

Cognizant's Learning Measurement Process Provides In-Depth Insight

Cognizant

Best Advance in Learning Measurement

November 2018



Company Background



Cognizant

Headquarters	Teaneck, New Jersey
Year Founded	1994
Revenue	\$14.81 billion (FY17)
Employees	260,000
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	25,000-plus projects in 40-plus countries, 25-plus regional sales offices and 75-plus global delivery/operations centers in over 16 countries across four continents.
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	950-plus active clients across healthcare, life sciences, insurance, banking, financial services, manufacturing, logistics, retail, travel, hospitality, information, media, entertainment, technology, communications, energy and utilities.
Industry	IT, ITES and consulting
Stock Symbol	NASDAQ: CTSH
Website	www.cognizant.com

Business Conditions and Business Needs

“Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.” — **Albert Einstein**

Measuring the “Return on Investment” of training, specifically leadership skills, has been a topic of contention for many years. There is little overlap between what can be

measured and what is required to be measured when it comes to leadership development programs.

Various organizations have been using the Kirkpatrick L1 to L4 framework to measure the success of a training program. In large organizations (100,000-plus employees), this measurement is typically driven by automated mechanisms. This results in poor response rates (on an average 30%), as well as poor quality of responses that are superficial and lack depth. These responses do not provide useful information regarding the job or business impact of specific programs.

The business teams needed to understand the job/business impact of the leadership development programs to subscribe/sponsor suitably. “What were the changes observed after the session?”, “How do they benefit the team?” and “How does it improve the team’s performance?”, etc. were of interests to the business sponsors. There was a noticeable gap and a need to extract the data on learning transfer on the job and its benefits.

The global leadership development (GLD) team at Cognizant needed a methodology/framework to measure the “impact” of the program that will help the GLD measure its performance against the team’s vision. Though the Kirkpatrick model includes L4 — “the results” of a training program — the exclusive focus and rigor to measure such results were missing. As a result, Cognizant’s GLD team designed and implemented a framework to measure the impact of leadership development programs at individual, team and client levels.

The impact measures were expected to give the organization an idea of both “direction” (the areas where change/impact is evident, i.e., coaching, collaboration, etc.) and “density” (the cascading of such changes/impact, i.e., team, business unit, etc.) of impact. These not only will provide as indicators of changes in the organization, but also as evidence for the business sponsors to invest further in the program. These also will help as feedback to the design team to make changes to the program. Thus, “learning impact measurement” was an extension to the typical “learning measurement” that was administered.

To Summarize the Need

- Inadequate current feedback capture mechanism: Though the average feedback scores were high (greater than 4.2/5), there was poor response rate and depth in qualitative feedback.
- Business sponsors needed to see the ROI and impact on the job to decide whether to invest in development programs.
- A need to track the GLD team's performance against its vision/initiatives.

Overview

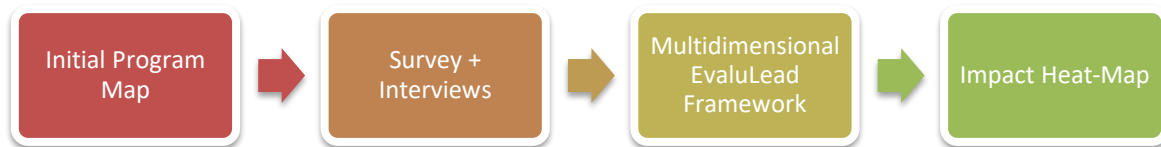
“The client awarded a six-month project worth \$150,000 and I give 100% credit to the emerging leaders program (EL) for helping me learn how to collaborate effectively,” said a senior manager from Bengaluru. Emerging Leaders is a mid-managerial development program. It is in a blended learning format spread over six months. The primary focus is on people, collaborative and client-focused leadership. This is not a lone story, however, there are many other such impact stories that have helped GLD recognize the business outcome of programs.”

There are many such anecdotes shared by participants that indicate learning transfer on the job/impact. The beauty of this output lies in intelligently weaving the EvaluLEAD framework to the Cognizant GLD context.

EvaluLEAD Framework (Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation and United States Agency for International Development [USAID]) is a methodology designed to measure impact of leadership development programs. EvaluLEAD framework categorizes the nature of impact as episodic, developmental and/or transformative. This framework seemed to systematically capture these layered aspects in a multidimensional matrix.

The high-level design includes, as a first step, an initial program map that derives possible areas of impact based on program objectives. This is followed by a survey administered to all graduates of a program, three to nine months from the time of graduation. The graduates who share their consent are interviewed along the EvaluLEAD parameters. The interview notes are compiled to create an “impact heat map” specific to each program.

Figure 1: Measuring Learning Impact – The High Level Design



Source: Cognizant

Traditionally, GLD has been using L1, L2 and L3 to measure the program success and L4 was measured using surveys and interviews. However, the EvaluLEAD framework has refined the GLD's process and quality of interviews, created better alignment with specific programs and helped GLD create an impact heat map that gives an overview of the direction and density of the impact.

Through this new methodology/process of measuring impact, GLD was able to:

- Overcome the inadequacies of the current feedback mechanism.
- Present the heat map to the business sponsors who make an informed decision on investing in certain leadership development programs.
- Measure GLD's own internal team's performance against the vision statements.

Example: One of the vision statements of GLD is to "improve people leadership" (one of the seven leadership capabilities) in the organization. The heat map of programs like Acumen, CLAS2.0 and EL reflect the impact on people leadership (developmental at team level). Acumen is a transformative program and facilitates self-discovery, CLAS2.0 is a program to build coaching and feedback skills. Given that these programs cater to the mid- and senior-leadership layers of the pyramid, the cascading impact is aligned with GLD team's vision.

In early 2016, the GLD started investing in conducting impact studies using the traditional L4 metrics. Later in 2017, the team researched, conducted a pilot using the EvaluLEAD framework, documented results and socialized the EvaluLEAD framework across the global GLD team.

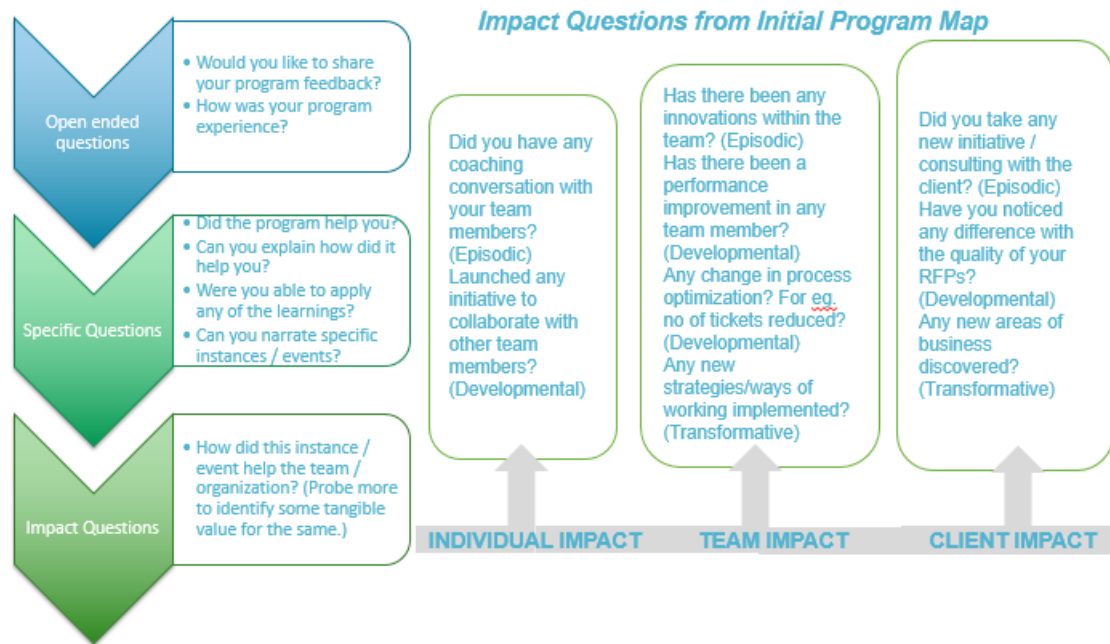
Design of the Program

The GLD team researched on methods to leverage and extend the learning impact measurement beyond the existing robotic ways that lacked both empathy and depth that a human can offer. While automated surveys do have their own place, they lack the ability to capture the detailed impact a program has made. The audience GLD team services are mid-/senior leaders and includes executive leadership. A C-suite experience is essential for this audience even if it is about collecting feedback.

The research pointed to the EvaluLEAD framework that aligned to GLD team's objectives. The EvaluLEAD framework reinforced that impact is often multi-level and cascading in nature. GLD measured impact at an individual level, team level or at the client level. EvaluLEAD framework further helped in categorizing the nature of impact as episodic, developmental and/or transformative. The framework seemed to systematically capture these layered aspects in a multi-dimensional matrix. The team analyzed various "learning impact measurement" models and finally decided on extending the EvaluLEAD framework.

The first step is administering a survey to all graduates of a specific program three to nine months from the time of completion of the program. The sample survey outcome is analyzed and interviews are scheduled for those participants who have shared their consent for the same. These interviews are conducted one-on-one between the GLD member and the participant. Questions start from being open-ended and gradually move to specific questions and, finally, probing questions to unearth the behavioral changes and the impact of the same. The responses are quantified as "money saved," "time saved," brief estimate of "improved productivity," "revenue earned" for the organization, etc. The EvaluLEAD framework further takes these interview questions in a loop across all the different levels of impact: at individual, team and client. The nature of questions for each dimension is documented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Nature of Questions for Emerging Leaders in Each Dimension

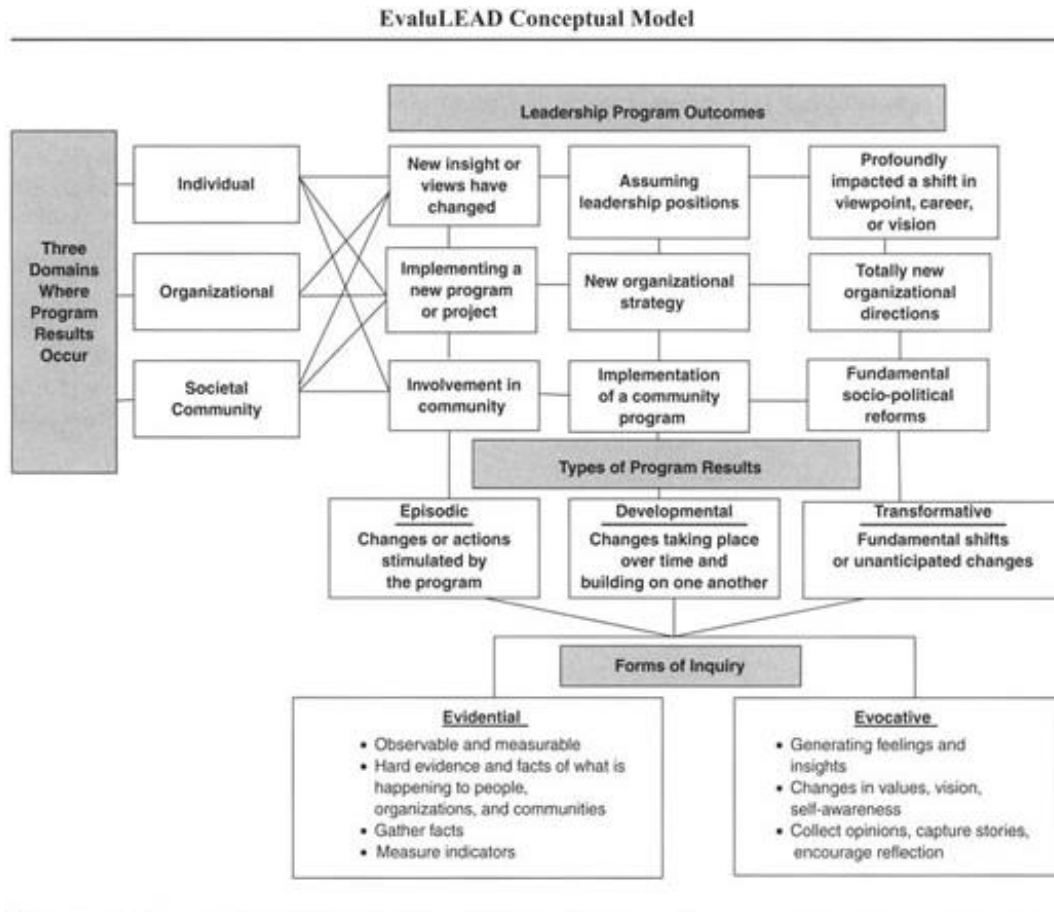


Source: Cognizant

About EvaluLEAD Framework

What exactly is this EvaluLEAD framework? In existence since 2001, the EvaluLEAD framework in the year 2004 was tested across 17 various leadership development programs. This study was done in association with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and USAID. The EvaluLEAD conceptual model is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: EvaluLEAD — Conceptual Model



Source: Cognizant

The working of the EvaluLEAD framework begins with the “EvaluLEAD — Initial Program Map.”

EvaluLEAD — Initial Program Map

This is the first step in conducting the “impact measurement study.” Based on the organizational objectives and program objectives, an initial program map is created. This map helps in identifying all possible areas where impact is expected. Below is an initial program map for the Emerging Leaders program (Figure 4).

Figure 4 EvaluleAD — Initial Program Map (for Emerging Leaders Program)

	EPISODIC	DEVELOPMENTAL	TRANSFORMATIVE
CLIENT IMPACT	Instances when client was able to gain from the initiative consulting. Client acknowledgements (CFL).	Initiatives to ease client communication (CFL). Time taken for RFPs (CFL).	New areas of businesses discovered (CFL). Strategic partnerships made (CFL).
TEAM IMPACT	Productive innovations within the team (PL). Number of structured coaching sessions with the team members (PL).	Number of team members/mentees promoted (PL). Change facilitated within the team (PL). New businesses earned (CFL). Process optimization (EnL). Quality optimization — number of tickets, etc. (EnL).	New strategies suggested/implemented (EnL).
INDIVIDUAL IMPACT	Championed an initiative that brought cost savings (EnL). Increased instances of “Mentoring” conversations with team members (PL). Active contribution toward strategic initiatives (EnL). Presence on social networking on thought leadership. Greater instances of feeling confident, positive and optimistic (PL).	Initiatives to collaborate with other teams (CL). Being open to organization wide change (CL).	A new vision suggested/implemented based on organization-wide collaboration (CL).

Ref: CFL — Client-focused leadership; EnL — Entrepreneurial leadership; PL — People leadership; CL — Collaborative leadership.

Source: Cognizant

The GLD team customized the initial program map for each program based on the objectives. But the icing on the cake was the “heat map” of outcomes created by the team for each program. This is a significant innovation by the GLD team. To the best of the team’s knowledge, this has not been deployed elsewhere.

EvaluleAD Customizations for Cognizant (GLD Programs)

The EvaluleAD framework contains three levels of impact: individual impact, organizational impact and societal impact. EvaluleAD framework was designed for an NGO (USAID) and, hence, the societal level learning impact was relevant. In the case of for-profit organizations like Cognizant, the corporate social responsibility teams may benefit from the societal level. It was not relevant to the GLD scope of offerings. Impact in the clients' organizations being the end objective, the third level was replaced with "client impact." A key component of team level impact was missing in the framework. The strength of Cognizant is in its high-performing teams, and hence the "team impact" was included. The structure was thus customized to the following three levels: individual impact, team impact and client impact.

Customizing/Redesigning EvaluleAD

EvaluleAD was used by various organizations to understand the multilevel impact. The outcome looked like the Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Traditional EvaluLEAD Outcome

PROJECT: PUBLIC ALLIES CORE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM					
0	SOCIETAL/COMMUNITY Episodic (S1)	0	SOCIETAL/COMMUNITY Developmental (S2)	0	SOCIETAL/COMMUNITY Transformative (S3)
* (More) People engage in activities that improve their community.		*Nonprofit and community leaders see young people as assets in creating community and social change. *Communities experience an increase in civic engagement from diverse populations.		*Communities experience more just and equitable solutions to social problems.	
<i>Gather Facts</i>		<i>Collect Opinions</i>		<i>Track Markers</i>	
<i>Collect Opinions</i>		<i>Compile Stories</i>		<i>Measure Indicators</i>	
<i>Encourage Reflection</i>		<i>Encourage Reflection</i>		<i>Encourage Reflection</i>	
3	ORGANIZATIONAL Episodic (O1)	3	ORGANIZATIONAL Developmental (O2)	0	ORGANIZATIONAL Transformative (O3)
*Partner Organizations receive capacity building benefits from the Allies' service in the ten-month program.		*Partner Organizations have a sustained or on-going increase in capacity beyond the 10-month program. *Nonprofits create systems to develop diverse young leadership.		*Nonprofit Organizations are inclusive, collaborative, asset-based, continuously learn and improve their work, and have integrity.	
<i>Gather Facts</i>		<i>Collect Opinions</i>		<i>Track Markers</i>	
<i>Collect Opinions</i>		<i>Compile Stories</i>		<i>Measure Indicators</i>	
<i>Encourage Reflection</i>		<i>Encourage Reflection</i>		<i>Encourage Reflection</i>	
3	INDIVIDUAL Episodic (I1)	3	INDIVIDUAL Developmental (I2)	3	INDIVIDUAL Transformative (I3)
*Allies engage with their communities in ways they haven't before.		*Allies exhibit attitudes and behaviors that define PA's leadership. *Alumni become leaders in influential roles with control of resources.		*Alumni become effective change makers in public life and are committed to creating community and social change. *Allies embrace values-based leadership and believe it can work toward creating a more just and equitable society.	
<i>Gather Facts</i>		<i>Collect Opinions</i>		<i>Track Markers</i>	
<i>Collect Opinions</i>		<i>Compile Stories</i>		<i>Measure Indicators</i>	
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Source: EvaluLEAD: An Open Systems Perspective on Evaluating Leadership Development — Grove, Kibel and Haas

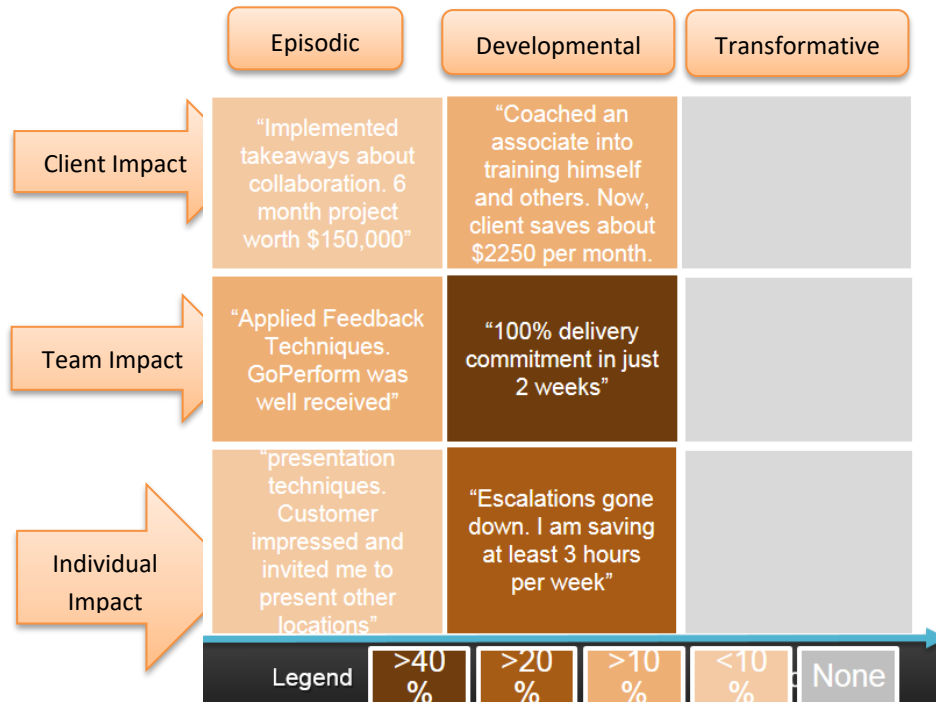
Source: Cognizant 2018

Heat Map

Using EvaluLEAD “as is” provides the “direction” or areas of impact, however, it is the heat map uniquely designed by Cognizant’s GLD team that reflects that “density” or quantum of impact. This visual representation gives an overview of both direction and density of the impact for a specific program.

The innovative re-design of the EvaluLEAD model that pictorially represents the “density” of impact is presented below (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Impact Outcome Designed by GLD using EvaluLEAD Framework



Source: Cognizant

The above EvaluLEAD Map is that of the program CLAS 2.0 taken from a sample size of 16% of the total participants who attended the program.

As mentioned in the above graphical representation, the legend (key) suggests that more than 40% of the total impact stories/experiences collected are under "developmental/team" segment. About 20% to 40% of the impact stories collected fall in the "developmental/individual" segment. Roughly 10% to 20% of the impact stories fall in the "episodic/team" and the "development/team" segment. And less than 10% of the total experiences collected belong to "episodic/individual" and "episodic/client" segment.

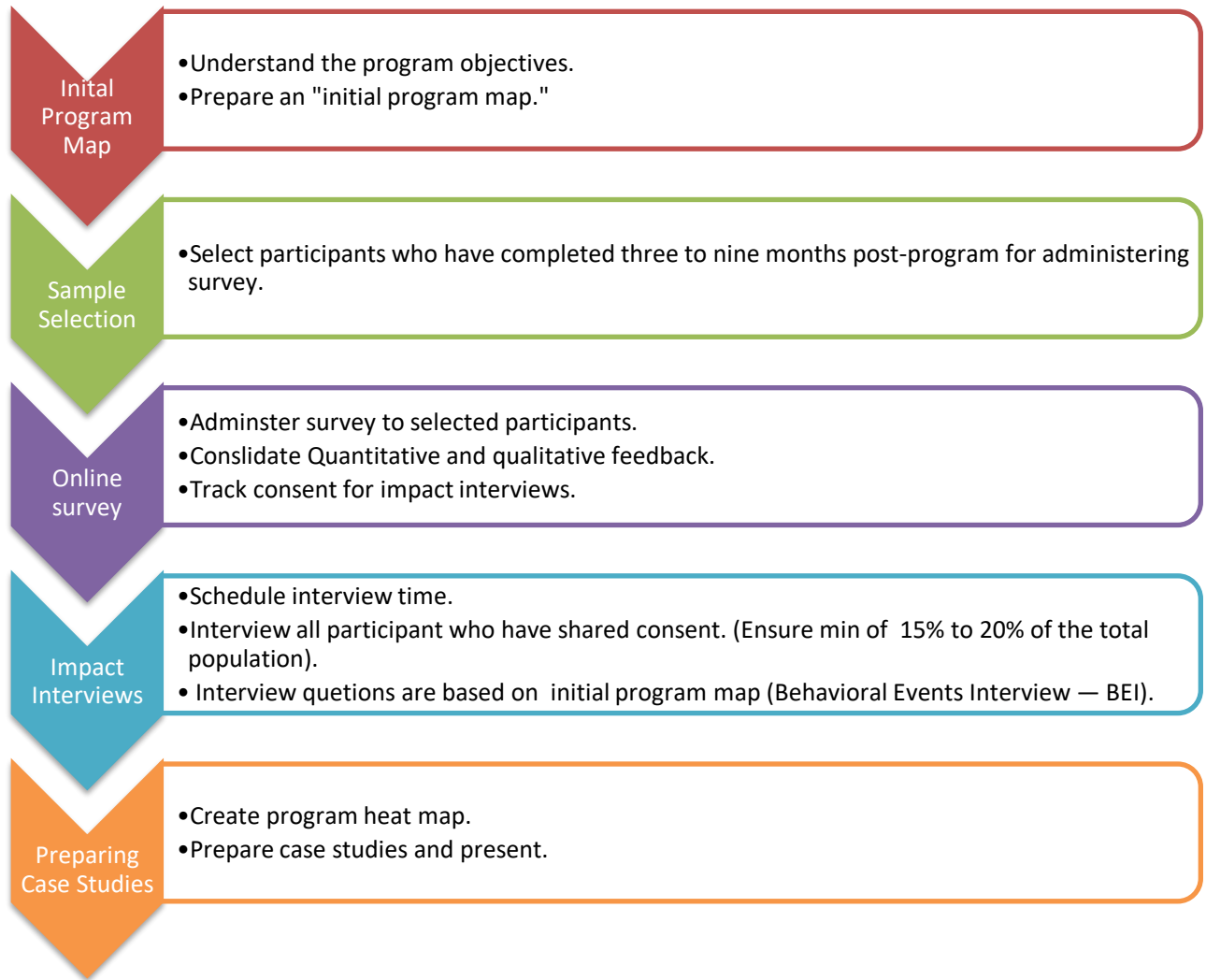
The benefits of this design and innovation are detailed below in the "Measurable Benefits" section.

Delivery of the Program

This methodology was designed for participants who have undergone a developmental intervention for behavioral/leadership skills. Such programs have impact at various levels.

EvaluLEAD framework facilitated the process of identifying and consolidating feedback across these levels to create a measurement matrix.

Figure 7: Impact Measurement Implementation Process



Source: Cognizant

GLD has been documenting impact study data from 2015 following a similar implementation process, however, in the year 2017 the team leveraged the EvaluLEAD framework that has added two key components to the implementation: one being the initial program map that guides survey and interview questions; and the second being the "heat maps." For a cohort of 25 to 30 associates, it would take about two to three weeks for one trained person to conduct the impact study. In the last 12 months, a three-

member team has collected about 75 stories across three different programs. These team members spent about 15% to 20% of their time on this. They had other responsibilities apart from conducting impact studies.

Change Management Efforts

Challenge

The biggest challenge was to reach out to sizable numbers. Unlike previously used models for impact measurement, this model involves one-on-one interaction with extensive detailed probing. Since the program participants were senior management within the organization, getting their time is always a challenge. Such a dependency on the availability of their time often delayed the “impact measurement” process.

Mitigation

This challenge was mitigated by training few resources within the team. This “impact measurement” training helped GLD reach out to more number of participants which increases the representation and reliability of the impact studies.

Challenge

Adapting the interview techniques to the preferred interaction style of the leader. This was a skill-based challenge.

Mitigation

Sensitizing team members to understand the interaction style of the leader through observation, empathy, flexing behavior and complementing his/her style during the interview.

Challenge

Another challenge the team faced was acceptance of this model. Since it was new and not tested or deployed in other IT organizations, acceptance within the team and organization was a big challenge.

Mitigation

To mitigate this challenge, the team piloted this methodology in a closed group. The results were then presented to the larger audience where the benefits and value were

articulated. The organization soon found value and appreciated the ease of implementation of this model.

Measurable Benefits

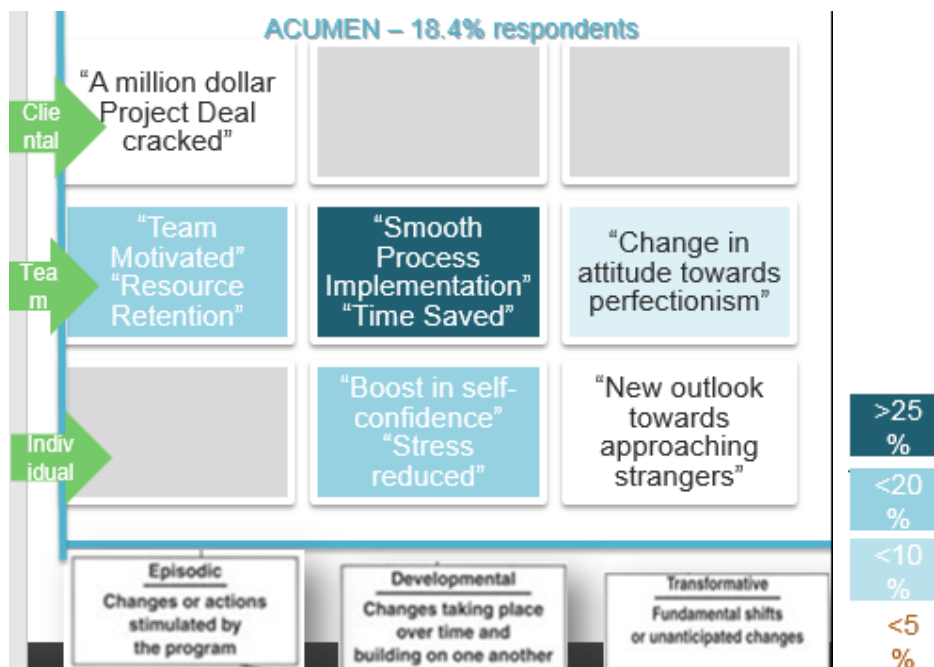
Benefits of this Measurement Methodology

The 3x3 matrix of EvaluLEAD brings out a multi-dimensional impact. This helps further in probing with right questions. While this framework is used to procure impactful stories/experiences, the team at GLD extended this framework to create a consolidated “impact measurement.”

The study conducted on the Acumen program can give one a detailed insight about the benefits of this program. Out of the total 78 Acumen participants, 49 had nine months from the time of their program completion. GLD reached out to nine of them which, is a sample population of 18.4%. Together, the team collected 14 impactful experiences.

The collected impact experiences then were categorized in each of the impact sections of the EvaluLEAD framework and what came out was an insightful heat map. The below figure represents the impact heat map for the Acumen program.

Figure 8: Acumen Impact Heat Map.



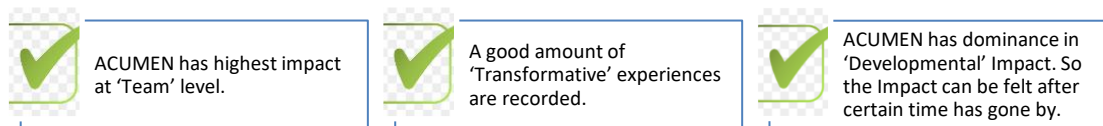
Source: Cognizant

From the representation above, it is clear that more than 25% of the impact stories were under the “developmental/team” segment. About 20% to 25% of the experiences collected belong to the “developmental/individual” and “episodic/team” segment. About 10% to 20% of the experiences belong to the “transformative/team” segment. And about 5% to 10% of the experiences belong to the “transformative/individual” and “episodic/client” segment.

Observations from the Above Heat Map

- Acumen has most impact in the “developmental/team” segment (more than 25% of the impact experiences were from this area).
- This has a cascading impact on the “developmental/individual” level.

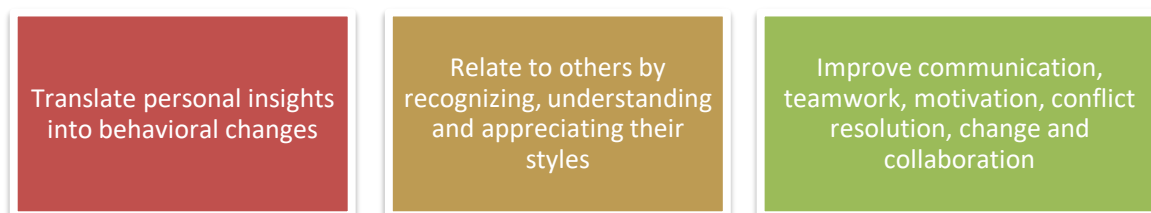
Figure 9: Inferences from the Acumen Heat Map



Source: Cognizant

Now what were the objectives Acumen was supposed to achieve?

Figure 10: Acumen Program Objectives.



Source: Cognizant

The heat map of Acumen further emphasizes that the program objectives are indeed aligned to the impact.

And one of the L4 studies suggest that the takeaways from the Acumen program actually helped Cognizant win a million-dollar account. When the total annual cost of the program is weighed over this one program experience, one can get a hint of what the real ROI of the program could be.

The highlight of this style of impact-measurement is the comparison one can draw over multiple programs.

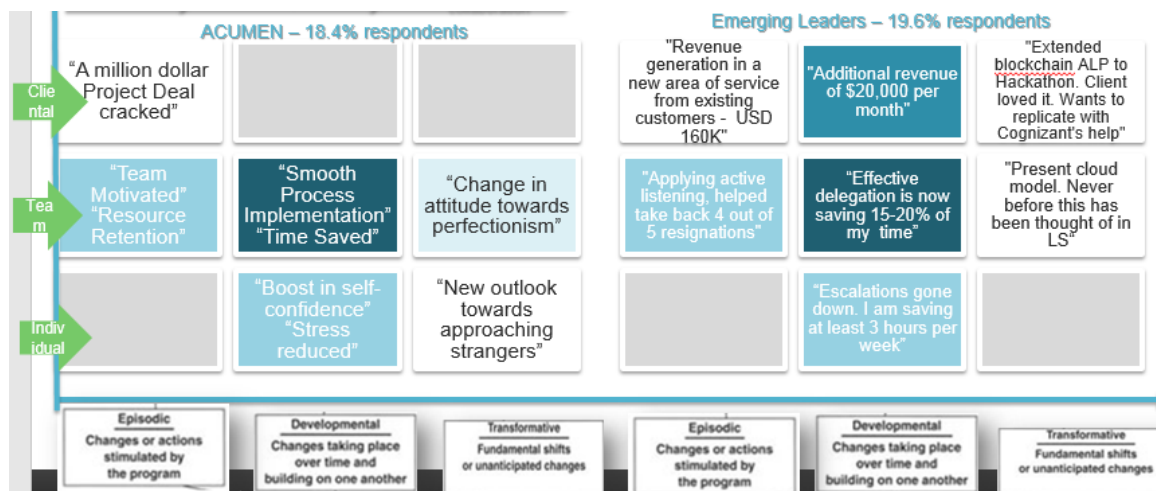
For example:

A direct comparison of the below two heat maps can help one draw following inferences:

Emerging Leaders shows higher impact at the “client/developmental” dimension while Acumen has higher impact at “individual/self-transformative” dimension.

These resonate with the overall program objectives as well (where Emerging Leaders’ primary objective is enhancing client engagement and Acumen’s main objective is to bring forth transformative experiences).

Figure 11: Comparing Impact Heat Map of Two Different Programs.



Source: Cognizant 2018

With the help of this methodology, not only does one understand the quantitative output of the program but also the area in which the program is making most impact.

Overall

“Acumen program taught me how to interact with aggressive people. Toward the end of my discussion with the client, I was offered the million-dollar project.” He gives Acumen program 50% of the credit for this success. Now picture this, the total annual expense of Acumen program across India is less than 10% of the revenue mentioned by the leader. This should give a sneak into the return on investment for Acumen.”

The above story reinforces that impact measures need to emphasize on quality rather than quantity. Organizations trying to conduct impact study with large associates using automated mechanisms may not be able to produce powerful outcomes that resonate with the business/learner needs. This is a significant learning for GLD.

Lessons learned

Figure 12: Lessons Learned from Impact Study Done So Far.

Category of Learning Impact Measurement

- Learning impact measurement of behavioral skills such as leadership, communication, etc., is multi-dimensional in nature.
- One needs to consider all possible learning outcomes and their category before considering a model to measure the impact for behavioral/leadership skills.

Employee Engagement

- The process of conducting impact study and interacting with participants helps in increasing employee engagements. It helps them realize the value they are adding to the organization and makes them feel important.

Learner Retention

- The impact stories when shared with future cohorts increase their interest in the program and reduces the drop-out rate.

Source: Cognizant 2018

What is Next

- There is a need to devise an index for learning impact measurement.
- EvaluLEAD heat map for all programs within global leadership development to provide holistic comparison among all programs.
- Using the outcomes of this heat map to reconfigure the program solution design (if needed).
- Using the EvaluLEAD heat maps for consultations and guiding leaders to sign up for the best-fit program.
- Allocate right budget and make meaningful investments in the leadership programs, making the impact aligned to organization's strategies.
- To invest in a dedicated team/COE to conduct such impact studies across the enterprise.
- To present this work in conferences and forums for collaborating and sharing knowledge.



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