



Best Leadership Development Program

Management Foundations Case Study - Overview

What is Management Foundations?

Merck's Management Foundations (MF) is a four-month-long experiential management development program designed to:

- Develop and strengthen skills, knowledge, and behaviors for new people Managers to enhance staff engagement during a time of significant organizational change.
- Ensure that new people Managers are equipped to drive a consistent global leadership and management approach.
- Establish a framework through which to acclimate new people Managers to Merck's culture, leadership behaviors, and performance management practices.

The program, developed in partnership with Performance Impact*, consists of various blended learning modalities, including web modules, virtual classrooms, instructor-led training, and Manager-guided activities.



How Was the Study Conducted?

In 2012, Merck partnered with Brinkerhof and Dressler, two professors from the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin, respectively, to conduct an objective study of the MF program and its value to the organization.

Brinkerhof and Dressler employed the Success Case Evaluation Method, which is a two-step process consisting of an online survey sent to participants to report behavior change and in-depth behavioral interviews to understand how the learnings are reflected in behavior changes. The goal of the study was to answer the following questions:

- How many participants gained any valuable new learning or insights from the learning?
- How many participants applied their learning in their work?
- How, when, and where was the learning applied?
- When the learning was applied, what, if any, positive results were achieved?
- What external factors hindered or helped participants?

* Performance Impact is The Center for Leadership Studies' internal custom development arm

What Did the Study Find?

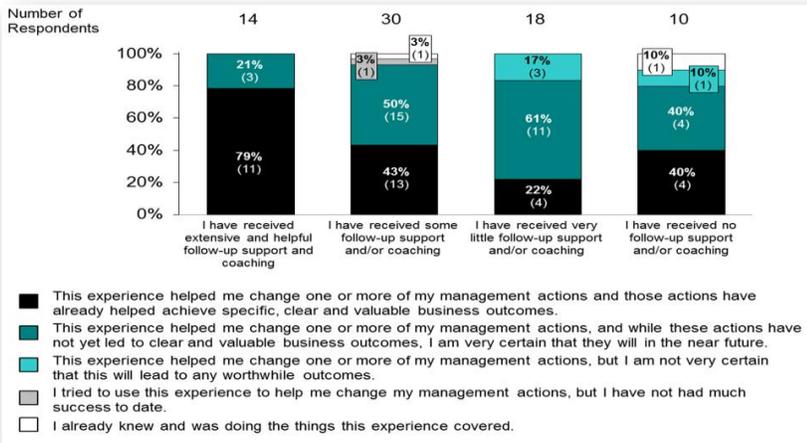
Ninety percent of the respondents (n=72) stated that the MF program helped change one or more managerial actions and those actions have led to or will lead to the achievement of specific, clear, and valuable business outcomes (bars A and B in the diagram below).

The impact of the MF training was most evident in three areas of managerial actions:

- Coaching and performance feedback
- Strategies for the compensation / differentiation / calibration process
- Leading through change



The study identified the following as examples of direct impacts of the MF program:



- More frequent and productive performance discussions
- Style-based coaching and mentoring
- Accurate performance calibration
- Increased staff commitment / engagement
- Improved internal cross-functional team interactions
- Effective recognition of top talent

Overall, Brinkerhof and Dressler found that the MF program led to team members growing and performing to their highest levels of capability. They found sufficient evidence to prove that the MF experience is producing the desired Manager behaviors and intended results. This organizational value will only increase over time as these behaviors continue to be developed, fully justifying the time and resource investment required for sustained success.