

Building engagement for change

Action learning is often used by organizations to support change initiatives. In order for organizational change to be successful and sustainable, there needs to be continuous commitment and participation by people in the organization. In order to be more change-ready, organizations need to develop its capacity and capability. Action learning is an effective approach to develop the leadership skills needed to influence and lead teams to drive change.

In August 2017, Master Action Learning Coach, Ng Choon Seng, and his team of certified Action Learning coaches had the privilege to conduct a 2-day leadership development program on change management and Action Learning for a client in the Singapore healthcare sector.



The program kicked off with a half-day segment on change management where Peter Seah (Certified Action Learning Coach) shared key elements of the major change theories and facilitated discussions to help participants gain insights on leading and managing change.

The other 1.5 days were dedicated to Action Learning sets where participants got to apply their learning to personal leadership challenges. Four WIAL-Certified Action Learning Coaches (Andrew Lee, Ng Choon Jin, Kris Tay and Lyn Wong) and a Professional Action Learning Coach (Phoon Kok Hwa) were roped in to be Action Learning coaches for the various groups.

Kok Hwa made a short explanation about Action Learning. Participants then divided into 5 groups for the Action Learning sets. Every member of each group briefly shared some information about an issue or challenge that they would like the group

to help them with. Each group then selected one issue for each Action Learning set. The participants took turns to be problem presenters, asked open questions to help the problem presenters get to the root cause of the problems and gain insights into the issues, and helped the problem presenters come up with possible solutions to tackle the issues. Action learning coaches intervened as and when there was a learning opportunity, reminded participants to practice their identified leadership competencies. Most importantly, coaches ensured to build a safe environment conducive for peer learning.

The feedback from the participants about the program was great! Some of the feedback highlights:

- Action Learning is useful to help create insights
- peer learning is very valuable
- the power of asking instead of telling
- the importance of asking the right questions to tackle the root cause of the problem
- Action Learning is an interesting concept and a useful problem solving tool.

Overall, participants had an enjoyable and insightful learning experience. One participant shared how her staff noticed a change in her when she applied the new skill she picked up after the first day of the program! A great encouragement when embarking on a change journey !

The positive feedback and sharing was also encouraging for the Action Learning coaches involved. The coaches were thankful they had the opportunity to make a positive impact to the healthcare sector through their involvement in this leadership develop program.

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