



# Leading People Program Overview

## Program Overview

### What is it?

Discovery in Action® is an innovative approach to leadership development for people managers that blends:

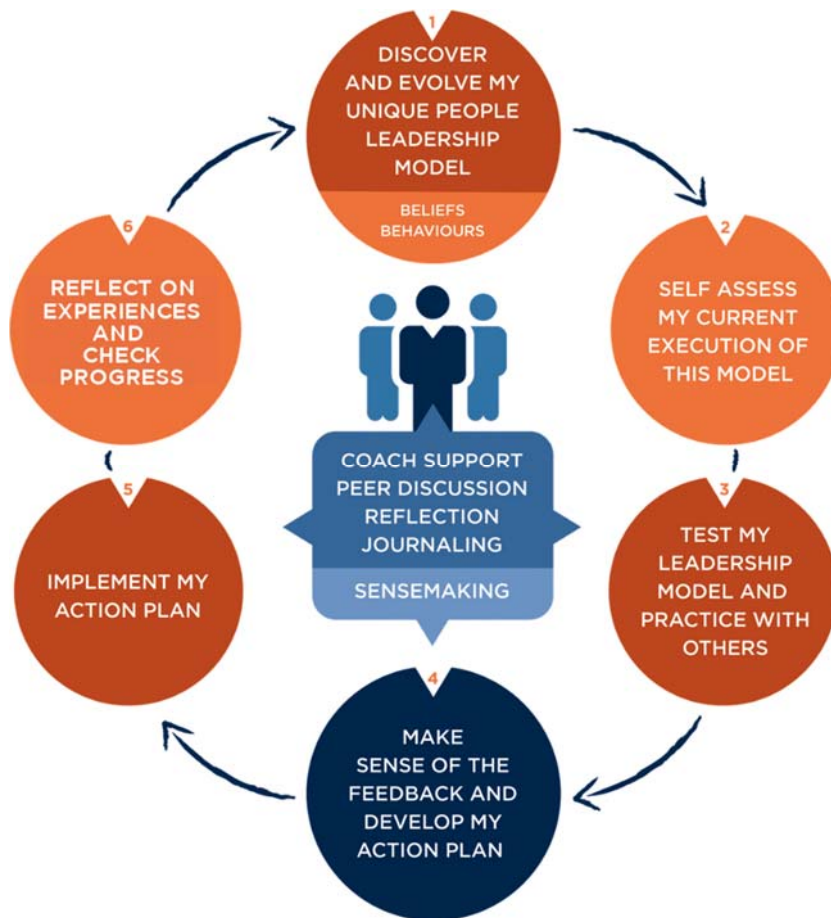
- **Action learning** where participants are the subject of their own research and take responsibility for their choices
- A **workplace based, real world perspective** where everyday issues provide the context and drive the personal journey for each person
- An **extended learning period** with sustained support that encourages a continuous cycle of reflection + action + feedback
- **Peer groups** which accelerate the development process and provide a rich learning environment through listening, challenging, supporting and mentoring
- A **guided process of self-discovery** which creates self-awareness of participants beliefs and behaviours and encourages the development of their own leadership model specific to their situation

It is a self-directed learning process where the content is created by the participants themselves drawing on their knowledge, experience and workplace based issues. This makes it a leading-edge example of where leadership development is heading - action learning and reflective practice grounded in real work situations.

### What is the focus of the program?

Discovery in Action® draws from principles in action science, emotional intelligence, adult learning and appreciative inquiry. It encourages people leaders to discover, evolve and apply their unique people leadership model with the assistance of a skilled facilitator and the support of a peer group. Participants explore:

- When do people perform at their best?
- What do I have to do to get my team to perform at their best?
- How well am I doing those things?
- What actions do I need to undertake to improve the performance of my team?
- What are the results of my actions?



## How does the process work?

Participants work through a facilitated process where they:

1. Develop and clarify their own individual 'model of people leadership', which includes identifying the conditions under which they believe people will perform at their best and the behaviours the leaders need to demonstrate to get the best out of their people.
2. Reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in executing their model.
3. Test their thinking with their staff and others and get feedback on their model and perceptions of their behaviours and actions in practice.
4. Develop and articulate an action plan that identifies specific behaviours and actions they will take to improve leadership of their people.
5. Take action and implement their plan.
6. Reflect and learn from experience and check progress.



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## What is the time commitment?

This is an organisationally-based, individual development program with a time commitment that is easily manageable:

**7x two-three hour meetings approximately one month apart**

**8-10 hours of individual reflection, feedback + action**

### Details:

- Each meeting is facilitated by an experienced coach
- First + last meeting with entire cohort (typically 20-25)
- Middle 5 meetings with a small group of peers (approx. 5 people)
- Participants share, discuss and refine their thinking in the peer group
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- The peer groups work supportively and collegially to make sense of their experiences



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## What are the Key Features?

Discovery in Action® is an applied leadership development program – it is *not* a training program. There is no content-based ‘classroom instruction’ as part of the program. The program utilises adult learning principles and is based on the premise that participants have a range of leadership and life experiences, knowledge and theory that they bring to bear in their leadership development.

### Key Features:

- There is an emphasis on deep reflective thinking that requires participants to challenge their beliefs and behaviours. This can provide great individual insight and growth for participants.
- Participants develop a practical leadership model in their own words. This ensures that the program is highly relevant to their specific context and that they own and take responsibility for it.
- The program has a focus on action over an extended period of time allowing for experimentation and development of new behaviours and actions.
- Leaders that participates in the program is required to engage with people they lead as part of the process. Through this interaction they gain greater insight into themselves as well as strengthen their relationships.
- Peer group meetings provide a safe environment for sharing of beliefs, experiences and actions that facilitates learning from each other as well as tremendous support throughout the process.
- During peer group meetings facilitators introduce content (models, theories, research, practical tips) into the facilitated discussion that is relevant to issues faced by that peer group.
- There is a vast set of resources of guides, tools, models, articles and videos that are easily accessible through a members-only website.



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## What are the key benefits?

The **Discovery in Action®** program guides participants to embed real behaviour change which ignites team engagement and encourages everyone to reach their potential. The ultimate goal of the program is to have a positive impact on organisational culture and performance through more effective leadership. The benefits we have seen as a result of the program:

- People **'stepping up' and owning their roles** through a journey of self-discovery which allows them to define their personal leadership style and transforms them into leaders with clarity and confidence.
- **Embedding accountability** in people managers with an emphasis on learning from experience and feedback so that they understand and take responsibility for their choices and the impact of their behaviour on their team's performance.
- Encourages leaders to be true to themselves and **develop an authentic voice** that enables positive relationships built on trust and leads to greater organisational stability. Remember, people join organisations but they leave bosses!

## Conclusion

**Discovery in Action®** works effectively as a stand-alone program with an emphasis on individual leadership practice in the workplace or as part of a broader, long-term leadership development strategy. Where the program is applied through the management structure of an organisation or a division it also has the potential to positively impact organizational culture as leaders actively engage with each other in conversations about leadership and undertake actions and behaviours that involve the entire workforce.

## Like to Know More?

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