

# BERKSHIRE COUNTY REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD

## LEADERSHIP STRAND



### **Partnership Members:**

Berkshire Applied Technology Council, Berkshire Community College,  
Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Berkshire Works

BayStateWorks Promising Practice Case Study

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# 1 The Need

In rural Berkshire County the population growth has declined and the population is aging. It is estimated that by 2007, approximately 45% of the Berkshire County workforce will be eligible for retirement and 18% of the workforce will be 65 or older. An increasing percentage of labor market entrants will come from groups that have traditionally received less education. Those individuals who have the technical skills (gained on the job or through the Berkshire BayStateWorks project) to do a job will often lack the leadership skills necessary to fill the increasing number of front-line leadership positions that will be available. There are also many small to medium-sized companies that cannot afford to provide leadership training to employees, although it is of critical need.

# 2 The Solution

**The Berkshire BayStateWorks Leadership Strand** consists of a strong leadership development curriculum for front-line supervisors, new managers and individual contributors likely to be promoted in the near future. It is designed to ensure that participants have greater impact on the success of their organizations by learning how to provide positive leadership, encourage and support teamwork, develop employee skills and competence, establish clear direction and goals, and prevent legal liabilities. The training is very practical and readily applicable to everyday work situations. Sessions are designed to be highly interactive and incorporate experiential learning and participant sharing. Specific details are as follows:

- The curriculum design is focused on creating a learning environment over time. Students will get to know each other, build trust and have “Learning Partners” with whom they will make contact outside the classroom.
- Leaders from various businesses and the community speak to the students about their perspectives on leadership.
- There is an initial two-hour training for supervisors of students attending the program (the Supervisors' Briefing). At this initial training, supervisors become educated on the content of the training so they can get involved in and help support the students' learning process. This is to ensure that the students can go back to the workplace and implement the leadership knowledge they have learned. In this initial training, supervisors are asked to come up with two to three workplace goals surrounding leadership for the participating students and to discuss them with the students.

## Process Outcome Goals:

1. Eighty percent (80%) of students who enroll in the Leadership Strand will complete the program.
2. Fifty percent (50%) of supervisors of the prospective students will participate in the initial training session for supervisors.
3. Evaluation of every guest speaker: 80% of students will be satisfied with each speaker.
4. Evaluation of each class: 80% of students will be satisfied with each class.

## Impact Outcome Goals:

1. As reported by supervisors, there will be an improvement in students' leadership ability, work relationships, and attitude documented in their performance reviews,.
2. As evidenced through follow-up phone calls, at least one of the goals established by supervisors will have been met.
3. Eighty percent (80%) of those completing the course will have improved leadership skills as evidenced by a pre/post self-assessment.

### **3 Implementation**

In conjunction with Charter Oak Consulting Group, the BayStateWorks staff developed the curriculum based on the needs of the target population. The following is a list of topics and the established goals for each of the eight sessions:

#### **3.1 Session 1**

##### ***Dynamics of Team Development: Building High-Performing Teams***

The first session focused on elements of high-performing teams and the skills that are necessary for employees to maximize team results. The training was highly interactive and included teambuilding exercises, didactic presentations, assessments, group discussions, and feedback. Participants gained a greater understanding of the elements that contribute to high-performing teams and what they can do as leaders and/or team members to enhance the results of their teams.

##### **Goals for Learners:**

- Understand the characteristics of a high-performing team.
- Increase self-awareness regarding your own behavior and what you do that hinders or enhances your team's performance.
- Learn about different work style preferences using *Charter Oak's Preferred Work Style Inventory*. Learn how work style differences often cause conflicts between group members and how to minimize conflicts and work more effectively with all styles to benefit the team.
- Develop effective team communication skills.
- Develop creative problem-solving skills.
- Understand how to use the power of groups to enhance individual performance.
- Learn about virtual teams and what you need to do differently for virtual teams to perform better.
- Get to know each other better and begin to form strong learning teams.

#### **3.2 Session 2**

##### ***Legal Liabilities of the Supervisor and Effective and Legal Interviewing***

This session examined the State and Federal laws that impact the workplace. Participants learned about how these laws affect their role and how to prevent legal liabilities. In addition, participants learned how to conduct an effective and legally sound interview.

##### **Goals for Learners:**

- Learn about the legal landscape at work. Review Federal and State laws.
- Discover ways of preventing and handling sexual, racial, and other harassment and discrimination claims.
- Learn the importance of critical employment practices including documentation, discipline and dismissal.
- Understand how to interview effectively and legally; practice these skills.
- Understand when it is critical to go to Human Resources.
- Learn about the supervisor's role in the eyes of the law.

### **3.3 Session 3**

#### ***The Leader's Window***

The Leader's Window session is based on the book *The Leader's Window: Mastering the Four Styles of Leadership to Build High-Performing Teams*, written by two Charter Oak consultants: John Beck and Neil Yeager. This highly interactive session focused on helping managers develop their knowledge and skills for leading individuals effectively. Participants learned about their leadership styles and how to use the full range of styles to foster individual accountability and greater levels of performance.

#### **Goals for Learners:**

- Recognize the four leadership styles of the L4 System, the behaviors associated with each one, and the effective and ineffective uses of each style.
- Understand how to use leadership styles to get individuals to perform to the best of their potential.
- Use an assessment tool to identify leadership strengths and weaknesses.
- Learn the Situational Analysis and Performance Contracting structures for using the L4 system to achieve individual excellence.
- Understand how to use leadership styles to create effective group dynamics.

### **3.4 Session 4**

#### ***Supervisor as Leader***

This session focused on the role of supervisor and key elements of managing and leading. Participants learned how to apply theories of human motivation to the workplace and identify what zaps employees' energy and what energizes them to perform at their best. Participants learned key elements of building trusting relationships in the workplace.

#### **Goals for Learners:**

- Understand the role of supervisor.
- Learn how to successfully transition from an employee with peer relationships to supervising your former peer group.
- Discover best practices for reaching and supporting the front-line employee.
- Identify ways to motivate employees.
- Learn the difference between managing and leading and the importance of both.

- Learn and apply a model for building relationships by using Charter Oak’s Pentagon of Trust Model.

### **3.5 Session 5**

#### ***Organizational Change Dynamics***

Organizations are constantly changing. Managers need to learn how to embrace change and help others navigate change more successfully. In this course participants learned about the individual and organizational drivers of change. Students were given an opportunity to examine their own reaction to change, learning strategies for strengthening change resilience and becoming effective change agents for their organizations.

#### **Goals for Learners:**

- Examine personal responses to change.
- Understand individual and organizational readiness for change.
- Identify ways to minimize resistance of others to change.
- Learn how to be an effective agent of change.

### **3.6 Session 6**

#### ***Coaching For Performance Improvement***

This session introduced essential coaching skills using the Charter Oak’s Coaching Model. Participants learned and practiced the coaching skills, including communication, problem-solving, developing people, and providing performance feedback. By focusing on their own real-world cases in the coaching practices, students also developed real-time solutions to current performance problems.

#### **Goals for Learners:**

- Define coaching as a management behavior and learn the skills associated with effective coaching.
- Understand how coaching can contribute to employee development and can lead to sustained high performance.
- Learn a process model for coaching and demonstrate the skills involved in the process.
- Develop coaching skills through practice sessions using situations from our own experience.
- Learn how to apply coaching skills as an effective method for handling performance problems.
- Learn about how to develop others and examine your own career development.

### **3.7 Session 7**

#### ***Effective Communication and Conflict Management***

This session was divided into two parts. In the morning participants focused on effective communication skills and, in the afternoon, on conflict management. Participants gained information and skills on effective communication that will enable them to view conflict as a

process that, when skillfully managed, can bring greater awareness, workplace productivity and commitment.

### **Goals for Learners:**

- Learn and practice communication skills.
- Become aware of how our attitudes, feelings, and beliefs about conflict affect outcomes.
- Identify organizational and cultural factors that influence workplace conflict situations.
- Assess the effectiveness of our individual conflict management styles.
- Learn and apply a process model for analyzing and managing a current conflict situation.
- Learn and practice skills needed to effectively manage conflicts and reach agreements.
  - Evaluate the costs and benefits in a conflict situation.
  - Diagnose the core of the conflict.
  - Use Active Listening to understand the other person's position.
  - Use assertions ("I statements") to clearly state your own position.
  - Use supporting and confronting to acknowledge feelings and identify differences.
  - Use problem-solving and negotiation to create win/win outcomes.

## **3.8 Session 8**

### ***Organizing Work***

This session focused on principles of organizing work. Participants received tips, tools and techniques for managing meetings, effective planning, goal-setting, and decision-making for improving results in the workplace.

### **Goals for Learners:**

- Learn the factors that contribute to effective planning, goal-setting and decision-making.
- Identify the critical needs of those who have a stake in the results of their individual work.
- Set goals that are linked to key results needed by stakeholders.
- Identify decisions needed for effective performance and learn to create a Decision-Making Guide for aligning decisions with goals.
- Learn effective meeting management strategies and the three stages for gaining more efficiency leading meetings.

## **3.9 Community Leader Participation**

As a way of developing leaders and enriching the experience of the participants, leaders from around the community were scheduled to attend the sessions and speak to the participants regarding their history and perspective on leadership. The following is a list of guest speakers who spoke to the participants:

1. ***Kevin Kinne, Attorney*** \* Cain, Hibbard, Myers & Cook
2. ***William Hines, President & CEO*** \* Interprint

3. *State Representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli*
4. *Lansing Crane, President* \* Crane and Company
5. *Mike Tweed Kent, President* \* General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems
6. *Marge Cohen, President* \* Brien Center and Berkshire Bike Path Council
7. *Mayor James Ruberto, City of Pittsfield*
8. *Tim Coe,*\* Berkshire Management Association
9. *Tyler Fairbank, President* \* Berkshire Economic Development Corporation

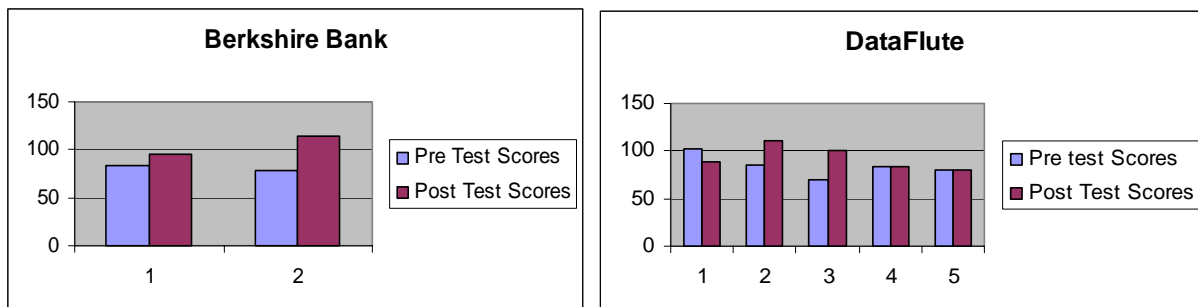
Along with the curriculum, program leaders presented the participants' supervisors with a briefing, highlighting the leadership training and the ways that they could continue to develop the training participants within the workplace. Discussion was focused on the participants' curriculum, developmental goals over a six-month period that align with the strategic initiative of their business and developing two or three goals on which the participants will concentrate. An action plan worksheet was provided to the supervisors and participants that mapped out the goals of the participant, the expected impact their success at meeting these goals would have on the business, the tasks it would take to achieve the goals, the support required, appropriate deadlines, the decisions needed to be made, ways to measure the impact and potential obstacles and ways to overcome them.

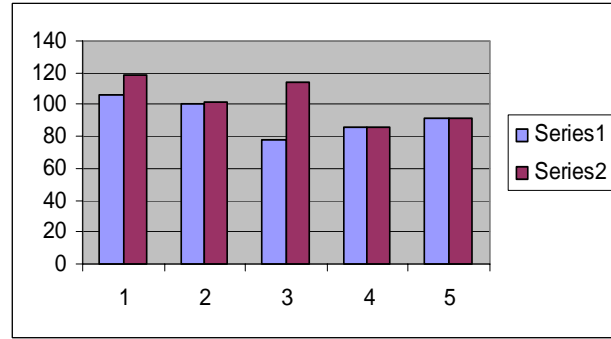
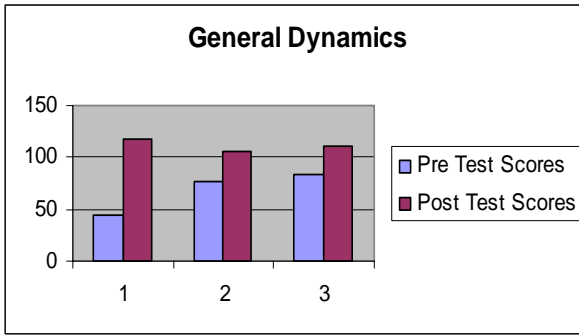
## 4 Results

As a result of the BayStateWorks practical and extensive leadership program, program leaders were able to meet, and in many areas exceed, the *session, process* and *impact* goals set at the beginning of the program.

### 4.1 Pre and Post Test Results

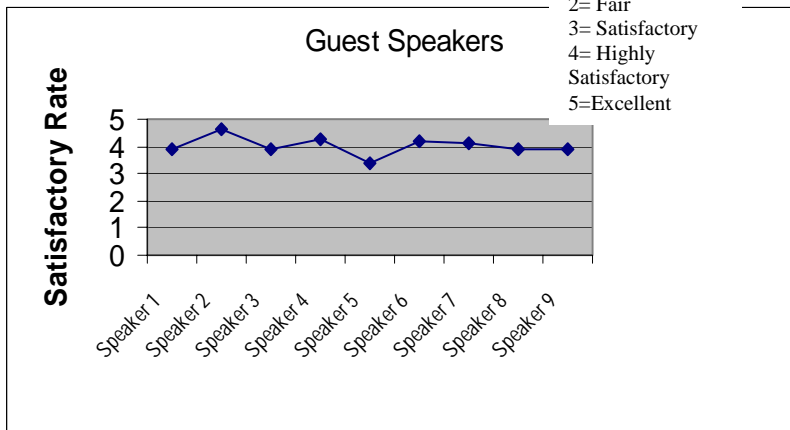
As seen in the pre- and post- self assessments, participants reached the session goals of understanding and retaining the curriculum. The following graphs show a sampling of the participants' knowledge of leadership skills before and after the program was complete:



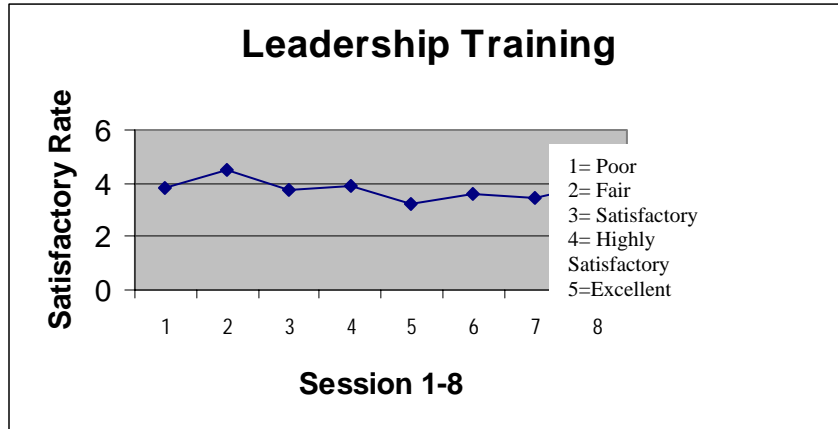


## 4.2 Process Outcome Goals Results

- Out of 28 participants that enrolled into the program, 26 of the participants completed the program. This equals a completion rate of 95%, exceeding the process outcome goal by 10%.
- Out of eight companies that participated in the leadership program, four companies had supervisors participate in the participants' training sessions. This resulted in a 50% participation rate, meeting the goal of 50% participation of supervisors.
- As a result of each participant evaluating each guest speaker on a scale of one to five, one being poor, two being fair, three being satisfactory, four being highly satisfactory, and five being excellent, the average rating for all the guest speakers was 4.01. This meets the goal of an 80% satisfaction rate. See graph

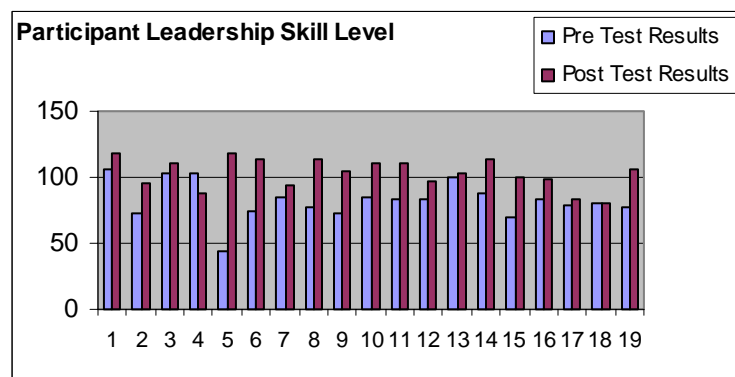


- As a result of each participant evaluating each session's curriculum at the end of the day, on a scale of one to five, one being poor, two being fair, three being satisfactory, four being highly satisfactory, and five being excellent, the average rating for each session was 3.8. This meets the goal of an 80% satisfaction rate. See graph below:



### 4.3 Impact Outcome Goals Results

- **Performance review will show improvement in participants' leadership ability, work relationships and attitude, as reported by supervisors:** This has yet to be determined. As stated in the *Implementation* section, participants and their supervisors will develop two or three goals that align with a strategic initiative of their businesses over a six-month period.
- **At least one established goal by supervisors will have been met:** As stated above, this is yet to be determined and at the end of the six-month period this information will be available.
- **Pre/Post-Test assessments showed 80% of those completing the course will have improved leadership skills:** From the results of the pre- and post-test (see graph below), the program achieved the goal of 80% of participants having improved leadership skills.



(NOTE: 19 out of the 26 participants took both the pre- and post-tests.)

## 5 Lessons

After reviewing the leadership program, program leaders were able to identify areas that stand out as important lessons for future programs.

## 5.1 Instruction and Implementation

- *Selecting a qualified instructor or collaborating with a reputable company is imperative.* The most important piece in developing a successful leadership program is to provide the participants with an instructor that understands the program's needs and goals. It is critical to the success of the program that the instructor researches the participants and the businesses at which they are employed. This allows for a connection between the participant and instructor, as well as the development of a relevant curriculum. As a result of the collaboration with *Charter Oak Consulting Group*, program leaders were able to deliver a successful program that the participants could understand and retain. Participants were able to take what they learned and apply it to their everyday work situations. This made for a highly interactive and energetic learning environment.
- *Provide participants with positive examples of leadership from the community.* Another important aspect of this training from which the participants benefited was the guest speakers from around the community talking about their leadership styles, roles and responsibilities, and how they have impacted their employment and the community.
- *Have participants provide feedback.* In collaboration with Charter Oak, program leaders were able to get valuable information about the success of the program by giving pre- and post-testing that showed the participants' skill levels before and after the program was finished. Program leaders also had participants fill out evaluations at the end of each session. These evaluations highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each session and will allow the program leaders to develop future successful programs.
- *Engage participants' supervisors in the training and curriculum.* As a result of many training efforts, it has been observed that successful training can only be accomplished if the participants take what they have learned and apply it to their job responsibilities immediately. As a way to ensure this success, program leaders developed a "Supervisor's Briefing," where participating companies were encouraged to send the participants' supervisors for a day of curriculum overview and goal-setting. The participation of the supervisors enabled the participants and their supervisors to develop goals based on the leadership training and connect them to their job responsibilities. Therefore, the training that participants received was implemented and not forgotten.

## 5.2 Lessons from Participant Evaluations

After reviewing all of the evaluations from the leadership program, the feedback that was apparent from the participants was as follows.

- The length of the program: most of the participants felt that eight full-day sessions were too many and would have liked fewer sessions with shorter days.
- The guest speakers: the participants rated the majority of the guest speakers to be *highly satisfactory*, and commented that they were a positive addition to the program's curriculum. The guest speakers were a great way for the participants to learn about different leadership styles and to interact with local leaders. This gave the participants encouragement to develop and strengthen their leadership skills, become successful within their current employment, and strive to become future leaders.

## **Appendices (not included in this format)**

- Appendix A: The Leadership Strand Curriculum
- Appendix B: Charter Oak Consulting Group At-a-Glance
- Appendix C: Behavioral Interviewing Questions
- Appendix D: Leadership Strand Course Evaluation
- Appendix E: Leadership Strand Self Assessment, Post Test
- Appendix F: Dynamics of Team Development: Building a High-Performing Team
- Appendix G: Supervisor as Leader
- Appendix H: Making Change Happen
- Appendix I: Coaching for Performance Improvement
- Appendix J: Conflict Management
- Appendix K: Organizing Work & Meeting Management
- Appendix L: The L4 System: Leadership4 High Performing Teams
- Appendix M: Leadership Strand Training Highlights