

THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF NEXT GENERATION SIMULATIONS

Simulations may work in practice, but they certainly do not work in theory.

WHEN WE WERE FIRST ROLLING OUT *Virtual Leader*, we knew there would be a lot of skepticism. People might be willing to believe that a soup can be eaten like a meal, or that it takes a tough man to make a tender chicken, but they sure weren't going to believe that you can learn leadership from what looked like a game.

We knew we needed to study the hell out of a few implementations. Here's one.

THE NEED FOR INFLUENTIAL LEADERS

The challenges at a division of a Fortune 100 company were typical. The groups needed to relate better across departments, achieve desired meeting outcomes, use time better, and build healthy relationships.

To create "influential leaders," the division heads brought in three elements:

- *Virtual Leader*, the off-the-shelf version of the leadership simulator from SimuLearn
- Corpath, a firm focused on executive coaching
- GEMA™-Lead360, one of the most rigorous 360-degree assessment tools on the market today

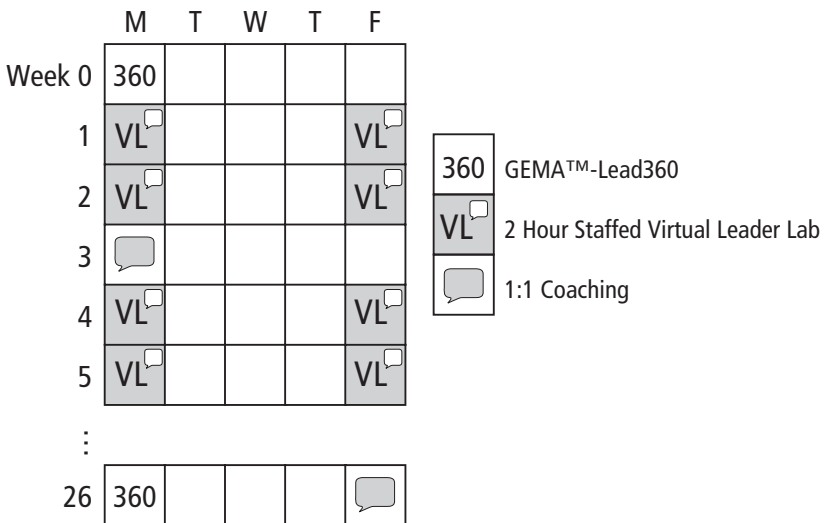
PROCESS

A 360-degree pre-assessment was conducted around the participants. The managers themselves, their peers, their subordinates, and their supervisors were given an extensive questionnaire about the managers’ performances.

The managers were then introduced to *Virtual Leader* and were required to spend eight two-hour lab sessions on the simulator, broken up over four weeks. The labs were available twice a week, allowing flexibility for the managers, and were staffed with a Corpath facilitator to answer questions. Half-way through the lab sessions, the Corpath facilitator spent one-on-one time with each participant, reviewing the results of his or her original 360-degree assessment and putting it in context of his or her behavior in the simulator (Figure 26.1).

The participants “graduated” five weeks after they began the program. Then, six months after the program began (five months after the last contact), the managers again were assessed, both on business performance changes (something the organization rigorously tested) and on a second 360-degree evaluation.

Figure 26.1. The Calendar for the GEMA™-Lead360/Corpath/SimuLearn Rollout.



This process was designed for the group, not just to optimize learning, but also to meet their schedule and even to maximize the use of the physical environment. Many other approaches were possible.

AREAS COVERED BY GEMA™-LEAD360

GEMA™-Lead360 is well-known, not only for the rigor by which it analyzes results, but also for the predictive areas it covers.

GEMA™-Lead360 looks at dozens of *positive* behaviors, including:

- Achievement Seeking—Actually creates useful contributions
- Affirming—Seeks out ways to affirm others
- Encouraging—Actually helps others do better
- Enthusiastic—Has a positive attitude toward ordinary work activities
- Equality Seeking—Promotes the attitude for treating others as equals
- Leading—Masterfully creates organizational visions
- Nurturing—Makes earnest efforts to nurture others
- Persuasive—Is respectfully persuasive
- Responsive—Makes efforts to respond to others
- Task Centered—Creates activity that promotes meaningful work
- Thought Expressed—Tends to express thoughts and ideas

GEMA™-Lead360 also looks at dozens of *negative* behaviors, including:

- Action Suppressed—Appears to have little energy for ordinary work activities
- Action Suppressed—Avoids using energy for ordinary work activities
- Critical—Tries to control others with the use of criticism
- Detached—Avoids interacting with others
- Egotistical—Braggs about own achievements as being superior to others
- Indifferent—Seems indifferent to ordinary work activities
- Intimidating—Tries to intimidate others with excessive self-importance

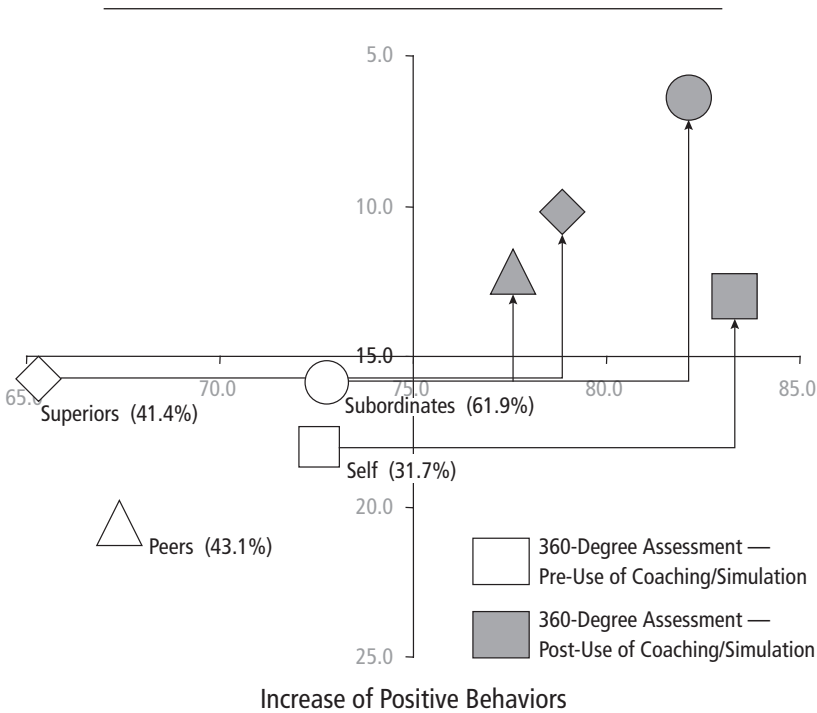
- Manipulative—Manipulates others for own self-serving advantage
- Revenge Seeking—Gets even; is quick to retaliate
- Ruling—Tries to be a ruler over others
- Self-Centered—Expects favors from others but does not return favors
- Thought Suppressed—Avoids expression of thoughts and ideas

RESULTS THAT ENDURED

The business results were significant. The participants who went through the coaching/simulation program improved their teams’ relative performance rankings, on average, 22 percent. The measurement was a non-subjective metric on volume of successful client jobs completed.

Just as relevant was the way these managers got these results (Figure 26.2). Six months after the program, the increases in positive

Figure 26.2. 360-Degree Assessment, Pre- and Post-Simulation/Coaching.



Source: SimuLearn Inc. Used with Permission.

Table 26.1. Analysis of Increase of Positive Behaviors.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORS— SERVICE BEYOND SELF				DIFFERENCE	%
		<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	Scores	Increase
Contribution	Self	69.2	81.1	11.9	17.2%
	Superiors	61.3	72.5	11.2	18.3%
	Peers	63.9	75.5	11.6	18.2%
	Subordinates	69.4	77.6	8.2	11.8%
Cooperation	Self	75.8	86.3	10.5	13.9%
	Superiors	65.2	86.2	21.0	32.2%
	Peers	68.3	77.0	8.7	12.7%
	Subordinates	71.8	82.8	11.0	15.3%
Connection	Self	72.6	82.4	9.8	13.5%
	Superiors	69.2	77.6	8.4	12.1%
	Peers	69.7	80.0	10.3	14.8%
	Subordinates	76.8	85.8	9.0	11.7%
Average Increase					16.0%

behaviors (Table 26.1) and the cessations of negative behavior (Table 26.2) across peers, subordinates, and superiors were unprecedented in GEMA™-Lead360s fifteen-year history, including previous Corpath/GEMA™-Lead360 joint engagements.

PEERS, SUPERVISORS, SUBORDINATES, SELVES

To sum it up, the managers who went through the assessment/coaching/simulation program significantly improved their value to the organization, while strengthening their relationships with their peers, supervisors, and subordinates.

Simulations are hard. They force us to innovate. They are a challenge to create, and not the easiest things to deploy.

But the good news is that they work. And as we learn more and do more, they will work better than we can imagine.

Table 26.2. Analysis of Reduction of Negative Behaviors.

NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS— SELF BEYOND SERVICE		DIFFERENCE			
		Pre	Post	Score %	%
Superiority	Self	15.8	9.4	−6.4	−40.5%
	Superiors	12.8	7.8	−5.0	−39.1%
	Peers	21.6	10.4	−11.2	−51.9%
	Subordinates	13.2	4.6	−8.6	−65.2%
Domination	Self	16.1	13.6	−2.5	−15.5%
	Superiors	15.4	10.0	−5.4	−35.1%
	Peers	20.1	10.4	−9.7	−48.3%
	Subordinates	17.3	6.6	−10.7	−61.8%
Withdrawal	Self	22.1	15.9	−6.2	−28.1%
	Superiors	18.7	12.5	−6.2	−33.2%
	Peers	19.6	15.5	−4.1	−20.9%
	Subordinates	16.7	7.6	−9.1	−54.5%
Average					−41.2%
Decrease					

COMING UP NEXT

Are *Life's Little Instruction Book* and *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* more related than we thought? And what is the implication for, well, everything?