

Want to improve your leadership skills? You need to get out more

Advanced Management Practice



Margaret de Lattre

Programme Director
Crimestoppers

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Looking at the world in a fresh new way can be a powerful catalyst for behavioural change, and this approach is being used with some impressive results, as part of Henley’s Advanced Management Practice (AMP) programme.

Margaret de Lattre, the Programme Director, recounted how the latest cohort used a real-life challenge to improve their own change leadership capabilities.

‘Leading change in a complex environment is one of the biggest advanced management challenges facing senior managers at the moment,’ says Margaret, ‘so the programme addresses the issue in a very practical way. I find a local organisation that is looking at a complex business challenge, often involving a major change in direction, and we use it as our subject matter.

‘Not only does it help the programme participants see the practical application of what they’ve learned and bring together lots of threads of theory, but it builds their internal consultancy skills and makes them far better, more rounded managers in practice – as per the programme’s title.’

5 Days – the week-long process

‘We usually have 10-15 participants on the programme, and a part of module 2 is spent focusing on a live project. The most recent of these was for Crimestoppers, an independent charity that gives people the power to speak up anonymously and stop crime. We agree the basis of the challenge in advance, and in this case, they wanted to consider the implications of a planned refresh of the charity’s brand.

‘On the Monday and Tuesday, we gather intelligence on the organisation, background and context, in order to establish some hypotheses about the challenge. On Wednesday, we visit the organisation, tour the site, and interview key people. With input from more expert colleagues, participants talk to people about areas of the organisation outside their usual remit – this gives them practice in understanding and a new perspective on different parts of an organisation and often reveals very telling insights.

‘By Thursday, the group can concentrate on practicing sharing complex but rounded information and starting to form practical insights for the organisation. In this case, whilst Crimestoppers’ starting point was a re-branding exercise, it soon became clear that this was going to be much more than simply changing their logo. The group decided to focus their report to the organisation to demonstrate that a successful rebranding requires a shift in culture, and changes to systems and processes as well as the planned changes to image look and feel.

‘Finally, on the Friday, the organisation sends a delegation to Henley, and the team presents its ideas and shares some of the learning from the programme that they have used to develop them. With Crimestoppers, there was a strong feeling that they had to take a more systemic approach to branding, and utilise the psychology of engagement to get everyone on board.

‘The Crimestoppers project has been especially successful for all concerned. The organisation was really wowed by the group’s proposals, and their application of really practical models. They felt that this was a really helpful approach, and one they would never have realised on their own. Since then, they have adapted their plans to include most of the group’s insights.

‘And for the programme participants, they’ve been the drivers for real change, and have seen how powerful their modelling strategies can be. As Margaret has followed up with each participant three months after Module 2, many are citing the field visit exercise as a truly memorable experience of advanced management – in practice!

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