

## Improving Retention of Leadership Talent within a Global Organisation

### Challenge

Functional leaders of a global bank recognised that managing and developing talent across the organisation was key to delivering the bank's strategic plans to achieve growth and reduce costs. Historically, they had struggled to coordinate their approach and had focused on their function, believing their unique capabilities had specific requirements that could not be met by other function's initiatives. Investment in people varied between functions and there was limited understanding of the impact learning and development was adding to the customer facing business. Increasing challenges to budgets and justifying spend on back office functions to the business was a regular annual event. In relative terms, investment in learning and development was decreasing year on year, with people regarded as 'leadership talent' having a high turnover and the cost of recruitment for key leadership skills increasing.

### Innovative Solution

Our approach was to firstly create a view of leadership that each functional head could buy into and that clearly linked and worked with the overall group wide model. Secondly we ensured that **Edge PACE** for Leadership was aligned to this model in terms of language and weighting of skills and behaviours. **Edge PACE** is our unique tool we use to identify leadership knowledge, skills and behaviours across an organisation and help them understand the depth and breadth of potential, ambition, capability and engagement with the organisation. It is a simple online 360° survey tool which engages the individual, their manager, stakeholders, customers and peers, with all their responses combining to create a unique position for the individual on **Edge Map**. Edge Map compliments existing HR tools used within an organisation by adding layers of information specific to leadership. These can be used to develop more effective and robust learning solutions which deliver greater and more sustainable business impact. Within a month the COO had an Edge Map for the functional teams which enabled the functional heads to identify 4 populations which were important to retain within the organisation:

1. Leadership Talent
2. Emerging Leadership Potential
3. Professional Expert Contributors
4. Mature Capability

A learning strategy was developed for each population with an agreed budget. Functional heads were responsible for managing populations 3 and 4, but the COO took responsibility for coordinating learning and development for Leadership Talent and Emerging Leadership Potential.

Edge was asked to focus on Leadership Talent, a population of 150 individuals with differing leadership experience and grades. Working with the COO our approach was to create a Leadership Development Network (LDN), - a programme that spanned 12 months. Invitation to join the LDN depended on meeting certain criteria defined within **EDGE Map**. A wide range of learning interventions from e-learning, specialist knowledge sessions, trainer led sessions, coaching and experiential events, which catered for different learning styles were offered to participants in the LDN. Participants worked with their line managers to identify their learning objective (which had to have a tangible business impact) and to create their own personalised 12 month learning journey. Each participant had a number of points to spend on their development. They could increase the number of points they had by participating in 'give back' options such as mentoring, coaching facilitating learning sessions, presentations etc. that added value to the business.

Each learning intervention was worth a number of points which was determined by the actually monetary cost of providing the intervention and the opportunity cost to the business i.e. the amount of time out of the business.

Participants had the opportunity to take on board a leadership challenge in Botswana, run their own business or an 'Apprentice' style of challenge, take a leadership MBA, attend executive meetings, job shadow senior executives or up skill their strategic thinking skills or presentation skills. Over 30 different experiences were opened up to the LDN. Each intervention aligned to the skills and behaviours the organisation and the functional heads had identified they wanted their leaders to have. Every quarter there were opportunities to network with senior leaders and for participants to develop their leadership profile. The success of the LDN created a buzz through the organization and improved the bench strength of the leadership pipeline.

### Benefits

Cost of learning reduced. The cost of each learning hour provided was reduced by 87%.

The learning budget delivered more varied interventions which recognised and supported different learning styles.

The Leadership Development Network (LDN) significantly increased staff engagement, motivation and productivity.

Cross functional networking improved ways of working together and support for the business.

On average 70% of participants gained promotion to the next grade, increased scope and responsibility within grade and positively raised their visibility with senior executives.

Edge PACE and Edge Map proved an effective and efficient way of identifying LDN participants each year and enabled the organisation to create an internal benchmark which was subsequently used in succession planning and recruitment.

### Quote

*'The Edge team were inspirational, working miracles with a limited budget. The LDN approach won industry awards and gave us a sustainable framework for targeting investment in people' Group COO, 2009.*