

MEMBER RESULTS

45-Day Engagement with Bersin & Associates Yields Big Results for Human Capital Management Leader ADP



CUSTOMER:

ADP, a global leader in payroll and HR outsourcing solutions.

ISSUES:

Gaps in leadership development; competition for scarce corporate resources.

BERSIN & ASSOCIATES SOLUTION:

Research-based best practices, integrated approach, clear and actionable recommendations.

IMPACT:

Funding for three-year plan to build 10 to 12 new leadership development programs.

ADP Redefines Leadership Development Curriculum with Objective, Data-Driven Best Practices from Bersin & Associates

SITUATION

More than 31 million workers around the world have their paychecks processed by ADP, a leader in payroll and HR outsourced services for more than 60 years. As a growth company, ADP requires a robust pipeline of leaders prepared to manage expansion in uncertain global business environments.

In 2009, an internal associate engagement survey revealed gaps in the company's leadership development curriculum used by more than 750 employees in the management pipeline. The gaps identified were due largely to a decentralized, oftentimes inconsistent approach to leadership development at ADP. Although these employees represent the company's current and future leadership, and it was clear that while ADP needed to make the curriculum more robust and impactful, the learning organization still had to compete for scarce corporate resources.

According to Karen Ruef, Vice President of Learning and Talent Management at ADP, her dual challenge was to gain budgetary approval and also spend the money wisely. "It's easy to invest in development programs, but much harder to get a good return," she observes. "Learning organizations often believe the more they spend on development, the better off the employees are, but it's not true. We wanted a focused and impactful set of the right interventions for the right people at the right time in their career."

BERSIN & ASSOCIATES SOLUTION

After successfully using her WhatWorks® membership to benchmark against best practices and educate her team, Karen once again turned to Bersin & Associates for advice on how to create the most impactful leadership development curriculum by tapping industry best practices. "We chose Bersin based on its strong reputation for identifying, describing, and sharing best practices in the enterprise learning space," Ruef recalls. "We did not want a vendor to tell us what we should do and then build it for us. We wanted business partners who spent their day objectively examining a wide array of development programs and could tell us how to take our curriculum to the next level."

Working on a very short 45-day timeline and across several international time zones, Bersin first provided ADP with access to a data-rich model of best practices. This highly granular information described not only average spending per head in various industries, but also what best practice leadership development programs look like and which common elements they share.

In order to successfully compete for resources in a cost constrained environment, the team created a first ever One ADP approach to leadership development which is grounded in their new leadership model and differentiates between transitional programs and those intended to accelerate the development of

top talent. This plan, which replaces the existing decentralized and inconsistent approaches, was backed by the credibility of best practices based on Bersin research with thousands of companies.

Next, Bersin partnered with Ruef to build out a detailed presentation for senior executives. “The Bersin team was highly skilled at describing our situation, summarizing what the research says about best practices, and then offering clear and actionable recommendations,” says Ruef.

IMPACT

As a result of the Bersin engagement, Ruef’s organization received funding for a three-year plan to build out 10 to 12 leadership development programs focused on career transitions. The dialog with senior management has become more about pacing and how quickly to implement the programs rather than whether new programs should be created. “I give a lot of credit to Bersin’s best practices research and ‘outsider’s

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Vice President of Learning and Talent Management, ADP

How Is ADP’s Strategy Incorporating the Best Practices?

Benchmarking identifies six “best practices” that inform leadership development strategies in global organizations



ADP’s senior executives and HR leaders reviewed the final Bersin research and recommendations and saw how they could move up the High-Impact Leadership Development Maturity Model™ to a more impactful level of learning. “It was instructive for our leaders to see concrete examples of what we do well and where we have gaps,” Ruef explains. “In the end, the Bersin research gave real weight and validity to our final recommendations.”

perspective’ for helping us get an enthusiastic endorsement of our final proposal from the leadership team, as well as creating a high sense of urgency about moving forward,” concludes Ruef. “Everyone is aligned around the Bersin Maturity Model, which provides a common model for understanding where we are going.”

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