

THDA's Leadership Development Series (LDS)

"It is important to me that our leadership focus at THDA be on people. One conversation at a time, one relationship at a time, leadership should be centered on people. This focus includes not only the people who work at THDA, but it also includes our partners, our stakeholders, and ultimately it includes the citizens that we serve. If we invest in the development of THDA's staff, create a fun and rewarding work environment, and empower our staff with authority and responsibility, they will do great things."

With these words, THDA Executive Director Ted R. Fellman launched the next stage of THDA's plan for growing leaders. THDA is comprised of "Leaders," not "Managers." The vernacular at THDA excludes the reference to "Managers." Long gone are the days of process management. THDA is encouraging a new level of engagement, a culture of respect, sharing of authority and accountability in which "people management" is a critical leadership competency.

THDA aspires to integrate a sustainable Leadership Development Plan to cultivate the leadership skills of its Leadership Team members in alignment with THDA's Mission and Values. THDA's HR Team designed a systemic approach to equipping Leaders with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need both as individuals and as a group to become more successful leaders as defined by THDA. LDS was born when Executive Director, Ted Fellman, presented his vision of Leadership at THDA in his presentation entitled *Defining Leadership at THDA and Setting Expectations for Leaders*. Mr. Fellman's program advocated a foundation of trust, mutual accountability, and openness through systems that provide transparency, empowering employees by enabling communication, pushing decision making down through the ranks, and investing heavily in training.

THDA recognized that continuous leadership development across the organization is critical to success. In order to cultivate leaders at all levels, LDS's 2009 plan consisted of three "prongs:" LDS I, II, and III.

LDS I – Executive Leadership

Directors through Executive Director, 19 participants

This program included:

- 1) Individual leader assessments conducted through an electronic 360° assessment
- 2) Individual leader coaching sessions – a minimum of six hours of executive coaching for each participant
- 3) Overall organizational assessment
- 4) Group leadership development training
 - Five half and full-day group workshops over a 12-month period

- Two-day teambuilding and strategic planning offsite retreat
- Designed around the needs based on the 360° results along with the coaching session.
- Workshop topics included:
 - Creating a Feedback Culture for Leadership Development
 - The Power and Practice of Appreciative Language in Pivotal Conversations
 - Conversations for Commitment and Accountability

5) Measurement of outcomes

The book, *Leadership Agility: The Five Levels of Mastery for Anticipating and Initiating Change*, formed the foundation for this program. This program focused on and resulted in relationships built on trust and shared commitment. Improved communication, including skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback, was a major outcome from the program. “One conversation at a time,” became a common mantra spoken and modeled by senior leadership, as relationships were nurtured and new communication skills were practiced.

LDS II – Talent Management (TM)

16 participated in four half-day workshops.

The development focus for the next level of leader was Talent Management, aligning business and people strategies. Talent management drives organizational results when leaders use the right data to align business and people strategies. The learning applied a systems-thinking approach to leading the organization, and presented skills in strategy development and workforce planning. A process and tool for assessing an organization’s readiness in managing talent and succession planning integrates the factors.

Four workshops, homework, and interactive exercises were included in the program. Workshop topics included:

- The Art of Hovering: The Strategic View
Leading the organization’s performance through systems thinking
- Fasten Your Seatbelts for Landing: Workforce Planning
Developing Strategy

LDS III – Performance Management (PM)

16 frontline leaders participated in four half-day workshops.

Performance Management, to enable frontline leaders achieve results by hiring, assessing, developing, and retaining quality talent, one employee at a time, was the focus of this tier. Workshop topics included:

- Hiring the Best
- Assessing for Performance

- Developing for the Future
- Retaining Talent

A unique finale event, Leadership Reflections, showcased the learnings of LDS II and LDS III to an LDS I audience in an *Inside the Actors' Studio* format.

Leadership Council

THDA's Three-Year Strategic Plan defines being an Industry Leader as a major goal. An element within that goal is to "create and maintain an ongoing employee leadership development institute." It is understood that THDA staff will not only be the expert in their fields, but also energetically look for ways to support their own growth and that of their co-workers.

To meet this goal, THDA recently formed a Leadership Council. The Leadership Council is a mechanism designed to complement the Leadership Development Series and sustain leadership foundations from which all staff will benefit. The Council is comprised of a group of nine members of THDA's leadership collaborating to design systems that build leadership capacity and help THDA achieve its strategic goals. The Council seeks to integrate all three prongs of LDS in order to cross-pollinate Leadership dimensions.

The Council has developed Guiding Principles for THDA complemented by Core Competencies and Behaviors of Leadership. The Core Competencies will drive accountability. Accountability will drive a soon-to-be revised performance evaluation process that will integrate the new Competencies for Leadership. Ultimately, the Guiding Principles will be embedded into a multitude of THDA processes including recruiting, onboarding, performance measurement, and development. They will become a part of THDA's Core Values.

THDA is re-offering LDS II – Talent Management, for LDS I members and others. Future presentations of Performance Management, and additional drill down sessions on topics covered in LDS I and II, are anticipated. These and future Leadership Development Series learning opportunities will be driven by the Leadership Council as it continues to find ways to engage all levels of Leadership at THDA.

Visuals

Materials from LDS I, LDS II and LDS III

THDA's Mission Statement

Guiding Principles, Core Competencies, and Behaviors