

SWITCHING CAREERS: THE ACTION LEARNING JOURNEY OF MAGALI LOPES FROM BRAZIL



It was love at first sight. That is how Marquardt Research Award runner-up and President of World Institute for Action Learning (WIAL) Brazil Magali Lopes described the very first time she discovered and learned about Action Learning.

"The first time I witnessed someone facilitating an action learning session, I felt this is what I really want to do. What I saw was everything that I believe in—people talking about different difficult things, people asking questions, people seeing each other as equal," she said. And so, from a human resources consultant, traveling around the world and helping companies and their people, she has set into a new career path—one that has re-ignited her passion for people development and led her to a fulfilling venture more than anything else.

Making Things Happen

However, the journey has not been a smooth-sailing pursuit. Back in 2014, Action Learning had not reached Brazil yet. Certifications to become a full-fledged Action Learning coach and practitioner are not yet available in the country. With perseverance to pursue her new-found passion, Magali became one of the pioneers of Action Learning in Brazil. She started launching programs for entrepreneurs and running sessions for companies and groups without wasting time.

The story of Action Learning in Brazil still has a long way to go, but Lopes' goal is to ensure that it stays on the path of international best practices and quality training. Since

her certification in 2015, Lopes has trained and certified more than 90 new Action Learning coaches in Brazil—an achievement she has been most proud of.

"In the beginning, I was really proud to help people solve their problems—getting leaders to talk with each other and think about how to best solve their problems together," Magali said. "Now, I find it fulfilling to hone and help new coaches of Action Learning. I feel really proud to mentor other coaches and train new Action Learning coaches."



Passion to Recognition

During the 2021 WIAL Global Virtual Conference in September, Lopes was awarded as a runner-up for the Marquardt Research category at the 2021 WIAL Awards. Her winning research study about building trust through Action Learning implementation has earned the judges' nod for its meaningful contribution to the industry.

Titled 'Fostering Human Connections: Building Relations, Trust, and Engagement through Action Learning,' the study emphasizes how practicing Action Learning helps companies achieve more engaged and productive employees and a positive working environment through the trust and connection built during Action Learning sessions.

"It has always been a struggle for many companies and organizations to engage their employees. Running a successful business requires satisfied and productive people. With Action Learning, that is not a far fetched goal anymore. A manager, a person, or a company who understands Action Learning and how implementing it can build trust in their organization can expect better results for their business," Lopes said.



Spreading Action Learning

Today, Lopes is focused on finishing her Action Learning book set to be launched within the year. "This is something very special for me because it is all about Action Learning and how people can use it to ask, to listen, and to be together to solve problems. I am writing about how Action Learning is a necessity for today's society," she shared.

Lopes also declared her intention to create a system by which leaders and employees may participate in the Action Learning process and organize new sessions as they see fit. This will enhance organizational leadership while broadening Action Learning's reach to other companies.

"I would like to have more leaders, more entrepreneurs, and more people in companies that practice Action Learning. Not coaches or consultants, but actually company leaders and employees who can run Action Learning sessions in their own organization. This is what I would like to start this year and continue to work on in the next few years," she said.

For Lopes, the benefits one could get out of Action Learning are countless. More than helping solve problems, it helps motivate employees and empower them to take their learning into their own hands, helps an organization reach its goals and keep things positive even in difficult times, creates a culture that focuses on creating value for the company and all its stakeholders, and on being visible about what is being done. It is a style that focuses on the organization—on creating long-term results and on lasting learning.

/June 2022