

Developing future-focused leaders to drive smart growth



Client need

A \$6 billion federal contracting company in the U.S. needed to build a future-focused leadership bench capable of executing its strategy to deliver on growth and extend their position of industry leadership. While the company has a successful history, they recognized an opportunity to invest in critical capabilities that would ensure their continued success in a rapidly changing environment. The CEO and the leadership team were looking for an innovative approach to accelerate their leaders' ability to lead and influence others, while simultaneously strengthen their capabilities to make data-driven decisions in critical moments.

The development journey they took with BTS began by grounding these high potential leaders in the capabilities and behaviors that create executive presence and influence as measured by the Bates ExPI™ leadership model, while connecting it to the business-critical themes of strategic thinking, entrepreneurial thinking, and innovation. The Leader Lab integrated experience enabled their leaders to develop and practice strategy execution, while flexing key elements of executive presence. As the leaders worked through the journey together, they were able to practice collective leadership based on collaboration and trust, a key goal for the enterprise.



Solution

The development journey was spread over two dynamic and fast-paced development sessions. The audience was 50+ high-potential and cross-functional leaders, who manage some of the company's largest, multi-million-dollar client relationships.

Building the capabilities of executive presence

Participants started by going through the ExPI™ assessment, combined with virtual coaching calls and debriefs, to understand their strengths and opportunities to lead effectively. They then attended a 3-day classroom-based program. The first two days focused on strategy, entrepreneurship, and innovation, taught by a local university's business program. On day three, BTS facilitators highlighted behavioral elements of leadership presence and influence. Post-program the leaders took the practical, tangible learnings back to practice in the business and build their skills.

Leader Lab: tapping the power of business acumen

In the next phase of the learning journey, participants attended a live, classroom-based **Leader Lab**. This customized experience included a three-day business simulation. Together in teams, leaders assumed different positions from their day-to-day roles, grappling with tradeoffs similar to those they would encounter in real life and practicing making decisions in a safe learning environment. This experience was designed to inspire leaders to adopt enterprise-wide thinking and strengthen their decision-making capabilities. The Leader Lab experience included:

- Two rounds of simulation dedicated to executing their team's strategy by running their 'business' in a dynamic market where unexpected moments force the team to make quick decisions.
- Observation-based assessment of individuals on each team, based on behaviors core to executive presence and communication
- Introduction to an intuitive yet powerful approach for applying data-driven decision making
- Practice delivering persuasive presentations in small groups with peer and expert feedback

To reinforce behavioral change resulting from the sessions, participating executives committed to simple actions that would facilitate accountability and help leaders carry learnings back to their teams. Facilitators continuously provided feedback, encouraging leaders to collaborate across the enterprise and invest more time in getting to know one another.



Results

The collaborative spirit generated in the session was highly visible and contagious – just the kind of mindset and energy the company needed to move its culture forward to achieve new growth. Both sessions were ranked highly by participants, garnering a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 82 and 93, respectively.

Following these development efforts, the company's high potential leaders advanced their ability to work together more collaboratively, and problem solve at a peer level, reducing the need to escalate issues and increasing the speed of execution. This is reducing risk and increasing work efficiency. It has also improved their ability to lead and manage their multi-million dollar-client portfolios as they apply their new leadership skills with their teams and their client partners, reinforcing the longer-term sustainability of that revenue.

