



## People Make The Difference whitepaper

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### **Building leaders from the ground up: Leadership skills training isn't just for those who have reached the top**

Where is your organisation investing in leadership skills training? For many businesses, that investment of both time and money is being directed to people who have already reached the top. But is that strategy going to give your organisation the best return? I'd argue that leadership skills training is something that should be offered to high performing employees at all levels of your organisation.

#### **Leadership exists at all levels, in all types of organisations**

Leadership writer John C. Maxwell says it well: ["Leadership is not about titles, position, or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another."](#) Leadership isn't just about those at the top telling those beneath them what to do. It's not about one person – *the* boss – who leads anymore, if indeed that's ever what leadership was.

In our fast paced culture, leadership and decision making has become increasingly distributed. This is true for all types of organisations - schools, government departments, and companies of all sizes. Leadership isn't just about being the big boss, but about guiding teams, mentoring other employees, modelling behaviour, and empowering people to make smart and timely decisions.

## **Why leadership skills training matters**

What are some of the skills needed by leaders? At People Make The Difference, we think some of the core skills leaders need are giving and receiving feedback, developing self-awareness, and the ability to learn from experience. Do these sound like skills that are only needed by people at the top of your organisation? No, didn't think so.

Leadership skills training is an important element in your organisation's *succession planning*. Even if you think no-one at the top of your organisation is leaving, change can happen at any time. People get sick, accidents happen, or they just wake up one day and decide that it's time for a change. By investing in leadership training for people at all levels – especially those identified as having strong potential for future opportunities – you can avoid your organisation ending up in limbo.

Investing in skills development also plays a key role in *employee retention*. Providing leadership training gives employees the message that they are valued, their contributions are appreciated, and that there will be opportunities in the future for them to grow and advance their career. Even if these employees don't go on to become leaders in the conventional sense of the word, the skills they learn will still boost productivity and create a feeling of good will towards the organisation.

## **Set the foundations for success**

It's true that it takes time and money to invest in future leaders – and that sometimes, employees can go off and put their new-found leadership skills to use in other organisations. That's a real risk.

But a far greater risk we believe is waiting until a leader is in place to invest in skills development. In this scenario, leaders can flounder, trying to learn the skills that they should have been taught before they got appointed. This takes away time and attention from other important business management tasks and can create a culture of uncertainty within the organisation.

To help organisations provide leadership skills training to people at all levels, People Make The Difference can provide workshop-style sessions. These can be tailored to suit your organisation's needs. We also offer one-on-one coaching programs. If you'd like to find out more about our training and coaching services, visit [www.peoplesmakethedifference.com.au](http://www.peoplesmakethedifference.com.au) or call +61 412 333 415.