



IMPACT STORY

Korn Ferry

ExperiencePoint®

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The Importance of Leadership Training to Close the Strategy-Execution Gap for Organizational Change and Growth

About

Korn Ferry is the preeminent global people and organizational advisory firm with nearly 7,000 colleagues, sharing a single purpose: helping leaders, organizations, and societies succeed by releasing the full power and potential of people. Korn Ferry delivers services through three divisions – Executive Search, Hay Group, and Futurestep – giving them an unrivalled ability to address the entire talent continuum. Their insight is supported by data on more than 20 million professionals in 114 countries. Visit kornferry.com for more information.

Challenge

In a world where even small shifts in the market, technology or business strategy can make today's skills obsolete tomorrow, leadership development programs have never been more critical to an organization's success. But leading in this kind of environment is an increasingly complex proposition. You not only have to be able to deal with unprecedented challenges and rapid change, you also have to be prepared to lead your team successfully through the turbulence to execute on new strategies, projects and plans.

In fact, **closing the strategy-execution gap is one of the biggest obstacles many growth-oriented organizations face**. It takes strong leaders, who can thrive in the midst of uncertainty and complexity, to keep the organization moving forward, even when the path ahead isn't immediately clear.

With its breadth of expertise across a wide range of industries, geographies, topics and functions, Korn Ferry is looked to as one of the preeminent authorities on leadership, offering tailored programs that integrate with an organization's and its participants' real work. The result is more than accelerated learning and development; it's accelerated business strategy and execution.

Creating those effective programs is the job of the company's leadership development consultants, who are continually looking for new ways to help clients grow strong leaders and solve their business challenges. One of those consultants is senior partner Keith Halperin.

The founder and architect of the worldwide training practice area at PDI Ninth House, which was acquired by Korn Ferry in 2013, Keith has been building strategic leadership development learning systems for organizations, and coaching individual leaders and leadership teams for more than 30 years. He remains a leader in the field, because he's constantly looking for ways to enhance the leadership development solutions he creates. So while serving on the board of ISA, an association of executives in the learning and performance industry, he was keen to keep an eye out for new ideas that might benefit his clients.

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Keith Halperin
Senior Partner

"At ISA's annual business retreat, board members are teamed up with new members," he says. "One year I was teamed up with Greg [Warman, co-founder of ExperiencePoint], and I was just enthralled with what they were doing with ExperienceChange™. I immediately thought it would be a valuable addition to what we were doing."

That teaming up turned out to be the beginning of a long-term partnership.

Solution

Soon after cementing the partnership with ExperiencePoint in 2009, Keith became certified in ExperienceChange™ and began discussing it with clients. For those working on strategy, change

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is always part of the equation, so he felt it would be a valuable learning tool for helping leaders successfully execute on strategy.

“Although companies have different models of change, the 7-step model that is introduced in the simulation is robust, it’s sensible, and it’s easy for people to see and put their arms around,” he says, adding that the broad applicability is a big selling point as well.

“I tell participants: You can use this for huge, massive organizational changes, but you can also use the same 7 steps in an abbreviated, less complex way when it’s a small change that you need to lead.”

He developed a three-day program that is targeted to senior leaders—primarily senior directors and managers—with the first day focused on strategy development. Day two is all about executing on the strategy, and that’s where ExperienceChange™ comes into the picture.

“Day two is focused on what the participant’s role is in formulating and translating strategy as a senior leader, and then how they need to be able to execute on that strategy with their team and the rest of the organization,” Keith explains. “ExperienceChange™ is embedded into that, giving participants insights and experience in how to lead organizational change. Then we link it to the changes that they’re going to need to lead to ensure the strategy they developed on day one executes successfully.”

The third day focuses on how to lead and develop people so that they can achieve the strategy.

After delivering the program with the first client and getting traction within that organization, Keith knew that he wanted to make ExperienceChange™ part of the larger leadership training interventions he offered.

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He adds that the entertainment aspect of the simulation is just as important because it engages people in the concepts and steps. Participants have fun with the competition and get excited when they’re winning points and hitting percentages.

He was quickly able to add ExperienceChange™ into other clients’ solutions where the fit was right in terms of what the company wanted to accomplish, and the program began to build momentum. Eventually, a global company headquartered in Europe expressed interest. With their plans including a rollout to hundreds of senior managers from all over the world, Keith realized he needed some backup.

“I was the only one certified at that time to deliver ExperienceChange™,” he says.

Since he would need to train people to facilitate the other components of the leadership program in order to run it in Europe, Latin America and Asia, it only made sense for Keith to become master certified in ExperienceChange™ so that he could easily incorporate it into his broader train-the-trainer program. He completed master certification, and to date, he has certified 9 people within Korn Ferry to deliver the full three-day program, including ExperienceChange™, in sessions around the world.

With ExperienceChange™ off and running, Keith soon learned about the next simulation offering from ExperiencePoint, the innovation program, ExperienceInnovation™, which guides participants through IDEO’s *design thinking* approach to innovation and problem solving. Although Korn Ferry was already using another innovation program, he quickly realized ExperienceInnovation™ would be a better option.

Beginning in 2014, Korn Ferry began implementing ExperienceInnovation as part of a program to “front-end” a team project, using it as a kick-off that allows participants to do real work on an actual one-month or three-month project.

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And although he is currently only using the simulation to kick off an immediate project, he adds, “I’m looking forward to finding opportunities to use the second half of ExperienceInnovation™, where you have the participants apply the concepts to a work problem. I think that’s a great follow on.”

Results

Between ExperienceChange™ and ExperienceInnovation™, so far Korn Ferry has delivered over 180 sessions to over 2,600 senior leaders in 25 countries across the globe (and counting). With both programs, Keith says that the value lies in the practical, easy-to-use yet robust principles that people can quickly understand and act on, combined with a fun, entertaining learning experience. “It’s the best of both worlds,” he sums up.

With ExperienceChange™, he has found that, in all cases, the program has resonated with participants. Additionally, in application sessions after the simulation, participants are always able to find opportunities to apply the concepts back on the job.

“I have talked to a couple of organizations that are using it widely, and they’ve told us how helpful the model is,” he says. “When they’ve come upon a change that they have to implement, they’ve gone back and thought through the model before implementing the change. It resonates, people see value and they’ve identified opportunities where they can use it on the job.”

What’s more, Keith is using ExperienceChange™ in many different countries throughout the world and has consistently found that it’s been very well received, with very little pushback or issues with acceptance.

“The model seems to resonate globally. People react to it well around the world, and there’s just as much—if not more—energy, enthusiasm and fun when they’re doing the implementation phase as we see when we run the program in North America,” he says. “The entertainment value translates across cultures.”

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Because they are using ExperienceInnovation™ at the beginning of an actual project, it’s been even easier to see immediate application of the tools. Participants go from the ExperienceInnovation experience to working on an action learning project where they have to employ some of the skills from the simulation.

“I have seen people start to talk the language that’s in ExperienceInnovation™,” Keith notes. “They do the empathy work, they clearly go out and interview and look for things in different ways, **they brainstorm in groups, and they come back and put together some prototyping and storyboarding of their solution. You can really see that the skills learned are being used on the job.**”

Keith has just as many positive things to say about the relationship with ExperiencePoint.

“ExperiencePoint is just a delightful group to work with,” he says. “They’re customer responsive and flexible in problem solving if problems should occur. Even when I had an issue come up when I was outside of North America, they were so responsive. I always feel very supported throughout the process.”

It’s clear that the partnership that began at a business retreat more than six years ago has been a successful one, both for the partners and for the clients that are strengthening their leadership capabilities to forge ahead in an uncertain world.

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About ExperienceInnovation™

ExperienceInnovation™ is an energizing workshop that challenges teams to flex their creativity to solve a realistic and complex design challenge. In so doing, they engage with the terms, techniques, and thought patterns of successful innovators.

ExperienceInnovation™ was created in collaboration with IDEO, an award-winning global design firm that takes a human-centered design approach to helping organizations in the public and private sectors innovate and grow.

About ExperienceChange™

ExperienceChange™ is an expert-guided experience that teaches a best-practice model for managing change. Backed by over 20 years of change research and industry insights, the experience enables leaders and managers to practice leading change and engage with the behaviors, tools and skills sets that make change happen.

ExperienceChange™ is the trusted tool for Fortune 500's and the world's leading business schools. It's the cornerstone of change initiatives that transform, leadership programs that enable, and learning events that inspire.

About ExperiencePoint

At ExperiencePoint, we're passionate about how people work together to get stuff done. We're an award winning training company that develops business simulations for leadership development in the areas of change and innovation. We're known for realistic simulation experiences that challenge people to roll up their sleeves and learn the Whats, Whys and Hows of leading change and innovation.