



THE SIMPLY LEADERSHIP

# A Case Study In Adaptability

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Simply®



*It takes more than job descriptions and an organizational chart to understand a company.*

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**WHEN IT COMES TIME TO HELP CRITICAL LEADERS GROW, YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.**

Working Simply, an innovative management consultancy, knows that listening and responding to the needs of the people are what guarantee success. In 2012, Working Simply's partnership with Lend Lease Corporation made the case for such techniques.

# Your Guide to the Case Study.

*\*If in Acrobat, click on the pages below to visit those pages.*

*“They wanted a program that would help participants become more productive and effective, particularly in two regional divisions of Lend Lease.”*



**Lend Lease Corporation is one of the world's leading fully integrated property and infrastructure solutions providers.**

**With over 18,000 employees across the globe,** every Lend Lease division operates in a unique, competitive, and often demanding environment. The people who staff Lend Lease's operations ultimately shoulder these diverse demands, and their on-the-job performance is a critical factor in the company's success.

**2008–2011** was a volatile time for real estate and construction companies, with different conditions in every market. The staff of Lend Lease had to be responsive to each division's local economic situation, while never losing sight of the global corporate vision. This need for flexibility drove Lend Lease management to increase their investment in their most important business resource: their people.

**In late 2011,** Lend Lease began working to re-energize their middle management leadership and employee development program throughout their corporate hierarchy in the Americas. They wanted a program that would help participants become more productive and effective, particularly in two regional divisions of Lend Lease.

## RESULTS

*“By using the HBDI Whole-Brain® Model to balance out our marketing approach, we have been able to present a more complete picture of what we do to our clients. Because there are often several individuals on client selection committees, our new awareness of all thinking style has really helped us connect with more clients.”*

— Steve Conley

## **PRODUCTIVITY CHALLENGES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

The Washington, D.C., office was facing the productivity and focus challenges that come with a fast-paced work environment. As Steve Conley, VP of Project Management and Construction, put it, “We had several different challenges on the table. With a healthy project pipeline, our management staff was scrambling to keep up with the workload. Staying productive and increasing effectiveness were big concerns for our people.”

*“Because of the rapid pace of our work environment, people were losing sight of the big picture....”*

Conley adds, “Because of the rapid pace of our work environment, people were losing sight of the big picture. They were meeting customer needs, but they were acting with a reactive focus rather than a long-term, strategic focus.”

## **BURNOUT AND MORALE CHALLENGES IN LOS ANGELES**

The Los Angeles office of Lend Lease was worlds away from D.C. With the construction industry on the West Coast still suffering the effects of the 2008 recession, the L.A. office was facing a different challenge. With a lot of overworked, underproductive, and near burnout staff, they knew a focus on productivity—rather than strategic leadership development—would best suit this environment.

## **RESULTS**

*“We really needed for our middle managers to step up their overall effectiveness, and we wanted a training and coaching program that would help them do that.”*

— **Michael Concannon**, Senior Vice President of Project Management & Construction

## LEND LEASE NEEDED A DEVELOPMENT A PROGRAM THAT FIT SOME UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS

Lend Lease turned to Working Simply to help with their development needs, because of their unique, customized approach.

Working Simply modifies the components of the company's Simply Leadership program to satisfy each client. As Amanda Moorhead, VP of Human Resources Over Talent, Performance, and Development, said, "Working Simply is not an in-and-out company that does one-off sessions and leaves.

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*"They worked with us as a partner on the design of the program, and they really pushed hard to understand what our company was trying to accomplish."*

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## WORKING SIMPLY'S CUSTOM-DESIGNED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In late 2011, Working Simply began the process of designing a development program for Lend Lease by taking an in-depth look at:



*Company values*



*Market position*



*Existing leadership development framework*

## DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COMPONENTS

After this discovery process, the Working Simply team created a customized, nine-month development program for Lend Lease. The program used a wide range of tools to meet participants' needs. Working Simply combined several components, from one-on-one coaching to self-paced learning. The program components were presented in the following order, each one building on the concepts and skills of the previous:

### Component: The Work Smarter Not Harder™ Program

In this half-day instructor-led workshop, participants explored investing time wisely, getting work done, and handling information overload.

Participants left the session with an action plan that was customized to their individual workflow.

After the session, participants engaged in self-paced nano-learning to support behavior change.

### Component: The Herrmann Brain Dominance Inventory (Hbdi) & Communication™

Participants completed a Herrmann Brain Dominance Inventory (HBDI assessment) and applied those insights to communication, client interactions, coaching, and productivity in a half-day instructor-led workshop.

After the session, participants engaged in self-paced nano-learning to support behavior change.

### Component: The Hbdi And Coaching™

Each month, participants engaged in tailored one-on-one and group coaching calls to ask questions and reflect upon their experience in implementing their action plans. Each call added a layer of support and accountability to the overall curriculum.

### Component: Follow-Up Nano-Training

Nano-training provided short, targeted self-paced learning opportunities. This helped support durable behavior change.

## RESULTS

*“The understanding our people got about thinking styles has really helped. Sometimes people will joke about how so and so is a sensitive type, but they also seem to be able to communicate more clearly, and that’s huge.”*

— Steve Conley

*“By acting on their new understanding of how cognitive styles affect interpersonal interactions, participants were able to communicate with each other more effectively.”*

### Applying the Program Right Out of the Gate

Within the first three months of the program, the Lend Lease Washington, D.C., office showed encouraging results. “People saw value starting with the very first session. It piqued their interest, which helped them stay involved throughout, even though they were very busy,” said Conley. Following the HBDI component of the program, participants began to notice that their interactions with co-workers were starting to improve. By acting on their new understanding of how cognitive styles affect interpersonal interactions, participants were able to communicate with each other more effectively. This change was not limited to employee interactions only.

### Early Benefits Extend To Lend Lease Clients

When you ask Carson Tate, president and founder of Working Simply what she likes about her work, she’ll say when people quickly apply new skills in real situations and make a difference. In D.C., that happened after just the first training session. “The pitch went really well, and they landed the deal.”

According to Conley, “During the first part of the program, our sales executive team realized if they reworked an upcoming client pitch to better fit the cognitive style of the client, it might go better. The pitch went really well, and they landed the deal.”

Conley attributes the early improvements in his staff’s performance to several key factors. “First, Carson made everybody feel comfortable right off the bat, that helped people engage with the new ideas she was presenting.

Second, our people were willing to be open-minded about improvement and change. Even though they were performing well, they knew they could do even better with the right help,” said Conley.

## HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

While D.C. was already applying what they learned, the LA personnel were not responding to the initial curriculum with the same enthusiasm. At the halfway point of the program, it became apparent things were not going well in the L.A. office. While engagement with the Simply Leadership program in the Lend Lease D.C. office was very good, engagement with the program in the L.A. office was low. Participants were not making time to fully prepare and engage in the in-person training sessions, which suggested they were not finding value in the curriculum.

As Moorhead explained, “Working Simply went in with a detailed, solid plan. In our Los Angeles office, we were not seeing the engagement or excitement around the learning. The realities of the L.A. office’s situation were strongly suggesting a different approach.”

Luckily, Tate was prepared.

### Still Weathering the 2008 Financial Storm

Tate and Moorhead knew the people in Los Angeles were not inherently opposed to receiving help, they just needed it to be the right kind of help. The 2008 financial crisis was especially hard on the construction industry in the Los Angeles area, and this region of the country has been generally slow to recover, and continues to be a very challenging business environment.

In response to the difficult economic climate, the L.A. Lend Lease office had been through multiple rounds of workforce reductions. The cumulative effect of these layoffs had inevitably reduced staff morale.

Because of the low morale, staff were focused on the short term fundamentals of survival rather than on long-term issues like growth or change management. Growth and development were certainly needed, but it had become apparent that an accelerated growth program was not the right approach for the L.A. office.

## RESULTS

*“Working Simply’s Simply Leadership program really opened up communication within our L.A. office’s middle management. Leaders began to speak more openly about the challenges they were facing, and the program’s tools helped them deal more easily with differing thinking and communication styles.”*

— Amanda Moorhead

## A SIGNIFICANT COURSE CORRECTION

After mutually agreeing to put the L.A. office training on hold for a time to sort things out, Concannon approached Working Simply three weeks later with a question: “Can you create and deliver a curriculum that will help get my people to come together as a team and bring their own ideas about changing and revitalizing our culture?”

### ↙ ↗ A Bottom-Up Curriculum Designed with Participant Input

In response to this challenge, Working Simply collaborated with Concannon and Moorhead to refocus the program for the L.A. office. They began by gathering input from the office participants, to discover the core issues that needed to be addressed, and to prioritize those issues based on participant feedback.

Based on this analysis, Working Simply designed a new curriculum with a laser focus on managing change. Thriving in the midst of change was the deepest and most urgent need the participants had, and the biggest opportunity to help them become more effective. The new program was based on Chip and Dan Heath’s SWITCH model, a unique approach to making changes under difficult circumstances.

Additionally, instead of scheduling the action-learning component outside of the classroom, Working Simply worked side-by-side with participants to complete 100 minutes of instruction and 5.5 hours of one-on-one time working through each step of the SWITCH model.

Participation in this new program was a far cry from the early sessions. With the new training accurately reflecting participants’ needs, the participants were more invested in the training. “The new training program was a bottom-up approach that really helped re-energize our management staff. They felt like they owned it, and that it was up to them to make it work,” Concannon said.

## RESULTS

*“A lot of the program participants took the opportunity to step up their game and run with it. We’ve seen people who were hunkered down in survival mode take ownership of the long-term picture.”*

— Michael Concannon, L.A. Office

## KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING TOWARD RESULTS

Many managers have seen training generate a wave of initial excitement that quickly fades. To prevent that drop off in interest, L.A. office senior management had each participant present to senior management the change initiative they had designed during the training class and a plan on how to implement it in the L.A. office. A challenging deadline was set for the presentations, further creating a sense of ownership, a feeling of accountability, and a wave of bottom-up momentum. The participant presentations were very successful, ultimately leading to some new company-wide initiatives and best practices, including:



*Strategies for more targeted client prospecting*



*Building the Lend Lease brand in the L.A. area*



*Developing competency in a new area of construction*

*“Working Simply really came through with their willingness to be extremely flexible. Carson was ultimately concerned with what was right for each business unit, not blindly sticking to the original plan.”*

**- Amanda Moorhead**

## THE RESULTS: BETTER FOCUS IN D.C. & MORE ENTHUSIASM IN L.A.

Lend Lease measures the results of their personnel development initiatives using an annual employee engagement survey, and a shorter form bi-annual engagement pulse survey. Additionally, the company measures whether senior leaders are meeting their yearly individual talent development goals. These two metrics help the company determine the impact of personnel development programs like the one Working Simply delivered.

When asked to characterize the overall results, Moorhead said,



*“We saw tremendous impact, particularly on the two senior leaders Working Simply worked most closely with.”*

The company's 2012 pulse survey revealed a 15% increase in the number of employees who believed the company was providing sufficient development opportunities, and a 10% increase in the number who believed the company was adequately recognizing their efforts.

## Communication

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— **Steve Conley.** D.C Office

*“Working Simply's Simple Leadership program really opened up communication within our L.A. office's middle management. Leaders began to speak more openly about the challenges they were facing, and the program's tools helped them deal more easily with differing thinking and communication styles.”*

— **Amanda Moorhead.** Human Resources

## Leadership

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*"The program worked well because Working Simply didn't ask us to make big sweeping changes. Instead, they focused on simple, small, actionable changes that added up to make a real difference in our performance. The program actually is simple."*

— **Steve Conley.** D.C. Office

*"A lot of the program participants took the opportunity to step up their game and run with it. We've seen people who were hunkered down in survival mode take ownership of the long-term picture."*

— **Michael Concannon.** L.A. Office

## Culture

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*"People are more present, in the moment, and more focused on what's happening right then and there instead of being constantly distracted by email and text message notifications. I think this is a big reason we're seeing better results."*

— **Steve Conley.** D.C. Office

*"The program re-energized the L.A. leadership team. It helped them deal with each other more effectively, and especially helped them better manage change."*

— **Amanda Moorhead.** Human Resources

## Collaboration

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*"I've noticed more camaraderie and cross-functional interface among groups here. The new initiatives that came out of the training have generated a lot of excitement and positive momentum."*

— **Michael Concannon.** L.A. Office

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## Competitive Advantages

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*“By using the HBDI Whole-Brain® Model to balance out our marketing approach, we have been able to present a more complete picture of what we do to your clients. Because there are often several individuals on client selection committees, our new awareness of all thinking styles has really helped us connect with more clients”*

— **Steve Conley.** D.C. Office

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## Productivity

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*“The Simply Leadership program really gelled the D.C. team, improved communication, and improved productivity. It helped good performers become great, which is just what you want to see from coaching.”*

— **Amanda Moorhead.** Human Resources

*“A lot of the program participants started making better to-do lists. For example, some began color-coding telephone calls that require prior reading. It seems like a small thing, but it's made a huge difference in how much people can get done in a day.”*

— **Steve Conley.** D.C. Office

### WHY DID IT WORK?

Working Simply's engagement with Lend Lease was successful for several reasons. First, because Working Simply created a customized development program, a diverse range of participants got a substantial jump-start in their development. Second, because Working Simply was able to adapt to the realities of the L.A. office, they helped turn a situation that wasn't working into a beneficial outcome for Lend Lease. As Tate puts it, “Working Simply customizes the Simply Leadership program every time we deliver it. With Lend Lease, we got to see firsthand that being able to meet participants where they are can literally make or break a leadership development program.”

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*“...bottom-up approach that really helped re-energize our management staff.”*

In the Lend Lease D.C. office, Working Simply helped elevate good performers to great performers. And in the L.A. office, Working Simply re-energized a struggling office through development opportunities that were well matched to their needs. The result was a bottom-up transformation that generated new initiatives and best practices that had a company-wide effect.

## THE BACKSTORY



Our partnership with you has one explicit goal—to help you build a winning workforce in which your people leverage their productivity strengths to work simply each and every day.

We offer customized solutions designed for your enterprise to boost productivity, accelerate performance and develop high performance teams. And we support you with technology, training, coaching and consulting to build a culture that works simply.

Working Simply delivers the personalized service of a boutique firm, scaled to some of the largest and most respected organizations in the world including AbbVie, Deloitte, Wells Fargo and United Technologies.



With over 18,000 employees worldwide, 10,000 completed projects, and a market capitalization of \$4.8 billion AUD, Lend Lease works with communities, clients, and colleagues to create positive legacies from funding a project right through to developing and constructing state-of-the-art buildings and infrastructure, including hospitals, roads, and bridges. The company also creates vibrant residential communities, productive workplaces, and retail destinations.

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# Yes, we can help you build a winning workforce

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