



Brandon Hall Group

# EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023

## Johnson Matthey's Aspire — Leading Managers: Best Advance in Leadership Development

Johnson Matthey and BTS

Best Advance in Leadership Development

January 2024



### Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	London
Year Founded	1817
Revenue	USD \$19Bn in 2022
Employees	13,497
Global Scale	From a single office in London in 1817, JM has built a global presence with significant operations in more than 30 countries.
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	As a global leader in sustainable technologies, JM applies cutting-edge science to create solutions with their customers that make a real difference to the world around us.
Industry	Speciality chemicals and sustainable technologies
Stock Symbol	London Stock Exchange: JMAT
Website	<a href="https://matthey.com/">https://matthey.com/</a>



## Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Stockholm, Sweden
Year Founded	1986
Revenue	USD \$1.80Bn in 2022
Employees	1,000+ globally
Global Scale	35 offices across six continents
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	<p>BTS partners with nearly 450 organizations, including over 30 of the world's 100 global corporations. The organization's major clients are some of the most respected names in business: Microsoft, SAP, Chevron, Coca-Cola, Volvo Group, Citigroup, Salesforce, and Tencent. BTS works with leading companies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turn strategy into action through people.</li><li>• Develop great leaders.</li><li>• Change and sustain culture.</li><li>• Shift leader mindsets through coaching</li><li>• Increase business acumen.</li><li>• Accelerate their sales and marketing results.</li><li>• Build innovation and digital transformation capabilities.</li><li>• Leverage cutting-edge assessments for selection and development.</li><li>• Create scalable, personalized experiences using digital technology</li></ul>
Industry	Professional Services
Stock Symbol	Nasdaq Stockholm: BTS B
Website	<a href="https://bts.com/">https://bts.com/</a>



## Budget and Timeframe

Budget and Timeframe	
Overall budget	£538K
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	3
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	12
Number of contractors involved with implementation	10 from global professional services consultancy, BTS, who helped develop the journey as well as deliver it.
Timeframe to implement	5 months (March 2021 – July 2021), program was then running until March 2023.
Start date of the program	Pilot journey started in June 2021

## Business Conditions and Business Needs

Johnson Matthey (JM) is a London-based global specialty chemicals and sustainable technologies company founded more than two centuries ago. Recently, it reached a pivotal moment. Owing much of its past growth to technological prowess in catalytic converters for internal combustion engines, the organization is focused on sustainable technology and looking to the future and the role the company will play in the energy and transportation transition to renewables.

In 2020, the global pandemic influenced change in ways of working and in ways of delivering leadership programs within JM. At the same time the company also restructured for global effectiveness and efficiency in an effort titled “Fit for the Future.” The restructuring was spurred by the need to shift strategic focus to the growing sustainability agenda. Recognizing the need for greater competitiveness, JM needed to become more efficient and more globally minded. The restructuring included eliminating duplication of effort between sectors and functions; it is meant to promote working in a connected way so that the organization is more agile, quicker to adapt, and able to win in changing markets. As a less complex, more nimble organization, JM will be in an even stronger position to innovate solutions for the future.



Being fit for the future also means that JM needs to be better at identifying growth opportunities, drive faster results across their Excellence programs, and improve innovation processes. Galvanizing its strategy and transforming at speed was imperative to JM's success. Given this business context, JM renewed its leadership expectations to focus on the critical behaviors required for leaders to boldly deliver results with a global mindset and focus on innovation.

JM has a series of leadership development programs collectively known as, "Aspire". These programs serve everyone from first line supervisors to senior executives and are founded in the organization's values and Leadership Expectations. Each is oriented to the population served while maintaining alignment of models and principles across the suite of programs. In 2021, JM was looking to re-develop its learning journey for its 2000 mid-level leaders, Leading Managers.

## **Overview**

The intent of Leading Managers was to develop a mid-level leadership team that can successfully lead Johnson Matthey's Vision, Strategy, Business Model and Values into the future. The aim of the program was to prepare managers to take on more strategic responsibilities in their current role and beyond. It sought to expand managers' focus from the tactical aspects of managing work execution to the strategic aspects of leading across the business and strengthen their ability to lead through complexity and ambiguity, balance competing priorities, and collaborate across global boundaries while developing their own teams to boldly deliver business results.

The program was designed to revolve around the new Leadership Expectations. There was a strong emphasis on how the Leadership Expectations were present in the tools and situations discussed, and how they could show up in their day-to-day life. The program was designed to help participants cultivate relationships and build networks, and to develop through peer learning, ideation, and collective problem solving.

The program would be delivered globally in English and Chinese to leaders from across the organization—from offices, laboratories, and manufacturing sites. JM partnered with BTS, who is experienced in global leadership transformations, so that its mid-level leaders had the same quality development experience across the globe.



### Objectives:

The Leading Managers journey sought to enable participants to:

- Translate strategic priorities into day-to-day objectives for themselves and their team.
- Collaborate across JM and gain the perspective of others to inform decisions.
- Empower their team to take calculated risks, fail fast, learn, and adapt appropriately.
- Foster an environment that prioritizes getting work done safely—including protecting mental health and physical wellbeing—and respecting the rights of others.
- Own the culture and lead with inclusivity, ensuring team members are seen, heard, and able to speak.
- Acknowledge, understand, and respond proactively according to the pace of change.

### Results:

By March 2023, seven cohorts had completed the Leading Managers journey, comprising of 126 participants representing more than 30 functions from across JM.

## **Design and Delivery of the Program**

### Solution design process:

A key factor in the success of Leading Managers is that the program was built to meet the specific needs of the target audience—uncovered through research—rather than based on assumptions about what was needed.

BTS started the design process by interviewing 40 JM business leaders to gain an understanding of the business challenges, the people challenges, and the organizational context in which JM operates and how they show up in the work of mid-level leaders. BTS used this information to create a customized learning journey.

The design was underpinned by the Leadership Expectations and included a continuous learning loop and self-reflection opportunities. Each element of the training connects to business outcomes to ensure the program creates credible, meaningful, and lasting results. As part of the learning journey, participants are given “Go-Dos”—actions to implement their learning in the flow of work. BTS research shows that integrating Go-Dos into the flow of work doubles the completion rates for organization-sponsored actions.



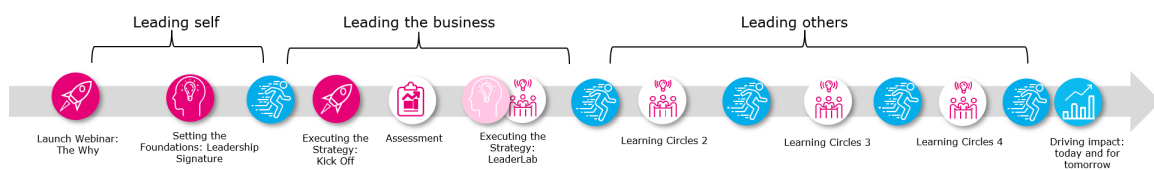
Once the program design was approved, BTS worked to solidify the content, using the data gathered during the interviews to determine the best simulation activities for JM’s leaders, prepare the roleplay scenarios and challenges, design the interactive exercises, and identify the company examples tailored to the learning context of JM’s leaders.

Overview of journey design:

The Leading Managers program is a cohort-based, five-month blended learning journey, Figure 1. It is composed of six parts: (1) a launch webinar, (2) Leadership Signature, (3) Executing the Strategy kick off, (4) Moments-based assessment, (5) LeaderLab, and (6) Learning Circles. Following each session, participants were tasked with Go-Do’s.

## The Learning Experience

The **Leading Managers** programme is a cohort-based, blended, learning journey over a **5-month period**. It is designed to cultivate relationships, build networks and cross pollinate through peer learning, ideation and collective problem solving.



Details on each stage of the journey:

### Launch Webinar: The Why

The program begins with a one-hour Launch Webinar to set expectations for the Leading Managers journey and position it in the context of JM’s strategy and renewed Leadership Expectations. This enables participants to connect the training to their specific objectives and identify areas of focus so that they can personalize the learning journey. The participants’ line managers are invited to the launch webinar, and afterwards they identify areas of strengths and development for their direct report. Participant’s line managers are provided with an overview of the learning journey and are equipped with a structure for the meeting.

### Setting the Foundations: Leadership Signature

Two weeks later participants are given the space and opportunity to explore their unique leadership qualities during a virtual three half day Leadership Signature workshop. As pre-work, they complete a StrengthsFinder assessment to uncover the strengths that shape their actions. Working in a small team with a dedicated leadership coach, participants work on their strengths and explore the values that anchor their outlook. Equally, they become aware of the impact of overplaying these strengths and when/how their values may be violated, which influences how they show up and inadvertently diminish their



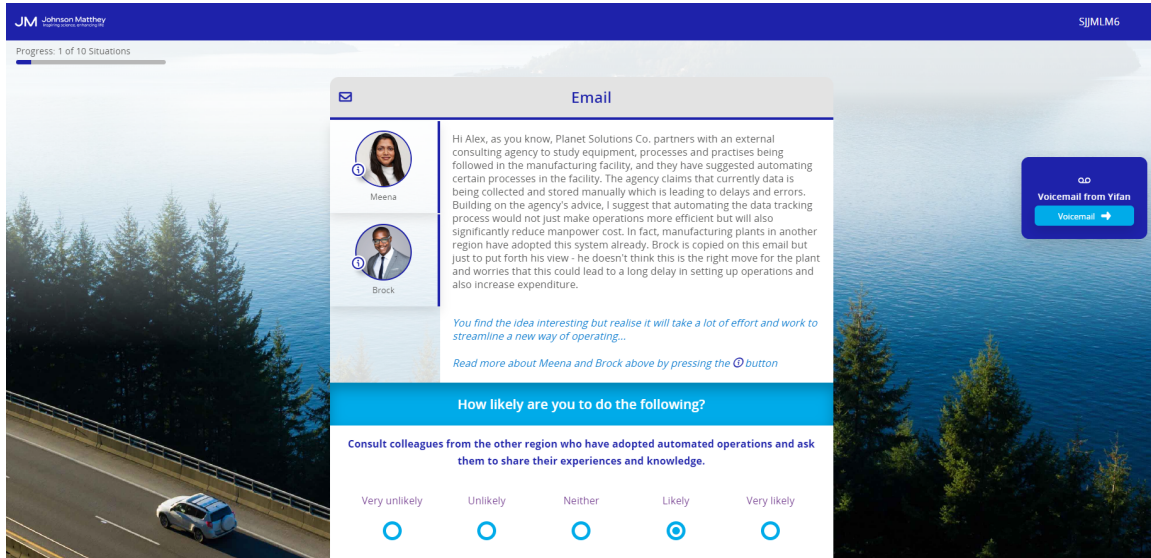
team. They then share the pivotal life stories that define who they are today. The business imperatives are discussed, and connections are formed to their personal leadership ambitions, allowing participants to develop a number of commitments and gain clarity on the priority leadership capabilities. Most importantly, these conversations center on the case for change they would have worked on Day One of Leadership Signature – using an innovative tool, a pre mortem, to define the case for change and even more critically, the case for purposeful leadership. At the end of Leadership Signature participants are equipped with a toolkit that will support them in living their Leadership Signature and having meaningful conversations with their diverse teams, tapping into the potential of individual ‘sweet spots’ – at the crossover of strengths and values.

### **Executing the Strategy: Kick Off**

The next step in the journey occurs two weeks later and aims to make this practical through exposure to the bigger picture: Executing the Strategy kick off. Participants experience a ‘Stakeholder Safari’ to explore the perspectives of various JM stakeholders, considering alignment and clashes in interest. The aim is to broaden awareness of the complexity of being able to win in changing markets. Participants are split into groups and each step into the shoes of a certain stakeholder and are asked to respond to prompt material from their perspective. The teams feedback their insights to the wider group sparking discussion on stakeholder care-about, but also as to what is within their circles of influence or control as JM leaders.

### **Assessment**

Participants are then invited to undertake a virtual, self-paced (c. 30 min) moments-based assessment designed to assess current leadership behaviors in pivotal moments. Immediately after the completion of the assessment participants receive individual-level feedback reports with development recommendations. This assessment enables participants to connect the insights from the Stakeholder Safari to everyday scenarios within JM.



## Executing the Strategy: LeaderLab

Participants are now in the second month of their journey and the next step of their journey is the LeaderLab. This takes place over 5 consecutive half days in a virtual setting and is multi-layered experience designed around JM's business, strategy, and Leadership Expectations. Moreover, the experience provides a laboratory to explore imperatives outlined in the Leadership Expectations and how the business will transform through People, Culture and Efficiency. At the heart of this experience, leaders explore and experiment with the intersection between strategy and leadership: the levers and decisions that will impact themselves, the team, and the bottom line. The LeaderLab was designed to drive critical on-to-job behaviors which are needed in this leadership population to drive key business results and organization goals:

### Strategic thinking

- Communicate the vision, strategy, and changing context with clarity and transparency, connecting individuals and teams to the purpose.
- Translate strategic priorities into day-to-day objectives for self and team.
- Prioritize and focus on value-adding and margin accretive activities.
- Proactive in understanding the external landscape and the implications on JM's strategy.

### Decision making

- Make decisions boldly and take appropriate risks based on available data.
- Make decisions with understanding and empathy for customer needs and external context.





- Leverage the expertise/perspectives of others to inform decisions.
- Creating the right environment
- Collaborate internally and externally in service of executing on priorities.
- Empower team to take calculated risks, fail fast, learn, and adapt appropriately.
- Recognize the value and leverage diversity in the team.
- Foster an environment that does work safely, including mental health and physical wellbeing, and respects the rights of others.

### **Taking Ownership**

- Proactively seek new solutions and challenge the status quo in service of the long-term value for customers and the business.
- Foster ownership and instill accountability in the team.
- Own the culture and lead with inclusivity, ensuring team members are seen, heard and able to speak.
- Drive team and talent development in alignment with individual and business needs

### **Being Agile**

- Acknowledge, understand and respond proactively according to the pace of change.
- Sense and respond to internal and external opportunities, risks, etc.
- Model alignment to strategy while demonstrating empathy and supporting others when facing ambiguity.

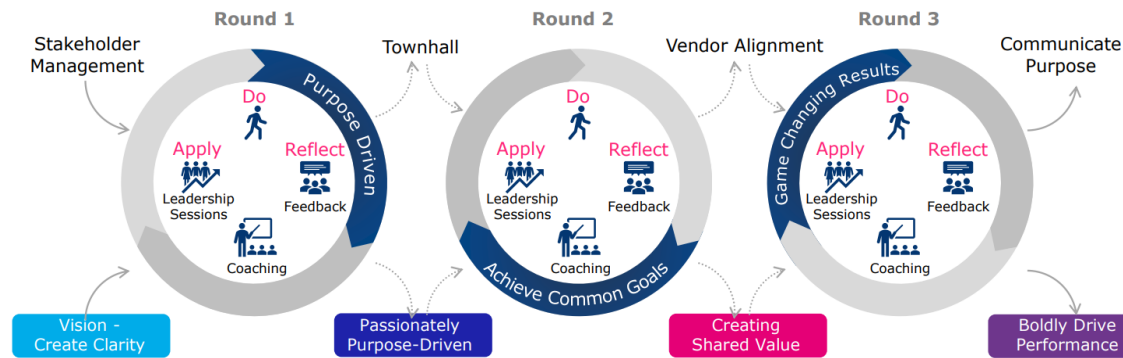
To drive these mindset shifts and behavioral changes, the LeaderLab simulation consists of several components wrapped together:

**Business simulation:** A customized simulation provides a ‘helicopter perspective’ of JM’s business, enabling participants to step back from the day-to-day and experience how the different parts of the business work together to create value for the whole. Teams grapple with the opportunities, challenges, and complexities they face at JM today and will encounter in the future. Underpinned by the Leadership Expectations, this experience focuses on the role of the JM Middle Level leader in driving change and creating long-term value for customers, employees, partners and shareholders.

The business simulation represents nine years split over three rounds. Participants first “Do,” then “Reflect” and “Apply” learnings, Figure 3, and then put tools into practice in the subsequent rounds of the simulation, and ultimately back in the workplace. This creates a rich context in which capabilities can be practiced, observed, and coached within



a safe but highly realistic, hands-on environment. Success in the simulation is dependent on a team's ability to align strategy, execution and leadership.



**Observation / coaching:** The business simulation enables leadership coaches to observe how leaders work together and understand how their decisions were made and how well leaders are living up to the desired Leadership Expectations capabilities. This provides the opportunity for reflection, coaching and application. Critical insights leading to individual interventions and coaching opportunities also arise during these sessions.

**Real play practice:** Leaders work through real life situations, including a town hall meeting, and challenging conversations with direct reports or external partners. Performance and feedback are benchmarked against the Leadership Expectations.

**Leadership sessions:** These sessions are an integral part of the business simulation designed to develop capabilities and address the values and behaviors that underpin the Leadership Expectations, illustrating these through different situations and forcing leaders to lead consistently whilst adjusting to different contexts.

**Debriefs:** At the end of each simulation round debrief sessions explore what decisions were made and how they were made. These group discussions are used to ensure a common understanding of topics that are critical for JM's leaders to drive success. Debriefs are facilitator-led discussions that ensure the learning and application of insights to the real world.

**Reflection, application, Go-do:** At the conclusion of the experience, leaders complete their personal GO-DO action plan and are introduced to the tools they will be using to continue their journey.

### Learning Circles

In the final phase of the program, the focus is on Leading Others. The learning circles give participants an opportunity to reconnect with their Leadership Signature groups and have two objectives: 1) hold each other accountable in sharing how they have been applying



lessons learnt back in their day-to-day, key insights gained, and their impact and 2) to build on the tools and frameworks they already have from the journey. These 90-minute virtual sessions occur once a month and are facilitated by a BTS leadership coach, focusing on the emotional intelligence aspects of leadership, within JM context. This level of intimacy and conversation may initially be daunting, which is why they work in their Leadership Signature groups - a safe and trusting environment built from Day One of the Leading Managers journey.

Learning Circles provide additional leadership tools and frameworks to support them in working on their business opportunity/challenge and how to drive results with their team, and so each learning circle has a specific topic:

- Learning Circle 1 (delivered with the Strategy Kick Off): Barriers to decision making.
- Learning Circle 2: Create an inclusive and safe environment?
- Learning Circle 3: Empowering others through delegation
- Learning Circle 4: Consolidation and Sustaining Momentum

Each Learning Circle has a series of Go-Dos that are an opportunity to experiment with applying what they have learned. Each circle then begins with a review of the Go-Dos, so participants can learn from and support each other.

### **Adoption of the Program**

Leading Managers is one of several leadership development opportunities available through Aspire, which is JM's development pathway for leaders and represents the organization's commitment to developing all leaders at all levels to live the company values and be better coaches and role models, helping drive the performance and growth needed to deliver on JM's strategy.

High-potential managers were nominated to take part in the Leading Managers program and were drawn from across the business. Cohorts included a maximum of 20 participants, forming four teams who reconnect throughout the journey. This enables strong connections to be formed within the teams, building accountability and a peer support network. Over 18 months, seven cohorts completed the journey, reaching 126 leaders with more than 95% of leaders completing the program.

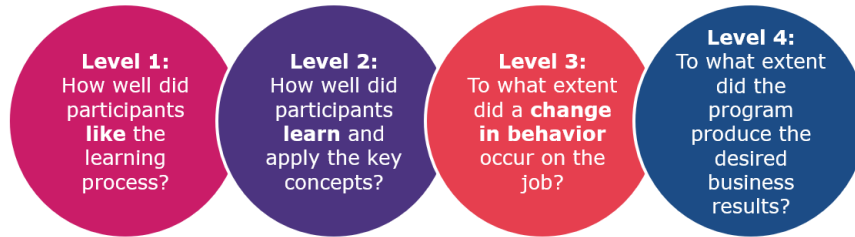
**Target Audience:** The program was open to experienced medium- to high-potential professionals in management roles who deliver strong and consistent contributions on a sustained basis and display functional competence aligned with or exceeding current role



expectations. Their responsibilities are shifting to include a more strategic and business level focus requiring them to think and work differently.

## Measurable Benefits

To enable measurable impact to be obtained BTS created a scorecard based on the Kirkpatrick model which included four levels.



The program clearly resonated with managers across the organization. From 45 participants the following data was obtained via surveys immediately after completing the journey:

**Level 1:** Participants' experience – How well did participants like the learning journey?

- Leading Managers overall journey NPS of 88.22/100

**Level 2:** Learning and intentionality – How well did participants learn and apply the key concepts?

The percentage of participants who have indicated that this experience improved their understanding by a large extent of:	
How to create the right environment that instils trust and values difference to build effective teams	87%
What enables them to be at their best and their role in enabling others to be at their best	93%
How to lead with a strategic mindset while navigating a changing internal and external landscape	84.4%
The importance of collaborating across JM for shared value	76%
The internal and external factors, including their own barriers, that influence them in being bold and decisive	89%



The need for them and their team to adapt to changing circumstances in order to support business performance	84%
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From 50 participants the following data was obtained from a survey conducted in the months after they had completed the journey:

**Level 3:** Application and changes in behaviors – To what extent did a change in behavior occur on the job?

- 76% of participants reported follow-up support and/or coaching.
- 72% of participants reported that they have learned something new or have and have used it in their work.

The percentage of participants who reported that they have applied the learnings from the Leading Managers journey:	
Translate strategic priorities into day-to-day objectives for self and team	56%
Collaborate across JM, and gain the perspective of others to inform decisions	58%
Empower the team to take calculated risks, fail fast, learn, and adapt appropriately	56%
Foster an environment that does work safely, including mental health and physical wellbeing, and respects the rights of others	58%
Own the culture and lead with inclusivity, ensuring team members are seen, heard and able to speak	62%
Acknowledge, understand and respond proactively according to the pace of change	58%

Comments from participants:

- “I often like to see lots of data to drive decisions which can sometimes slow progress. This was something I displayed during the leader’s lab, so I have focused on driving decisions more quickly in the team by giving more accountability to my direct reports e.g., Decisions to expand the plans for early decommissioning on site.”



- “Creating psychological safety in my team has helped people build deeper connections including looking for signs of burnout and helping one another get through tough times. People have been more willing to share ideas/thoughts in team meetings.”
- “I changed my mindset from competing with a colleague to supporting my colleague and to be successful together. I applied this to my team and share my knowledge/skills/thinking with them, their success is also my success.”
- “I have a diverse global team who are working more effectively together with hybrid working, some coaching others to share experience, specific skills and knowledge. I've tried to be open and transparent in dialogue with all, using some of tips and tools learnt from the training, sharing strategic objectives and translating how the team contributes to these objectives, and I believe the stability and progress being made is a direct result of this approach and the trust I place in my team members.”
- “The big change in leadership style by reflecting on my strengths and connecting with values transformed by way of working.”
- “I have increased confidence to move from Operations to Commercial for breadth, I have a great understanding of the different JM businesses.”

**Level 4:** Organizational impact – To what extent did the program produce the desired business results?

38% of participants reported that they have learned something new, have used it in their work to produce business impact, and have concrete evidence to describe that impact.

One of the primary goals of Leading Managers is to create a global mindset and promote cross-business collaboration. The cohorts of Leading Managers participants were deliberately cross-functionally and cross-regionally designed, exposing leaders to other business, geography and cultural leaders. This has raised the awareness level of leaders regarding opportunities for collaboration as well as prompted more diversity in thinking and broader business awareness outside their own organizations.

A practical demonstration of the effectiveness of this business knowledge breadth came with the sale of the Battery Materials business during a Leading Managers cohort. The discussion of why the sale was the right thing to do followed the lines of the Leader Lab simulation learning about cause and effect of decisions. The broader business awareness and cross-functional relationships eased the reassignment of key leaders from Battery Materials into other business units. The transferability of leadership skills and the greater business awareness facilitated the moves to occur quickly and with little business disruption.



## Overall

Key findings:

The Leading Managers program has:

- Helped embed the Leadership Expectations in a critical population for JM.
- Generated significant insights into the shape of JM's leadership development programs to inform new programs.
- Created cross functional, cross geographic and cross-cultural exposures resulting in accelerated business transferability that is critical to an agile and nimble business model.
- Accelerated manager awareness and practical knowledge of the intricacies of business strategy and the interrelationship of the various levers available.

Lessons learned and next steps:

From the post journey data, a number of key insights could be drawn on what made it challenging for participants to apply the learnings from Leading Managers:

Accountability could have been higher.

Of the 50 participants surveyed, 26% reported feeling fully accountable for applying their learning and that they and their manager discussed these expectations and accountabilities, and there are procedures in place for follow-up and feedback. 60% of participants instead reported that any accountability they felt for applying at least some of their training came only from their own determination.

The program design included touchpoints for participants to book check-in meetings with their line manager and discuss their challenges and opportunities, but also space to reflect on key learnings and share feedback. There is an opportunity to increase the overall support for line managers in terms of building buy-in and more focus given to setting expectations.

- Having the time

Participants and their managers need support to help manage the time required to devote to learning. Whilst this was identified in the design and steps taken to mitigate, finding time was still flagged by 28% of participants surveyed as a significant barrier to applying their learning.

- Organizational structures, policies and routines made it difficult.

Equipping leaders with the desired mindset, behaviors and tools is one half of change. 28% of participants have reported that organizational structures, policies and routines



made it difficult to apply their learnings, highlighting both the need for alignment throughout the organization.

During the rollout of the Leading Managers journey JM has undertaken significant organizational change, including launching a new strategy and direction for the company. JM and BTS are currently gathering insights from the Leading Managers alumni on what worked well and how the journey could better meet leader's needs. In the post-pandemic environment, the importance of globally minded, agile leaders who can lead in adverse and uncertain times is boldly highlighted.

Recognizing the culture and structure of the business has changed, BTS and JM are exploring ways in which to deliver continuous and dynamic learning at scale for our global leadership population. This learning needs to provide flexible leadership development for all leaders that is impactful, modular, connected and social, tailored to the learning needs of the individuals while maintaining the benefits of social and collaborative learning as well. Leveraging the success of the Leading Managers program, and the ongoing partnership between JM and BTS intend to re-envision JM's leadership pathway to meet the needs of a new future.





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