

Are you developing your leaders for tomorrow?

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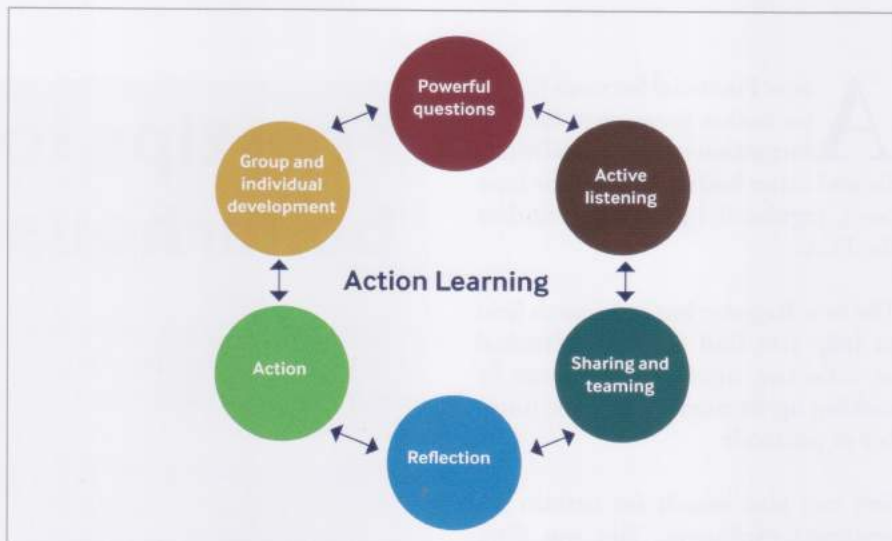
For individuals to develop leadership competencies, three elements are needed: action, learning and reflection. Action means actually doing something and seeing the impact this has. Learning means to have new views and insights brought to our attention. Reflection means to compare one's thought frameworks with those of others and with the feedback from the environment.

Leadership development approaches often address two but rarely all three of these elements. Training programmes allow to learn and reflect, but action is often absent. On-the-job work acts on company issues, but learning and reflection are left to chance. Team building allows to learn and reflect about oneself and others, but this temporary 'high' quickly disappears back at the office. Coaching combines all three elements, but helps one person at a time and is very investment intensive.

What is Action Learning?

What if an organisation could (1) address real business challenges, develop options and implement solutions, (2) have leaders practice their competencies continuously and (3) do this with a whole team? Action learning is a problem solving process that does exactly that, and that by design integrates taking action, learning and reflection. A team works on a real and current business issue, not a case study. Asking questions about the problem, rather than jumping towards solutions, allows you to explore all aspects of a problem and often leads to innovative solutions not yet thought about.

An Action Learning team typically



works together for three hours, every one or two weeks. At the end of each session, team members commit to actions and implement these between sessions. The following session builds on the results of the actions and team members continue to peel the onion until the problem is solved in a satisfactory way. During each session, members practice and develop their leadership, listening and team working skills.

The perfect fit for Thailand

A study by Jean-Francois Cousin (ICF MCC) concludes that the biggest challenges for leadership development for Thais are problem solving, expressing ideas and taking initiative. The Action Learning process is the perfect answer for these developments. Action Learning deals with real problems the organization is facing, and the focus is not on finding the best answer, as in a brainstorming session.

Asking questions creates a safer environment than when one is supposed to come up with the answers. Ques-

tioning allows the team to find the root of the problem and explore solutions. At the end of an Action Learning session, everyone has actions to implement, and there is reciprocal commitment for follow up. Action Learning is a team-based process and works very well in cultures where people are more at ease working in small groups. Training and certifying internal coaches can be done quickly and the organization becomes independent to maintain and further deploy the Action Learning approach.



Contact the World Institute for Action Learning - Thailand (www.wialthailand.com) to find out how Action Learning can help your teams solve critical business challenges and develop their leadership skills, at the same time. peter@wialthailand.com or 0819397833.