

FEDEX FREIGHT ACTION LEARNING PROGRAM INVESTS IN FUTURE LEADERS



FedEx Freight Action Learning is a 90-day intensive developmental experience that brings leaders together from across FedEx Freight to produce revolutionary solutions to real organizational problems focused on generating revenue or saving/avoiding costs.

During the 90 days, participants can:

- Gain skills to solve complex problems more effectively
- Collaborate and lead across functional areas
- Work with senior leaders as thought partners for critical issues
- Learn a series of skills that will be useful throughout their leadership development journey

When it comes to solving the problems presented to them in their cohorts, the processes and principles of WIAL Action Learning are critical to the success and development of our people.

The goal of the experience is to use Action Learning principles in the context of real work rather than in a programmatic or hypothetical setting. This process aims to operationalize our traditional problem-solving methods by infusing them with WIAL principles, so that as an organization we can:

- Drive alignment with and commitment to organizational goals and priorities

- Strengthen the leadership pipeline with team members who are prepared to step up to the challenges that require transformational thinking and the activation of multiple perspectives
- Apply a standardized repeatable process to develop revenue generating and cost saving/avoiding solutions while building team engagement
- Provide the opportunity and tools for intensive development in rapid experiment cycles
- Develop a core group of emerging leaders who understand the transformational benefits of leading people to improve process instead of the transactional habit of managing process
- Practice rapid improvement and transformational change processes that are aligned with the organization's strategy
- Be prepared to drive transformational change and stay engaged with one another and the future



We just recently wrapped our sixth cycle of the Action Learning Process at FedEx Freight and were once again thrilled with the results. Our 28 participants were divided into four distinct Action Learning groups and challenged over the 90-day cycle to leverage Action Learning to solve the problems they were presented:

Problem 1: Using waste reduction, participants focused on improving our holiday polling process with our customers

Problem 2: By addressing network efficiency and waste reduction, participants worked to balance equipment across our network

Problem 3: Keeping network efficiency in mind, this group dug into IT interruptions and outages

Problem 4: By focusing efforts on the frontline workforce and effective staffing, participants evaluated ways to improve employee retention

Each opportunity to leverage Action Learning principles with our participants brings on new ideas, insights, and solutions as a direct result. For us, as the program manager and lead facilitator, it is an opportunity to teach others the power of Action Learning and to remind them to get comfortable being uncomfortable. It is at the intersection of discomfort and awareness that brings forward the best solutions!



Each cycle our participants develop great ideas and solutions that impact the bottom line here at FedEx Freight, but what is most rewarding is the personal growth of our participants. Watching these leaders learn how to listen for understanding, ask meaningful questions, and dig into root cause not only solidifies for us the power of Action Learning, but reminds our participants of the power of true teamwork harnessed through Action Learning strategies.

We asked some of our participants how the FedEx Freight Action Learning Program benefited them, the team, and the organization, and here's what we heard:

"I have solved a problem by offering solutions and guidance and trying to relate and connect rather than react and inspect. This has empowered my coworkers to grow in technical knowledge and relationships with other coworkers rather than degrade and isolate from the team."

"Action Learning taught me to ask for more perspectives and viewpoints on an idea or issue rather than just consulting with one person. Different viewpoints offer different solutions to help get a problem solved."

"I was very impressed with the team's proposed solution for equipment repositioning. Arriving to that solution required knowledge that participants didn't have at the outset of the Action Learning Program. It was a creative and effective solution that clearly required critical thinking to develop."

"As is often the case during problem solving, solutions often have the tendency to emerge before getting to the root cause. Taking time to ask better questions, and especially composing the cohorts of outside perspectives that are unfamiliar with the status quo, have created better solutions that could not be seen by those much closer to the problem."

The organization gains from the work of the cohorts during each cycle, but also gains by growing the problem-solving skills of each member, who are often sought after to take on new problems in diverse groups within the company.

The balance of determining when to intercede as a coach vs. letting the group find their way is always at play, and each cycle we as coaches better recognize how to best guide our cohorts. Some cohorts progress at a faster pace, but we often see that the pace is up to the group, and with gentle guidance they adjust their own needs as the cycle goes on.

Each cycle that we get to facilitate Action Learning at FedEx Freight is an opportunity for us to grow as well as WIAL certified coaches. Our skills need honing and strengthening and each cycle we have an opportunity to grow along with our participants. Leveraging the knowledge we received through WIAL training has helped us grow as a facilitation and program team and has been key to the success of each Action Learning cycle. What we continue to realize time and time again is that when we take the time to reflect and learn from our attempts to solve problems, we can improve things that require mindfulness and quality approaches.



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