

Excellence in Practice 2017

Mars & Center for Creative Leadership

More life on Mars

Wouldn't it be ideal if every company's investment in professional development resulted in measurable ROI over both the immediate and long-term? Perhaps you think this is impossible. However, companies can achieve it

A case in point is Mars, a confectionary and pet food giant, as a result of its collaboration with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). According to Mars' Global Director of Leadership Development Kristin Colber-Baker, the result of its partnership with CCL was a home run because of the short and long-term impact.

Context

In 2006, Mars was growing both organically and through acquisitions faster than its talent management pipeline could develop leaders. Additionally, Mars was changing its management strategy from a geographic leadership model to a segmentation model in order to better manage its diverse holdings.

The 10-year growth model at the time estimated that Mars would need to double its senior leader pipeline from 400 to 800. A review of the top 1,000 jobs crystallised the issues that general managers across the organisation had noticed – middle managers were not ready to take on senior level positions.

As the company expanded, more leadership roles would open up and the leaders who filled them needed to be mission-ready with a firm understanding of Mars' culture and values. In other words, the company needed to address a potential talent drought.

"These mission-critical roles were positions that we couldn't afford to leave open," explains Colber-Baker. "We needed to prepare high-potential leaders more quickly for senior management positions that required successfully leading others





and driving organisational change initiatives.”

Mars’ Chief Learning Officer was tasked with finding a solution to rapidly develop leaders just below the mission-critical level and prime them for their next leadership role. While each region previously had its own leadership school and related programmes through Mars U, developing leaders for these mission-critical positions was now a global challenge and required a centralised approach.

Programme

To make high potentials mission ready for their next leadership role, CCL and Mars committed to the Advanced Leadership Program (ALP) in 2007.

The programme builds on Mars’ internal programme and is structured around the following four stage “eco-change” model:

Classify: Participants learn to map their change ecosystem by doing ethnographic research and conducting experiments

Cultivate: Participants prepare themselves to impact their environment by learning their strengths and weaknesses in leading change

Convert: Participants multiply their change effects by influencing key stakeholders across the business

Cascade: Participants use storytelling or storyboards to spread their changes system wide and accomplish a significant milestone, which they then share with Mars’ senior executives

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Some of the programme’s design and success can be attributed to CCL’s in-depth research into Mars, including:

- Investing in a technology platform to support on-the-job learning and emphasise the 70-20-10 rule (70% of knowledge is from job-related experiences, 20% from interactions with others and 10% from formal educational events)
- Positioning the transformational change initiative to solve a significant problem in the business and prepare participants to move to the next level
- Aligning Mars, mentors, CCL trainers and coaches to create a seamless experience for participants. This entailed innovation in both the coaching and mentoring process

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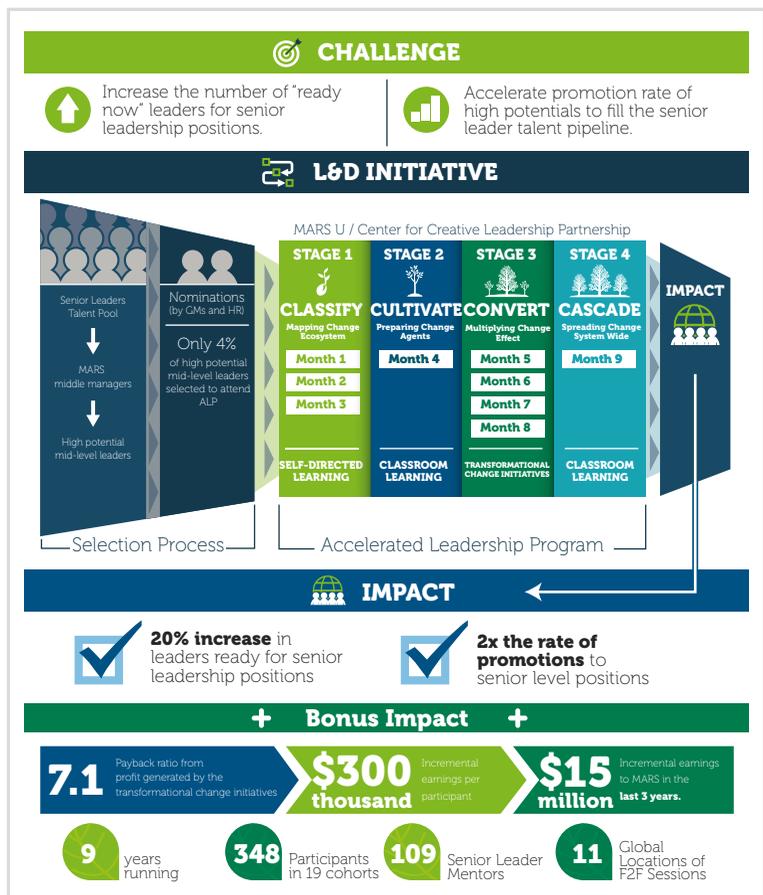


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A flipped classroom was used in the programme. Over nine months, participants spend eight days in formal classroom learning. The rest of the time they are working on their transformational change initiative hand-in-hand with their coach, faculty, mentor and line manager. To support this, CCL put together a custom-built technology to support self-directed and applied learning. All participants said that they were prepared to a “great” extent for classroom learning by completing self-directed learning on the platform.

A network to provide developmental support and feedback was also key to the programme’s success. Assessments provided participants with perspectives about their personality. Mentors, a diverse representation of senior leaders from across the business, worked directly with participants on their challenges. For participants, it was often an avenue to promotion. CCL’s coaches provided support throughout this process.

“Mars pushed us to partner with them in innovative ways,” says CCL’s David Dinwoodie, Vice President, Leadership Solutions. “This included undertaking applied research into Mars’ leadership ecosystem; devising a radically different approach to coaching and mentoring; promoting the value of learning through failures; measuring the financial business impact of each participants’ transformational challenge; handcrafting a technology platform; and leveraging a flipped classroom where participants guide their own learning experience in powerful ways.”



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Impact

In total, 348 participants in 19 cohorts have gone through the programme. Among the benefits are the following:

- There has been a 20% increase in Mars' promotion of ready senior leaders in the past five years, largely due to ALP's impact
 - ALP alumni are promoted to senior-level positions at twice the rate than similarly identified high potentials who have not attended the programme
 - The earnings generated by the transformational change initiatives have resulted in a 7.1 payback ratio
 - For every leader Mars sends through ALP, the business can expect nearly \$300,000 of incremental earnings
 - Since 2014, ALP alumni have generated nearly \$15 million in incremental earnings for the business as a result of the transformational change initiative
 - 9,396 key stakeholders have been influenced by ALP alumni – an average of 27 stakeholders per participant
 - Over the last five years, the programme has averaged a rating of 4.88 (on a rating scale from 1-5) on outcomes. Additionally, senior leaders have been able to learn about similar challenges faced by their peers across the globe and leverage this knowledge in different ways
- There are many examples of individual transformation as well.

"Through all the feedback and support, I was able to see that 'I got this. I am capable. I have the confidence. Now I need the courage. So go and do it.' That has lots to do with ready-now leaders," says ALP alumna Saskia Connell, P&O Director, UK Wrigley.

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Tomi Lyle, Mars' Global Director of People and

Questions used to guide ALP participants in building their transformational change plan

9 Steps:

1. Name your initiative: What is your transformational change initiative?
2. Changes to Make: What needs to change at Mars for you to be successful in driving the transformation?
3. Stakeholder Groups-Mapping: What stakeholder groups do you need to consider based on what needs to change at Mars?
4. Identify Change Agents: Which relationships need to be built in your stakeholder groups?
5. Know your Agents: What do you need to know about yourself and others to build the relationships that will advance your transformational change?
6. Fortify Relationships: How will you fortify key relationships?
7. Focus on Relationships: What will you do to ensure that you focus on relationships when your natural default may be task-orientated problem solving?
8. Relationship Task List: Make a plan to focus on relationships.
9. Adapt and Influence: What have you learned?

Organization for Procurement, sees a new confidence in Mars' leaders. "They are revitalised in terms of their energy for learning and taking on business challenges," she says.

This sentiment is shared by Juan Martin, President of Multisales and the Mars ALP Executive Sponsor.

"ALP truly accelerates our high-potentials' readiness and capacity to take on senior leader positions," he says. "ALP provides the platform for our top 4% of high-potentials to not only learn to drive change effectively across our global system but also prepare themselves to take on senior positions more rapidly."

These results and the individual impact is testament to CCL's 17-year partnership with Mars.

"One of the keys to success is the alignment between CCL's core values and our five principles," concludes Mars Chief Learning Officer Antoine Mangin. "That level of alignment has ensured that every leadership initiative not only helps us develop great leaders, but also makes a significant impact on our business."