

Havas Health & You Develops Emerging Leaders for Long-Term Success

Havas Health & You partnered with BlessingWhite, a division of GP Strategies, to establish a comprehensive leadership development program to enhance leadership skills and encourage leaders to pay forward what they learned to support future executives.

THE CHALLENGE

Great advertising campaigns for clients start with great input from talent. No one knows this better than advertising agency Havas, whose employees' creative genius and intellectual capital are what drive its business.

As the brains behind such memorable campaigns as Dos Equis' "Most Interesting Man in the World" and TJX Companies' "Bring Back the Holidays," workers at Havas must be continually inspired and motivated to propel the firm's success.

So when Havas launched its newly expanded and branded Havas Health & You entity, which combined its separate global consumer health agencies under one umbrella, the talent management team knew it would need to identify and cultivate each agency's future leaders for long-term success.

"An inspired and motivated workforce is the lifeblood of creative agencies and leaders are the torch bearers for engagement," said Patrick Chenot, executive vice president and chief learning officer at Havas Health & You. "To ensure the success of our newly branded division, we needed to identify and develop a strong corps of emerging leaders."

In 2015, in partnership with BlessingWhite, a division of GP Strategies, Havas Health & You rolled out Developing Leaders @ Havas, a program aimed at enhancing leadership skills, establishing a network of supportive relationships, providing greater exposure to and connections at the executive level, and promoting an environment in which Havas Health & You leaders would pay forward what they learned in supporting future talent.

THE SOLUTION

The Developing Leaders program is a comprehensive, nine-month semester that encourages professional growth and includes cross-agency representation—a new approach that allowed participants to get to know and learn from individuals from other parts of the organization.

In creating the Developing Leaders program, the Havas Health & You talent management team considered several key elements. First, it was important that each program participant be encouraged to establish his or her own path and style of

leadership, fostering a culture of authenticity and individuality. Second, leaders should be given a sense of what qualities Havas Health & You values in a leader and have a clear picture of what the firm wants in its executives. And third, the program should help participants look outward to understand what others need from them so they could be as responsive and effective as possible.

With these initiatives in mind, the Developing Leaders program was called "Becoming a Better Leader Through Introspection to Inspiration."

With this blueprint set, the learning and development team then addressed each of its goals for the program with a four-pronged approach consisting of coaching, mentoring, leadership development workshops and executive support.

Figure 1.



"While coaching and training has always been an important part of how Havas Health & You supports its people, this program took a more structured approach and included cross-agency representation—a new element that allowed participants to get to know and learn from individuals from other parts of the organization," said Leah Clark, director of strategy and development, GP Strategies.

First, each Developing Leaders participant was paired with an external coach to pinpoint, prioritize and address development issues. As part of this process, the firm collected 360-degree feedback from peers and associates to assess each leader's strengths and weaknesses. Insight was also gleaned through Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and other leadership assessments.

LEARNING IN PRACTICE AWARD SPOTLIGHT

Next, each program participant was paired with an executive mentor who could impart insight, advice, challenges, best practices and opportunities based on his or her own experience as a leader at Havas. Participants and mentors took part in a mentorship workshop as part of the leadership development workshop series.

The third prong of the Developing Leaders program comprised a nine-month curriculum of four leadership development sessions: the mentorship workshop, the emotional intelligence workshop, a workshop titled “Why Should Anyone Be Led by You?” and a workshop called “Leading Out Loud.”

The mentoring workshop focused on defining the mentorship experience and understanding the roles. Havas supplemented the mentorship workshop with an internally created tool called “A Guide for Mentors and Mentees.”

The “Why Should Anyone Be Led By You?” workshop shifted the focus from introspection to the outward view, helping leaders understand what their teams need from them and tips to develop strategies to meet their follower’s needs.

The final workshop, titled “Leading Out Loud,” focused on communication’s role in effective leadership and taught leaders how to inspire others for greater engagement, ownership and agency.

The Developing Leaders program also included coaching circles, facilitated events in which the group discussed and coached each other on whatever topic was most relevant as a workshop follow-up.

Throughout it all, the Havas Health & You executives spent time with program participants to share insights and answer questions about the importance of leadership on business success. In 2017, the learning and development team also created an internal, bimonthly publication titled *Leadership Happenings*, which is distributed to senior leadership as well as to participants in the Developing Leaders program.

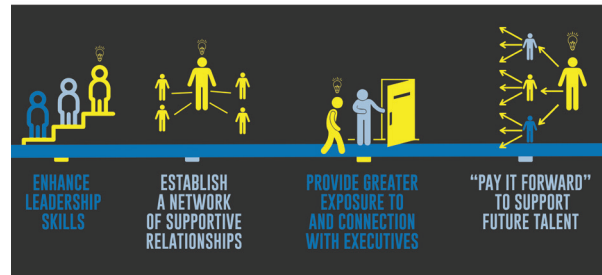
THE RESULTS

By focusing on a renewed leadership development experience, Havas Health & You exceeded its targeted goal and saw a positive response from participants and business sponsors. The program has grown in size and scope with each subsequent year.

Up-and-coming executives were accepted into the program through a process that included a one-to-one conversation between Havas’ chief learning officer, the managing directors of each internal agency and their human resource leads, as well as nominations of three to five individuals from each managing director. The learning and development program sponsors made the final decisions.

Figure 2.

WHY HAVAS HEALTH & YOU DESIGNED A HIGH POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



The Developing Leaders program has garnered overwhelmingly positive feedback. In a post-program survey, nearly 88 percent of veterans of the program report their leadership skills improved as a result of the program, 100 percent said their confidence as a leader improved, 87 percent indicated their team members have noticed a change in their leadership style, and 100 percent felt as though the program was a valuable investment.

Further, the program is fulfilling its goal of having leaders pay forward what they learned. Graduates address each new class of participants in a panel session as well as serve as mentors for each new class and for participants in a pilot Havas Health & You fellowship program that offers learning opportunities, tuition reimbursement and mentoring to a select group of entry-level talent. Going forward, the learning and development team plans to offer ongoing coaching circles to bring the group back together and continue the learning and support, while continually refining and improving the program based on feedback.

“In the Developing Leaders Program, Havas started something that will continue to pay off in the lives of the program graduates but also in culture of the organization,” said Donna Murphy, Global CEO. “As leaders move from introspection to innovation, they will continue to lift themselves, those around them and the clients they serve to new heights.”