



The 2005 New Zealand Post Management Excellence Awards

Category 1: The New Zealand Post People Management Award

Our Organisation

Auckland City is the largest local authority in New Zealand and is one of seven territorial authorities within the Auckland region. We are an organisation of diverse businesses and offer employment opportunities to a wide range of people. Auckland City has an FTE of 1775, 28 business groups and around 400 people managers and key leaders. Our organisation carries out a wide variety of functions and businesses from a zoo to art galleries, traffic and roading services to community recreation facilities.

Our project

Leadership Development Framework: To develop leadership capabilities so that we have strong leadership – we have clear direction and we are motivated to achieve.

Submitted by: Human Resources Group Auckland City

1. The need for and expected benefits of the project and how it furthers the council’s vision and strategic direction

The community vision is for Auckland to be the First City of the Pacific – Taonenui Tuauahi o te Moana nui-a-kiwa. This is supported by the council’s strategic direction to ‘build stronger communities’ and ‘move Auckland forward so that it becomes a vibrant and leading edge city with heart and soul’. Auckland City recognises the importance and contribution that strong leadership makes in delivering organisational objectives and, therefore, service to the community. We need people in our organisation who can provide ‘excellent leadership and sustainable community services to improve the quality of life for the people in the city of Auckland’.

Two successive climate surveys (2002-2003) and an organisation wide learning needs analysis (2001) identified that we needed stronger leadership to develop our people so that Auckland City could work better with other agencies on long-term complex projects and more collaboratively internally.

Accordingly, since 2003 one of our organisational development objectives been to “develop leadership capabilities”. This supports the strategic outcome that “we have strong leadership – we have clear direction and we are motivated to achieve”.

Our employees value professional development. The increasing complexity of business and the higher demands on our leaders required Auckland City to find a mechanism that would integrate managers’ individual leadership development and their development of others.

We intend that a by-product of our initiative will be increased retention of our people and potential recruits will view Auckland City as a learning organisation. For the organisation, a leadership development initiative that enabled measurement of leadership trends at individual and organisation level provided a clear benefit.

The concept – Our leadership development framework

The leadership development framework was designed to enhance the leadership capability within Auckland City using a process which will imbed desired behaviours and concepts in the organisation. The framework aims to build a strong collective confidence in our ability as leaders to manage and develop others. Our approach supports the organisation’s new Performance Development Process (PDP), which aims to improve both individual and organisational performance and focuses heavily on developing our people.

The leadership framework was developed by February 2003. The focus is on leaders’ self-development and their coaching and development of others. While the framework has been populated over the past two years, the initial focus was the two main components outlined below. 2004 was crucial for pulling these components together.

Leadership workshop (Component one)	Understanding leadership style to assist in self-development (Re-test after 18 months)	
Coaching (Component two)	Exploring the fundamentals of coaching. The programme has three components:	
	Directors and group managers	One on one executive coaching
	Divisional managers	Coaching Others workshop, plus one-on-one coaching
	Team leaders	Coaching Others workshop

Component 1: Leadership workshops (two days)

The aim of this workshop is for individuals to gain awareness and understanding of their leadership style and identify areas for development. More specifically, the workshop is designed to help our people managers and key leaders to:

- understand the impact their behaviour has on others
- have a greater understanding of leadership styles that increase leadership effectiveness
- improve their ability to work collaboratively
- gain a fresh perspective on potential strengths and areas for development.
- create an action plan for development.

Auckland City has chosen a measurement tool developed by Human Synergetics Ltd called Life Styles Inventory (LSI). We chose this tool for four specific reasons:

- a) Some groups within Auckland City had used this tool previously and had found it comprehensive and effective for addressing leadership behaviour.

- b) The LSI tool has a 360 component for gaining feedback from others so that individuals are able to compare their own perception of their leadership style with that of others.
- c) The 360 component enables Auckland City to gain an understanding of both the organisation's style as well as those of each business group.
- d) There is the ability to re-test to measure changes in style over time. This gives both the individual and the organisation an understanding of the progress made in leadership development.

After the workshop, participants share their LSI profile with their manager and put development needs into their individual development plan (part of the Auckland City performance development process) so they can monitor and record their progress.

Component 2: Coaching Others Programme

The Coaching Others programme followed the success of an earlier executive coaching initiative. The executive programme had focused on individual coaching around self, business and team. However, the Coaching Others programme focuses on understanding the use of coaching in developing other people and upon extending the coaching approach through the organisation. The Coaching Others programme is designed for people managers and differs for managers and team leaders.

Managers

Part A Coaching Others workshop (one and half days)

This workshop expands upon the LSI element from the Leadership Workshop and explores the principles of coaching. Participants are invited on to the programme once they have completed the Leadership workshop. Prior to this workshop, participants complete a questionnaire about themselves and their previous coaching experience. They then have a discussion with the coach around the questionnaire. The workshop is one and a half days long with a week gap between the first half-day and the full day. This allows participants to prepare for the second part of the workshop.

The following areas are covered during the workshop:

- understanding of self (building on Leadership workshop outcomes)
- how coaching relates to the organisation
- principles of coaching
- toolbox of coaching skills for different approaches
- developing a coaching plan for individuals

Part B One-on-one coaching (over three to four months)

Participants take part in 4 x 2-hour coaching sessions over a four-month period, meeting their coach every four to six weeks. This one-on-one coaching aims to put into practice the learning from the coaching workshop. Participants cover coaching techniques, application of live examples from their workplace and have the opportunity to practice. In between coaching sessions, individuals initiate the learning from the session.

Team leaders

Team leaders participate in a Coaching Others workshop similar to that of divisional managers. The key difference is that this workshop is longer (two full days) and there is additional focus on case studies and practical exercises.

Our ethos is that the one-on-one is component is cascaded through the organisation i.e. managers provide this coaching to team leaders. Therefore, team leaders do not engage in one-on-one coaching sessions as a formal part of the programme they learn this skill from their managers. This means that, over time, we develop our own leaders so they can become effective coaches in their own work environment.

2. Effective project management techniques

Project management has been critical to the delivery of an integrated and aligned approach to leadership development across our organisation. Below we have outlined some particular areas of project management that had significant impact on planning and delivering the programmes.

Project definition

Once the scope of the project had been defined, the Human Resources (HR) group researched different development options that could form a comprehensive programme. This included researching best practice, initiatives other successful Australasian organisations had engaged in, and assessing different leadership tools and suppliers. We also had to take into account all current initiatives, such as our executive coaching programme.

Project Planning

Two critical areas of consideration when planning the programmes were people resources for developing and delivering the programmes and financial resources.

The transparency of financial process is critical to publicly funded organisations. The financial transfers to fund the Leadership workshops and Coaching Others programme could only be done during the annual business planning and quarterly forecasting processes. One consequence was that programme rollouts were contingent on the timing of these.

We felt it was essential to provide comprehensive support to our people for both programmes and had tight budget constraints around how we could do that. We decided to deliver the Leadership workshop in house and to use an external provider for the Coaching Others programme.

Several members of the HR team (who had an interest and prior experience in development) obtained LSI accreditation with Human Synergetics Ltd so they could facilitate Leadership workshops. We also up skilled the HR adviser team in how to coach others around leadership styles. This meant we could gain best training dollar value, ensure the programme was tailored to the needs of the organisation and provide internal and ongoing support to participants and business groups.

Due to the specialist nature of the Coaching Others programme and limited internal resource it was essential to have an experienced external provider. We selected the provider through a tender process and they worked in partnership with Auckland City to design a programme that would meet our needs. Auckland City and the provider work closely on the programmes' continuous improvement. This ensures that they have timely knowledge of any organisation changes that may impact on the Coaching Others programme.

Project Implementation

Both the Leadership workshop and Coaching Others programme were extensively piloted, evaluated and redesigned using evaluation results before being implemented into the wider organisation. The consultation and communication built into the project plan was central to the success of the initiative. See below for more detail on these aspects.

3. A participatory approach to communicating with and getting 'buy-in' from stakeholders associated with the project

Consultation

Auckland City values consultation and it is central to our culture. This means that, in order to introduce initiatives such as the leadership development framework, internal consultation is crucial for success. The key to our success in implementing the Leadership workshops and Coaching Others programme was gaining input each step of the way in order to create buy-in from the target audience. The leadership development framework was developed in consultation with the organisation (via learning needs analysis and climate survey results). Discussions with the executive were crucial.

For each component, a pilot group was identified. The pilot group was a mix of people from throughout Auckland City. They contributed to the design and development of the programme and provided extensive feedback along the way. After each pilot, feedback was collected via several methods i.e., surveys, one-on-one interviews and focus groups. HR wrote a report with recommendations for implementation and gave it to participants for comment before asking the executive team to endorse the programme.

Communication

Due to the complexity of Auckland City and its various different business groups, it was initially very difficult for HR to identify target participants at the individual level. This meant working closely with senior managers within groups to identify the individuals. This also had an impact on our communication of the programmes. We found the best way to communicate was through the businesses themselves rather than centrally. HR advisers have worked with managers in the business to provide a briefing to participants prior to their participation in Leadership workshops. As the programme has evolved and more people have taken part, communication has been easier and become integrated into business as usual.

For the Coaching Others programme we went a step further to held a programme launch for the key group of future participants. We believe that this initiative added further value in terms of gaining support for the programme from participants. We developed a presentation, which included film clips of participants involved in the pilot. In effect, the pilot participants sold the programme to their peers.

All eligible managers (they must have completed the Leadership workshop) receive an invitation prepared by HR and signed by their general manager and group manager. The invitation provides information about the initiative and a list of programme dates from which to choose. This ensures that workshops have a mix of participants from different areas of the organisation to maximise knowledge sharing and learning. It also allows individuals to select a date that suits them. Our chief executive opens each Coaching Others programme.

4. Innovation and originality in the specific award category

'Leadership development' is not a new concept. However, we believe our point of difference is that we have a fully integrated leadership programme that focuses on development in the widest sense. Our reasons for this are:

- We involved pilot participants in the evaluation and tailoring of each component to ensure it met organisation needs and established credibility.
- The learning needs from both components are included in individual's development plans (part of the organisation's Performance Development Process) so development can be tracked and supported by one's manager.
- Leadership development progress can be measured at the individual and organisational level by re-testing using the LSI tool.
- This is not a one off initiative. Auckland City is committed to ongoing leadership development that will enhance our culture and support our business needs over time.

Commitment to our people and their development is central to Auckland City's culture. We have focused on developing self-awareness and self-development in our leaders encouraged them to focus on developing others through the coaching approach. This enables our organisation to both build and sustain leadership capability by encouraging sharing of organisational and professional knowledge.

5. Successful results both in financial and non-financial terms

To gain a measure of return on investment, in behavioural terms, we are evaluating the individual components extensively and quantifying initial business impact. Table 1 below describes the measures.

Table 1: Levels of evaluation and corresponding measurement method for each programme

Level	Measured
Reaction/ satisfaction/ planned action	Leadership workshop and coaching others workshop: questionnaire end of workshop
- Learning - Application	Leadership workshop: electronic survey 3-6 months after workshop LSI individual re-test 18 months later Coaching Others: interview with L&D manager / electronic survey 1-3 months after one-on-one sessions complete
Business impact	Leadership workshop and Coaching Others LSI organisation profile, organisation climate survey

Many organisations do not evaluate development interventions beyond level one (i.e., reaction/ satisfaction or planned action of the participant after the learning event). However, we have spent significant time evaluating the programme to ensure we continuously improve it and ensure we are getting the desired outcome - contribution to the development of leadership capability.

Leadership workshop – After workshop

To date **384** people leaders and key influencers have taken part in the Leadership workshop. On completion of each workshop, participants are asked to complete a feedback form which asks a number of questions relating to the objectives of the workshop, the facilitator and other environment factors. Some key results from this evaluation over the past 18 months are:

- 96% of participants agreed that the workshop helped them look at how they lead and work with others
- 95% of participants agreed they were confident they could implement their action plan

(NB our target response rate was 85%)

Leadership workshop - 3-6 Months later

Three to six months after completing the workshop participants are sent an electronic evaluation to complete. The aim here is to gain an understanding of learning and transfer to the workplace. Some key results from this evaluation over the past 18 months are:

- 77% had made changes in the way they lead and work with others based on feedback received in the workshop (increased over 18 months – first measure was 65% latest was 82%)
- 68% had made progress on their action plan (increased over 18 months – first measure was 45% latest was 82%)
- 84% indicated they would like to re-test their LSI 360^o profile in 18 months to identify progress made

Coaching Others programme – post workshop

To date **150** have begun or completed participation in the Coaching Others programme. On completion of each workshop, participants are asked to fill in a feedback form. This form asks a number of questions relating to the objectives of the workshop, the facilitator and other environment factors. Some key results from this evaluation over the past 18 months are:

- 99% agreed the workshop helped them to look at and improve how they coach others
- 98% agreed the workshop helped identify areas to become a competent coach
- 95% agreed that overall this workshop will help improve role as a leader in the organisation

Coaching Others - Post one-on-one sessions

Structured interviews with participants are completed two to three months after they completed the one-on-one sessions. This evaluation is in its early days as, due to the length of the coaching programme, many participants are in the middle of the one-one-one coaching. To date, major findings have been that:

- All participants interviewed were engaged in coaching team members and reported that coaching had well received by team members.
- All participants found the one-on-one sessions to be valuable and an effective way to reinforce the coaching approach
- All participants said they would recommend the programme to other managers in the organisation

Business impact of leadership development initiatives

The most difficult level of evaluation for learning and development initiatives is measuring business impact or, in this case, return on investment in behavioural terms. We had identified measures when we first began developing the leadership development initiatives. While each programme has measures around participation, satisfaction, and application of learning, our high level measures are around an organisation view of leadership behaviours. One key measure is tracked through our organisation climate survey where we ask all employees about their confidence in the leadership of this organisation. Confidence in leadership increased 6.1% from 2004 to 2005. While we still want to increase employee confidence in leadership, this feedback is strong indication that the Leadership workshop and Coaching Others programme are having a positive impact on leadership behaviour. We think this is an excellent result.

We are also able to monitor change in leadership behaviour through our LSI organisation profile and re-test data. It is early days to measure this accurately as we have only begun to re-test those participants from late 2003 (23 people). However, we have found in our consolidated results an **increase** in constructive leadership behaviours. In particular the 'humanistic encouraging' style has increased. This style encompasses the coaching approach to development of others. Again, we are very pleased with this result as we can see change occurring.

Financial Returns

Financial return on investment is always a challenge with people development initiatives, particularly where the initiatives focus on change in behaviour. Over time, we believe that we will be able to link efforts made in leadership development to employee retention.

From the start, we were faced with the challenges of funding the components internally to maximise training dollar spend, keeping our approach tailored and providing this opportunity to a large number and wide range of leaders. This has meant working carefully through the issues of how to deliver the programmes and identifying to whom we should be delivering them. Our consultative approach helped establish the credibility of the components. That, in turn, helped us gain agreement from the groups to contribute to a central leadership development fund. That central fund has enabled us to rationalise spend on leadership development in the organisation.

6. That the project was good sensible and the right thing to do

For two years, the organisation's climate survey results had strongly indicated that there was a lack of confidence in leadership. Additionally, an extensive organisation wide learning needs analysis confirmed the need for leadership

development across the organisation. The organisation initially struggled to get to grips with how to go about addressing this.

The increasing complexity of doing business, the greater expectations of the community that we service, and the higher level of interaction we have with external agencies all presented the need for our organisation to be more adaptive in the way we work with each other and our stakeholders. This required leadership across the organisation that will meet strategic challenges and also support and develop our people at all levels of the organisation.

It was with these complex issues in mind that we developed the leadership development framework and the two components discussed in this application. Given the extent of what we are doing, the organisation has made considerable progress in a relatively short time thanks to the commitment and participation of our people, senior management and programme providers. We know that leadership development across the organisation will take time and we are committed to continue on this journey to provide 'excellent leadership and sustainable community services to improve the quality of life for the people in the city of Auckland'. Only then can we move toward being a 'vibrant and leading edge city with heart and soul'.