

Leadership Academy



The organisation

L&Q is one of the UK's largest housing associations owning or managing over 90,000 homes in London and other regions of England, making it the largest landlord in the capital and one of the largest residential property developers. With an annual turnover of £720 million in 2016 and with over 2,500 direct employees. They work with more than 90 local authorities in London and the South East of England.

The business issues

In 2008, the new Executive Group became aware of the need to be more responsive towards its key stakeholders and the challenge to build more of a partnership mentality within the organisation. In order to meet the complex challenges of the future and to deliver on the 5 year strategy, it was recognised that there would need to be a major transition in the way in which everyone in the organisation worked.

The culture change entailed a move away from the traditional "command and control" culture to one that embraced shared leadership and collaborative working and learning. Employee engagement was a critical part of the process of determining the leadership culture that would be required to take L&Q forward.

The need to develop leadership at all levels in the organisation and to encourage collaborative learning and working was seen as a core element in meeting L&Q's strategic vision.

This vision underpinned the creation of the L&Q Leadership Academy.

The approach

The ultimate goal of the L&Q Leadership Academy is to shift the culture to one of **shared leadership** and **collaborative learning** in order to be able to deliver more effectively against the strategic plan and mission.

In order to assess impact, three main indicators are used:

- **Behavioural** – to what extent are people working in a fashion that embraces shared leadership and collaborative learning.
- **Process** – what impact is the Academy having on organisational processes?
- **Business** – how does adoption of shared leadership and collaborative learning principles help L&Q deliver the 5 year strategy?

Throughout the design process, the Cranfield team worked as a collaborative learning group themselves to ensure the programme design drew from their collective capability and creativity.

The programme

The Leadership Academy was launched at The Oval in November 2008. Approximately 300 people managers attended the event in which David Montague, Chief Executive, set out the key strategic priorities for L&Q and the role that the Leadership Academy would play in developing leaders who could embed and sustain a change in the culture to one of shared leadership and collaborative learning.

Delivery of the programme was approached in the following way:

- 3 days workshop at Cranfield followed by 3 facilitated collaborative learning groups (CLG's) project days held in L&Q premises that are spread over 6 months to embed 'learning culture'
- CLG projects address key elements of the 5 year strategy
- A phased approach to the roll-out of the programme, with approximately 4 – 5 cohorts of 25 managers a year.

The overall aims of the L&Q Leadership Academy are stated in a Participant Briefing Document. An extract from which follows:

“By taking part in the L&Q Leadership Academy, participants will be able to develop their own skills in learning and develop their capacity to lead the learning of others both in formal collaborative learning groups and in their day to day leadership roles. In other words this is a leadership development programme with a focus on **leading learning and change.**”

Making a difference

The Leadership Academy is an ongoing intervention with incremental impact in each of the main areas listed above; behavioural, process and business.

Examples of some key business measurement indicators are below:

- Resident satisfaction objective – results increased by 3.5%
- Responsible growth objective – financial strength results increased by 7%
- Investing in our people objective – secured position 39 in 'The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies 2010'.
- As a result of CLG's, 12 business proposals for process improvements have been submitted to the Executive Group.

Why Cranfield?

The response from Cranfield provided the best fit in terms of both design content and process to achieve the desired impact of the L&D initiative.

L&Q's collaboration with Cranfield has been key to the success of this learning intervention.

“The Leadership Academy for me began as a journey into the unknown, what to expect was blurred. But as I embarked on this journey, I soon realised that I have discovered a new way of working that will inform the rest of my relationships with colleagues, peers and managers.”

Maurice Njoku, Leadership Academy delegate