THEME 1: SETTING THE SCENE

The programme structure and philosophy is unveiled and most importantly, the four projects are unlocked.

Participants are introduced to the concept of leadership and that leadership is learnt through obtaining feedback, through reflection by using a learning journal, and through application in real work environments. They also discover how women learn leadership differently and how the programme will accommodate it.

THEME 2: THE NEW WORLDS OF THE LEADER

The context i.e. the changing worlds of work of the leader and how that impacts on leadership today, are explored. Organisational trends and current issues of the day impacting organisations and leaders, are also debated.

A key insight of this theme is the nature of the Connection Economy. The leadership demands and how the organisation shapes up against the demands of this new economy are at the core of the programme.

An important outcome of this theme is identifying the leadership culture shifts required to fit the demands of the Connection Economy based on leadership culture and organisational functioning measures.

Coaching, giving feedback, receiving feedback and dealing with feedback are also introduced as these are core to all four projects. Participants also receive their 360° leader effectiveness reports and are guided on how to deal with feedback from different sources.

During this theme the participants are also introduced to the systems thinking principles and methodologies as well as how these will be applied in the Group projects (Project WE).

Having created the context for the programme and for learning leadership, the next 'cognition' cluster of themes deepens leadership insight and intensifies the journey of self and organisational discovery.

THEME 3: ART OF LEADING

To have an impact as leader requires an understanding of what leadership really is, and most crucially, that emotional intelligence and social intelligence truly make a leader. Participants measure their own leadership style profile to identify which styles are essential to use to their advantage as well as which require further development.

This theme also clarifies the difference between the art of leadership and the principles of management, including the tasks of both that should be competently executed by the same person. The most recent insights on the focused leader as well as the migration from traditional 'either/or' leadership to paradoxical 'both/and' leadership are confronted to set the bar even higher.

THEME 4: FOLLOWERSHIP

A special focus and differentiating feature of the programme is the focus on followership as the forgotten side of leadership. It is a fact that all leaders are most of the time also followers. Participants gain knowledge on what the effective follower looks like, understanding the rules of good followership, building strategies to promote effective followership and finally, discovering their own followership behaviour.

By gaining an understanding of the importance of followership for leaders, debating their own views on followership, by being challenged on how to establish an effective leader-follower relationship as well as how to establish their own followership and followership within their teams, participants commence the journey of courageous followership towards authentic leadership.

The measurement of followership behaviours of all those reporting to participants provides a valuable team and organisational followership profile. A detailed follower effectiveness measurement tool supports participants to engage their followers constructively. It further informs the coaching agenda of Project YOU.

THEME 5: SKILLS OF POWER

Gaining power through influence distinguishes the leader role from the follower role. Power is often feared and in general viewed negatively, particularly by women. In this session understanding is established on what power is, its importance as well as the role and sources of power and influence. Most importantly, participants establish their personal brand, values and vision as skills of power. Using these as anchors in being authentic is emphasized.

THEME 6: DIVERSITY

The visible and invisible differences between people are explored in this most valuable theme. The underlying reason for stereotyping, being unconscious bias, is fully debated as well as the consequences of unconscious bias.

Gender, race, age, personality type, processing style, disability and other factors bring richness and diversity to the place of work. Whilst diversity presents complex challenges to leaders, the intrinsic value of diversity is unlocked sensitively yet unavoidably plain to get participants to a point of personally committing to embracing diversity positively. Participants also learn from their own personal journeys how their personal qualities were carved and their personalities moulded.

The leader armed with these insights and understanding, now has the foundation knowledge to make a conscious decision to bring unconscious bias to the conscious; to embrace diversity. This is required to build a diverse and inclusive teams in full acknowledgement that building true inclusivity takes time and requires constant leadership work.

Measurements on the organisational commitment to diversity as well as making personal diversity commitments, convert the learning to action.

THEME 7: PERSONAL WHOLENESS

Many leaders experience role overload, poor work-life integration and deteriorating personal wholeness. These risks are illuminated through feedback on the participant group's collective personal wholeness profile, captured and assessed during the session. The crucial and essential requirement of whole leaders in leading whole organisations is an undeniable challenge presented to participants.

The meaning of happiness and learning about ways to gain happiness as well as understanding the concept of 'flow' as the description of the optimal experience, unlock insight into wholeness.

Measuring own levels of stress and then learning how to manage it further sets the scene. These insights are amplified with some valuable and recent content on personal strategies on managing the high intensity workplace with relentless change and polarities that exacerbate stress. Embracing vulnerability as an essential part of the personal wholeness journey is also unlocked. It all needs to, in the final instance, lead to success that lasts; building a personal kaleidoscope of success which concludes this very sensitive theme.

This theme challenges participants to take accountability for their own wholeness and for entering into conversations with followers about their wholeness.

THEME 8: FOR LEADERS ONLY

The goal of this theme is to empower participants to improve their personal impact through appearance and personal behaviour. Understanding the Primacy Effect; the initial formative judgements that people reach within the first 15 to 30 seconds of a meeting, sets the tone for the importance of making a good first impression. The theme deals with practical matters such as dress sense, personal appearance, etiquette, social grace and decorum. Participants are also sensitised to specific non-verbal cues like handshakes and eye contact, body posture and the impact of these on the perceptions created.

THEME 9: BEING THE LEADER

Being the leader requires knowledge of what leaders must do to be truly effective. Being the leader also requires being the ethical leader, being the inspirational leader, being the mindful leader, the personal fundamentally best leader and being the authentic leader that practices authentic engagement.

Ethics and integrity are probably the greatest challenges of the modern-day leader. This theme therefore deals with ethical dilemmas, personal ethics orientation, and how to make the toughest decisions about 'gray-area issues'. The dimensions of inspirational leadership are dealt with at a personal level including the notion of selective vulnerability. Mindfulness is unlocked as not only a source of happiness but also as a requirement to be constantly 'present' as a leader.

By discovering one's fundamental best and by mastering being that best self more often, one can become an exceptional person and leader. Being this fundamental leader that is authentic, inspirational and able to lead change and transformation, requires being anchored – a tough but worthwhile discovery process. Fundamental leadership is recent thinking in leadership development and is dealt with thoroughly.

Fundamental leadership also manifests itself in ethical leadership behaviour that impacts the behaviour of others. Leadership authenticity is often presented as the gold standard of leadership. Whereas this view is embraced, the challenge is presented to participants to avoid becoming rigid.

With all this knowledge and after this reflective work, participants craft a clear, concise, and declarative statement of their leadership purpose for discussion with their teams and as part of Project US.

This theme in the 'self' cluster of themes is the start of a profound inner-journey that is often a personal turning point for participants.

THEME 10: LEADING PEOPLE

This is the first theme in the 'engaging' cluster of themes that focuses on doing leadership work. It deals with the hard work of leaders; people leadership. It starts with the practical expectations that all people at work have of their leaders, and the fact that trust is the essential requirement for people leadership.

The latest, and fascinating, theory on the neuroscience of trust and the new theory on the basic emotional drives underlying motivation, position this theme firmly in new science.

Feedback is dealt with extensively. Understanding the value of giving people feedback, types of feedback and the essentials of effective, constructive feedback are dealt with comprehensively in this theme because it is widely accepted that most leaders lack this skill. To understand how to deal with feedback when participants get it themselves, it is also used to unlock their understanding of how to coach their followers (strengthened by the experience in Project YOU and Project US) in dealing better with receiving feedback.

High-performance individuals and how to develop them is the ultimate aim of this theme thus a thorough understanding is reached on this. Instead of emphasising a 'performance management' approach as the prime tool to drive performance, a fresh notion is introduced that leaders need to turn employees' struggles into growth opportunities by cultivating vulnerability in followers. This very powerful new look at developing performance is personalised as participants are challenged to 'go first' by having these conversations with their own leaders. This is a very powerful theme that breaks the mould of conventional people management.

THEME 11: LEADING TEAMS

Teams are the primary units of performance in high-performance organisations. The goal of this theme is for participants to build the confidence, based on sound knowledge, to become leaders that develop teams. They get a clear understanding of the difference between groups and teams, the dimensions of a high-performance team and the critical importance of effective relationships in teams. The essential requirement for a team of mutual, or joint accountability, is practically dealt with.

Fundamentally, teams are about relationships between members who are all different in personality, brain profiles and work styles amongst others. The most recent science on work styles provide valuable insight on how a leader can effectively lead a team with diverse work styles. They build a profile of their team based on these dimensions in order to practically work on the implications of this in developing their teams.

Participants use the dimensions of high-performance teams to get a full grasp of these kind of teams and the challenges to develop their teams to this level. They also work on the dimensions of effective relationships to understand how to build trust in teams as well as how to deal with the dysfunctional behaviours in teams.

Armed with this knowledge, assessments of their own teams as well as a leadership baseline assessment of themselves as team leaders, they work with their teams to construct a team development agenda. This becomes part of their Portfolio of Evidence (Project US). This theme is practical and has a noticeable impact in organisations as all participants engage with their teams simultaneously.

THEME 12: COMMUNICATION

Organisations are information processing systems within which leaders spend more than fifty percent of their time communicating with relevant others. Effective communication is a leader's single most critical tool to inspire others and for making performance happen. The female style and how it is perceived, in particular the use of humour by women are addressed and optimized.

Transactional communication is explained as it is the ego states that leaders choose to be in that often disempowers followers in interactions with them. Our natural tendency to evaluate also prevents us from listening with attention hence active listening is explored in this theme. Effective listening enhanced by the skill of questioning using Socratic questioning as framework, is dealt with. Careful and respectful listening during adult to adult constructive interactions are undoubtedly critical for developing relationships and for empowering followers.

Improving vocal delivery, non-verbal communication, public speaking, kinaesthetic speaking and story-telling as an effective leader competence, are all dealt with. Participants are exposed to the concept of the human moment to emphasise the importance of direct personal communication as well as the importance of assertiveness in communication. Leaders being naturally assertive, require insight on the differences between discourse, debate and dialogue as these skills, and in particular dialogue, increase the influence of a leader in an organisation.

A strong focus and the final measure of the programme (Project WE), is whether participants truly master the art of persuasion.

THEME 13: GIVING DIRECTION

The goal of this theme is to define the role of the participant in the strategy of the organisation as well as to take accountability and ownership as a leader to make it happen.

To achieve this goal leaders must take accountability for strategy leadership as well as strategy management at their level as distributed leaders. This requires an understanding of decision-based strategy and how good strategic decisions are made being through the dynamic and disciplined fusion of insight, foresight, thinking and practice. The notion of strategy being simply handed down for programmatic implementation to lower levels is discarded as they realize their own role as 'co-owners' of business success.

Participants discover their own decision-styles and the extent to which it needs development to make good strategic decisions given their natural brain preferences. Throughout this theme participants evaluate and reflect on their own capacity and competence to lead direction using the organisation's strategy as well as the strategy at their level as reference points. They are also introduced to the thinking fusion AFRICA strategy framework against which their strategy leadership competence is assessed.

The latest research on the myths of how to implement strategy effectively and their discoveries of their own strategic leadership competence are used to design a presentation that participants practice at the session. They then subsequently make the presentation to their teams covering their role in 'giving direction', their insights as leaders, their priorities and actions as well as their expectations of their teams.

THEME 14: CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

Developing change leadership skill as opposed to change management skill, is the focus of this theme.

By understanding the difference between change and transformation, types of organisational change, its scale and style as well as exponential change on the one hand and personal change on the other, participants are given the foundation to develop change leadership skill.

The theme is a journey of change on two paths- one on personal change and one on organisational change in order to get participants to understand the convergence between these. At the same time, the theme has a change and transformation focus, which requires change management as well as change leadership skill. Participants get to understand that content has more to do with change management (the what) while the process has change leadership as core focus as it is where personal transformation takes place (view of life, behaviour, and attitude).

The fundamentals of the psychology of change, change dynamics in organisations, resistance to change in organisations as well as how to deal with it, are dealt with. The established science of the 'change curve' and the emotions brought about by organisational change are discovered with a focus on the appropriate leader behaviour during change.

This is a conceptually challenging theme that positions the reality that change leadership is a critical leadership competence to master.

THEME 15: GROWING A NEW CULTURE

The thinking fusion AFRICA model on planting and growing a new culture is used as the foundation for understanding the concept of organisational culture, its drivers, enablers and the evidence of a new emerging culture. A very conceptually challenging theme; participants integrate the knowledge gained throughout the programme by designing the desired culture for their organisation using a creative small-group process. Alternatively they focus on how the desired culture could be implemented and what the role of leaders are in this. It is a highlight in learning and participants gain a clear understanding of the leadership challenges, their roles in developing the desired corporate culture as well as the magnitude of such an undertaking.

CERTIFICATION

Successful completion of the programme, which includes handing in a Portfolio of Evidence that meet requirements and exceeds 65%, and presenting the system thinking-based Group projects to the Exco/Board, as well as attending 85% of the programme days, lead to a certificate of successful completion by the certifying university.

FACILITATORS

Two well-trained and experienced thinking fusion AFRICA facilitators, who are diverse in gender and/or race, present all themes to a particular group. They form a strong bond with the participants and guide participants in their personal discovery, the completion of their Portfolios of Evidence as well as in the completion of the Group projects.

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