practices by both the senior and 2nd layers of the organization
- The short-term measurements we integrate into the full organization's meetings

Long Term measurements exist

- Sustainability of the change post 2022
- Numbers of innovations / changes
- Increased revenues from the top 10 customers
- A proactive, productive and innovative culture
- The chosen behaviors from their development action plans should show increased frequency
- A visible increase in the co-operation and cohesion of the senior team
- Leadership behaviors to be embedded in to at least 3 systems across the organization

Research from the work behind The Leadership Challenge® provides a range of frequencies for each practice that will facilitate high-medium-low engagement levels.

With this company's Group LPI® (Leadership Practices Inventory) rating the practice **Inspire a Shared Vision (ISV)** as the consistently lowest set of behaviors in frequency, our work with vision has been vitally important. We aim to have the shift in ranking for ISV to be the most significant, as according to our report, it will bring the greatest gain, and hence ROI. Additionally, **Enable Others To Act (EOA)** should have movement resulting in a more even distribution of this practice's behaviors, showing that we are no longer 'enabling competency, confidence and collaboration for enabling sake', but rather to get the people equipped and aligned to take us towards where we need to be, to become the most progressive logistics and shipping supplier for the upcoming WC event and beyond.

With this comes opportunity:

- Decisions now are being filtered by our Departmental and Organization Visions
- The operation is being fueled by a common language and set of priorities
- All people are measuring our progress with one shared tool
- A shift from 'me' to 'we' for purposeful change
- The senior team is discovering 'fun' in change.

This connects back to the problem, and is now fueling innovation, teamwork and partnership through the organization.

We hope this business success story has inspired you to move into the realm of Organization Development Initiatives. Much has been written of their power, and many studies show great results, as we know we will see 16 months from now. We note our expectations are already exceeded with the results of our first 10 months.

Beyond the obvious, we also note the following salient points you may consider in further planning.

- Each change *activity* needs to stretch further than the former one. Don't allow your own fears to limit the extent of the activities your people complete. There's been many occasions where our monthly meeting forum, which sets the expectation for that month's activity, is in complete silence; people are processing '*are we really going to do that*'? Yet there's not been one stretch activity that has not been successfully completed and capitalized on.

- Recognize each person will process the change differently. By all means encourage the stragglers, yet never overwhelm them with demands.
- The organization will never achieve change until the very last person has adopted new behaviors. Rather than *only* focusing on those behaviors that are adopted, also keep one eye on the cost of non-supported behavior on ultimate outcomes.
- Maximize change and leadership opportunities by allowing local and regional environments and events to ‘spotlight’ need for change.

Success Story **2020 - 2021**

Providing Professional Services
and Solutions to your Business



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie Nicol is an Australian business executive, operating 'business en motion' across the Middle East and into Australasia. Her penchant for Organization Development initiatives grew stronger with every disconnection she experienced in the corporate world. With structured, process-driven initiatives addressing this issue, she was able to reconnect leaders to themselves, the Board, the team members, customers and the external environment. Debbie believes in the power of systems, while moving organizations and leaders ahead, through change.

business en motion

'business en motion' moves businesses and leaders ahead through change. It serves leadership, change and strategy needs of organizations across the Arabian Gulf region and into Australasia through the services of training, coaching and solutions. Organization Development (OD) Initiatives support the latter, and represent true excellence in the portfolio of services.

'It is so easy to work with 'business en motion'. They have a knack to lead us to change with very little to worry about.'

All OD initiatives bring together opportunity for the USP's of 'business en motion' to shine. We craft customized models that 'fit' the organization's uniqueness. We use current capability with 'stretch' as the mantra. We always start with the end in mind and we achieve real and lasting results – because we build ourselves out, gradually transferring ownership as we gently weave in-house capability into the core of the initiative.

CONTACT

'business en motion' will always stay in touch with its client base. We love to hear from you too.

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