A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of the Leadership Learning Website at Bank of America

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE LEADERSHIP LEARNING WEBSITE AT
BANK OF AMERICA

A Research Paper
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department
of Occupational and Technical Studies
Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree

by
Gloria D. Govan
August 2003
This research paper was prepared by Gloria D. Govan under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science Degree.

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Date  
8-18-03
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend thanks to my loving mother, Dorothy Pope. Thank you for your love, encouragement and support throughout my graduate program. Without your inspiration and unselfish devotion to my academic pursuit, I would not have made it. Thank you Mother, for being the woman you are.

I would also like to extend thanks to my father, sisters, brothers, friends, co-workers, and my academic advisor, Mr. Dave Netherton. Thank you so much for your prayers, encouragement and assistance.

I wish to also extend a very special thanks to my research advisor and his secretary, Dr. John M. Ritz and Mrs. Emily Jones. Thank you for your guidance, discussion and consistent patience throughout the writing of this research paper.

Last but certainly not the least, I would like to thank God for getting me through every class and assignment.

Gloria D. Govan
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Approval Page | ................................................................. | i |
| Table of Figures | ................................................................. | iv |

## CHAPTER

### I. INTRODUCTION

- Statement of Problem ......................................................... 3
- Research Goals ................................................................. 3
- Background and Significance ................................................ 3
- Limitations of the Study ...................................................... 5

### Assumptions .................................................................... 6
- Procedures ...................................................................... 6
- Definition of Terms ............................................................ 6
- Overview of Chapters ......................................................... 8

### II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ............................................... 10

- Leadership Learning Website .............................................. 10
- Blended Learning Options ................................................... 17

### III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES ..................................... 20

- Research Population.......................................................... 20
- Instrument Design.................................................................. 20
- Data Collection Method....................................................... 21

- Statistical Analysis............................................................ 22
# Table of Contents

Summary........................................................................................................................................... 22

IV. FINDINGS ...................................................................................................................................... 23

  Report of Findings.......................................................................................................................... 24
  Results by Questions..................................................................................................................... 24
  Summary......................................................................................................................................... 28

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ............................................................... 29

  Summary......................................................................................................................................... 29
  Conclusions..................................................................................................................................... 30
  Recommendations.......................................................................................................................... 31

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................................... 33

APPENDICES ...................................................................................................................................... 34

  Appendix A, Leadership Learning Survey.................................................................................... 36
  Appendix B, Cover Letter.............................................................................................................. 38
  Appendix C, Follow-up Survey Cover Letter................................................................................ 40
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE 2.1.</td>
<td>LEADERSHIP LEARNING WEB SITE HOME PAGE</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE 4.1.</td>
<td>RESPONSES TO QUESTION ONE</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE 4.2.</td>
<td>RESPONSES TO QUESTION TWO</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE 4.3.</td>
<td>RESPONSES TO QUESTION THREE</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE 4.4.</td>
<td>RESPONSES TO QUESTION FOUR</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE 4.5.</td>
<td>RESPONSES TO QUESTION FIVE</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE 4.6.</td>
<td>RESPONSES TO QUESTION SIX</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

Introduction

Leadership has always been, and always will be, an important factor in human affairs. Recently, the need for leadership in managerial jobs and the difficulty of providing effective leadership in those jobs have grown considerably more than people realize. Two fundamental shifts in business are responsible. The more recent and dramatic shift is a significant increase in what might best be called “competitive intensity.” The new competitive intensity has destabilized companies and even whole industries (Kotter, 1988, p. 5). At the same time that increased competitive intensity has been producing the need for additional leadership at almost all levels in many organizations, a second set of less dramatic forces of growth, diversification, globalization, and technological development have been increasing the complexity of firms (Kotter, 1988, p. 12).

In an unpredictable economy, companies that have a network of effective leaders throughout the organization are the ones most likely to thrive. Leaders who are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills are more inclined to take responsibility and feel pride in their work. When they are empowered to make decisions and be accountable for their actions, leaders take ownership in the success of the company and often become superior performers. The velocity of business is increasing and the pace of change has picked up. A leader’s ability to make independent decisions is especially critical as products and customer expectations evolve. In the wake of this change, the role of leadership is shifting as well. Front-line employees are expected to lead teams,
mid-level managers are heading up strategic initiatives, and downsized staffs are expected to take responsibility for more work with less guidance.

The new opportunities call for more than management skills. Companies also require managers to stimulate enthusiasm, motivation, and morale. Managers must also establish an environment of respect and dependability among employees (Gale, 2002, p. 1). Historically, leadership development has been limited to the executive team and the few up-and-coming people who are groomed to replace them. That was fine in an economy in which the core business strategy could go unchanged for years and a stable corporate culture was the mainstay of success. This strategic model is no longer viable. Leadership training is a critical business strategy (Gale, 2002, p. 2).

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of a leadership learning web site that was designed to promote Consumer Product leaders to develop a strong self-ownership of developing their leadership skills, to help bank leaders build a learning path based on their key leadership competencies, and to support their performance management learning process. The study was also designed to identify the most useful learning options on the web site that were evaluated as useful among Bank of America Consumer Product leaders and offer recommendations to web solutions to improve future leadership training.
Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify the usefulness of the learning options to traditional instructor-led training that are most used by Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products lines of business.

Research Goals

To solve this problem the following goals were established:

1. Determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site for Consumer Products leaders at Bank of America.
2. Identify the various learning options that are most frequently used by Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products lines of business.
3. Recommend web solutions to improve future leadership training of Consumer Products leaders.

Background and Significance

Effective leadership skills have become increasingly important in helping corporations deal with the economic warfare created by increased competitive intensity. In order to stay competitive in the global market, Bank of America’s Consumer Products Leadership Team conducted a study to clearly define a strategy that would support Consumer Products (CP) lines of business including: identifying new manager competencies that would align performance with business goals; closing specific performance gaps; and determining self-directed and classroom training solutions that would assist new managers in their professional development.
This New Manager Initiative Study was reported on April 19, 2002, with the following five CP lines of business: Customer Service & Support, Consumer Real Estate, Consumer Risk Operations, Dealer Financial Services, and Student Banking. The assessment consisted of site executive interviews and focus group sessions. The 50 site executives were interviewed using a performance relationship map to identify: performance expectations, leadership competency gaps for new managers, and factors contributing to the leadership competency gaps. The 13 focus groups with 81 participants were conducted to determine if new managers were aware of site executive expectations and validate performance gaps and identify root causes of the gaps. The New Managers Initiative assessment data revealed there were performance gaps in seven critical leadership competencies. The seven competencies were: Policy, Procedures & Processes Coaching; Performance Management; Coaching; Communication; Technical Proficiency; Process Improvement/Process Management; and Time Management. The data also revealed that the performance gaps of new managers were also the same for seasoned managers (CPLT, 2002, p. 1).

Other significant findings from the study included new managers knew what the business goals and competencies were for their lines of business, however, the vast majority learned about these by trial and error as there were no written job descriptions or formally communicated performance expectations (CPLT, 2002, p. 2). The focus group participants identified a total of 260 root causes for performance gaps. Of those 260, 93 or 36% percent were potential training issues. There was no consistent process/path for developing critical manager competencies, and new managers needed to receive training prior to having their teams assigned to them. Four learning channels were identified as

As a result of The New Managers Initiative Study, the Consumer Products Leadership Team developed a web site that offered multiple competency-driven learning options to support the leadership development of CP leaders. This study was developed to determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site and identify the most useful learning option for leadership training.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitations of this research study included:

1. The surveys were restricted to Bank of America leaders in the Card Services and E-Commerce line of business located in Norfolk, Virginia. However, the data gathered may be used to help other lines of business in the Consumer Products segment.

2. Limited data were found on the effectiveness of the various learning options at Bank of America.

3. The terms “managers” and “leaders” are used interchangeably.
Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in this research study:

1. All leaders have access to the Bank of America intranet in order to participate in web-based learning.
2. All leaders are aware of and are using the leadership training web site because it is critical to achieving the corporate goals and competing in the global market.
3. The performance gaps that were revealed in the previous study of new and seasoned managers still remain performance gaps due to a lack of usage of the tools on the leadership learning web site.

Procedures

A survey titled Leadership Learning will be distributed to leaders in the Card Services and E-Commerce lines of business located in Norfolk, Virginia. The survey will help determine what percentage of the population (new and seasoned leaders) feel that the leadership learning web site had a positive impact in providing the tools to assist them in developing their leadership competency areas, and what are the most useful learning options on the web site. The instrument was administered to 23 leaders who recently participated in a blended learning strategy (leadership learning web site) training session.

Definition of Terms

The following words or phrases are defined to help the reader understand the terms surrounding the study:
1. **Blended Learning Approach** – Incorporating traditional classroom training along with alternative learning solutions (videotapes, audiotapes, books, and e-learning) to meet the learners needs.


3. **Competency** – skill analysis or ability assessment.

4. **Competitive Intensity** – the aggressiveness of companies to strive to outdo others to remain in the global market.

5. **Consumer Products (CP)** – the business segment that includes products for everyday customers. The lines of business included in CP are: Card Services & e-Commerce, Consumer Deposit Products, Consumer Real Estate, Consumer Risk Operations, Customer Service & Support, Dealer Financial Services, Insurance Services, and Student Banking.

6. **Consumer Products Leadership Training (CPLT)** – the team of individuals that are responsible for supporting the Consumer Products lines of business with leadership training.

7. **Effectiveness** – process performance measurement that describes the adequacy of a product or tool to accomplish a task; producing the intended result.

8. **Intranet** – a network, based on Internet communication protocols, that belongs to an organization, usually a corporation, and is accessible only by the organization’s members, employees or other authorized individuals. Web
sites on an intranet look and act like other web sites but are surrounded by a protective ‘firewall’ system to fend off unauthorized access.

9. **Leaders** – all associates, whether they are in a managerial role or an individual contributor role.

10. **Leadership** – the process of moving a group (or groups) of people in some direction mainly through non-coercive means. Usually the movement is by directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating.

11. **Learning** – is acquiring information that changes something or somebody – either by becoming grounds for action, or making an individual or an organization capable of different or more effective action.

12. **OPAL** – Online Performance and Learning is a robust performance support system that provides both immediate answers to your day-to-day challenges, and support and guidance for long-term development planning.

13. **Performance Gaps** – competency development areas.

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**Overview of Chapters**

Chapter I introduced the reader to the important need of leadership training in today’s organizations. It also provides an overview of the problem of determining the effectiveness of the leadership training web site and identifying the usefulness of the various learning options. Chapter II will be the review of literature concerning the leadership learning web site and blended learning options. The literature will provide insight and some predictable outcomes or trends to blended learning options. Chapter III will address the methods of data collection used for this study. Chapter IV will show the
findings of the research study. The findings will be in statistical format and placed in tables. Chapter V will summarize and conclude the research and offer recommendations to improve future leadership training initiatives.
CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Chapter II is the Review of Literature section of this research study. In this chapter, the reader will be provided with an overview of the Bank of America Consumer Products leadership learning web site and the blended learning options offered to Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products line of business.

Leadership Learning Web Site

The Consumer Products Leadership Training team designed a leadership learning web site to promote Consumer Product leaders to develop a strong, self-ownership of developing their leadership skills. The web site also provided unlimited access to one-stop locations for leadership development by Consumer Products lines of business leaders. It was designed to help bank leaders build a learning path based on their key leadership competencies and support their performance management learning process.

The first seven links on the leadership learning web site are called the leader learning guide (LLG). This guide consists of the following seven steps: 1) Getting Started, 2) What's Next, 3) My Development, 4) Competency Map, 5) Show You Know, 6) Keep Learning, and 7) Wow! Stories.

Step 1 is called Getting Started. In this step, the leader is provided with access to the key leadership competencies and the learning options that they should need to develop their leadership skills. The seven critical leadership competencies that were identified for Consumer Products leaders, through a formal assessment process conducted in the early part of 2002, are Personnel Policy, Procedures and Processes; Performance
Step 2 is called What's Next. This step of the leader learning guide fully explains how to utilize each available blended learning option. A description and directions are given for each option. Skillport offers a comprehensive library of web-delivered, self-directed learning courses and performance support tools, addressing a vast range of professional development and business skills. Leaders can access Skillport at any time. Books24X7.com is an individualized professional information service that puts the power of the web's finest technical reference library at the leader's fingertips. Leaders can read books online or order/purchase the books by using this unique Bank of America link to Barnes and Noble. By using this link, leaders will receive discounts and free shipping. The books can be expensed to the leader's own cost center with proper authorization. This service can be accessed by leaders at anytime. Books, Videotapes, Audiotapes is a learning option which allows leaders to access books, videotapes and audiotapes from Bank of America libraries. OPAL (online performance and learning system) is a learning option that provides rich content and specialized tools for knowledge management. The classroom learning option is facilitator directed learning or face-to-face interaction between the facilitator and the leaders. Learning teleconference is a learning option that allows the facilitator to direct learning over the phone.

Step 3 of the leader learning guide is called My Development. This step allows the leader to commit to following a learning process that meets their needs. There are five substeps within Step 3. In the first substep, leaders sit down with their managers and assess their current leadership competencies using one or both of the following
assessment tools: performance management process or feedback from your manager, peers and direct reports. In the second substep, leaders with the help of their managers, identify a pathway in which they will develop competencies that will most enhance their development. The recommended competency pathway for new managers include: 1) Personnel Policy, Procedures and Processes, 2) Performance Management, 3) Coaching and 4) Communication. Substep 3 of my development helps leaders to identify their learning options using the competency map. When leaders click on the Competency Map link, manager competencies will be displayed. The leader then needs to click on their chosen competency and amount of management experience, when appropriate, and review the learning options available. Substep 4 of my development requires the leader to register for training credit by following the directions listed under their selected learning options.

Step 4 of the leader learning guide is called Competency Map. It shows the competencies and accompanying learning options for Consumer Products leaders. Each competency area has multiple learning options categorized according to the amount of leader’s management experience level.

Step 5 of the leader learning guide is called Show You Know and it allows the leaders to create a track record of their success in delivering on-going effective performance management discussions. Leaders can take an inventory to determine where they are with their leadership competencies. The leader’s manager or their direct reports can complete an observation survey of the leader’s performance.

Step 6 of the leader learning guide is called Keep Learning. This step provides resources to encourage the leader to keep learning. It provides a link to the performance
management resource page, top 10 tips on performance management, and other performance management tools.

Step 7 of the leader learning guide is called Wow! Stories. In this step, leaders are encouraged to share stories that demonstrate their results, be recognized, give recognition, coach their teams, and show their managers their commitment to becoming the best.

The Foundational Courses section of the web site lists the instructor-led classroom courses that are strongly recommended for all leaders. New leaders are encouraged to take the courses as soon as possible. The top foundational courses are Sexual Harassment Prevention, Quality Fundamentals, Foundations for Leadership, Managing Inclusion, Relationship Strategies and Conflict Resolution, and Performance Management.

The FAQ section of the web site contains the most frequently asked questions. It answers the question: Where is the classroom calendar? This is the number one question! The traditional classroom calendar no longer exists. It has been re-organized by leadership competencies. Leaders are requested to use the “Step 4 Competency Map” button and the “Foundational Courses” button to access traditional classes and registration procedures. It also answers the question? What is a blended learning approach? It incorporates traditional classroom training along with alternative learning solutions such as videotapes, audiotapes, books and e-learning to meet the learners needs.

The What’s New section of the leadership learning web site provides a detailed account of the latest updates and additions to the web site. A number of updates have been completed. Many new learning solutions have been added to the Competency Map.
Success stories have been changed to wow stories. An internet tutorial has been added as well as the link to Show You Know.

The Ask CPLT link of the web site provides leaders with a forum to ask their Consumer Products Leadership training team questions about their learning options or submit feedback regarding their experience using the web site. The Consumer Products Leadership training team is always looking for ways to continuously improve the leadership learning experience.

The Evaluation Data section of the web site provides leaders with a one-page summary of the Consumer Products Leadership training team's quarterly accomplishments and their ability to provide leadership resources for Consumer Product leaders that result in strong self-ownership of development, risk-free feedback and coaching environments, and champions of the continuous learning philosophy.

The Leadership Report section on the leadership learning web site provides leaders with status of current enrollments of the Foundational courses.

Internet Tutorial section of the web site provides a quick tutorial for a leader who is new to the internet. The tutorial will introduce the leader to the information he/she must know to use the system.

The Final link on the leadership learning web site is called the Bank of America Spirit. This section provides the leader with access to weave the Bank of America spirit into the learning that is taking place. Leaders are requested to share any success stories that are a result of the leadership training.

Figure 1 depicts the leadership learning web site home page, which consists of the following links: Learning Guide (LLG) – Steps 1-7; Foundational Courses; Frequently
Welcome to the New World of Leadership Learning
http://cptd2.bankofamerica.com/llg/

CPLT Web Site Job Aid

The first step in an evolution of a new blended learning approach for Consumer Products Managers, Bands 4 – 6

With your manager and performance management process to Support you, follow Steps 1 through 4 on the web site to:

- Assess your leadership competencies
- Discover multiple, competency-driven learning options
- Design your learning pathway to success

**LEADER LEARNING GUIDE**

**STEP 1 GETTING STARTED**

START here to review a list of the seven critical leadership competencies Identified for Consumer Products Managers.

1. Policy, Procedures & Processes Coaching 5. Techncl Proficiency
3. Coaching 7. Time Mgmt
4. Communication

**STEP 2 WHAT'S NEXT**

Access the “What’s Next” link to understand how to use the new Blended learning options, such as Books 24X7, videotapes, Audiotapes, Skillport and OPAL.

**STEP 3 MY DEVELOPMENT**

Click on the "My Development" link to access and commit to a Successful learning process which consists of five steps:

1. Assess your leadership competencies.
2. Identify a competency pathway.
3. Identify your learning options using the competency map.
4. Register for training credit.
5. Return to assessing your leadership competencies.

**STEP 4 COMPETENCY MAP**

Use this link as a map to identify learning options for each Competency. Based on experience and developmental need, you will be able to design your learning pathway to leadership success.

**STEP 5 SHOW YOU KNOW**

Take a web site quiz and receive a reward for your efforts.

**STEP 6 KEEP LEARNING!**

Find out how your learning becomes a process rather than a one-time event.

**STEP 7 WOW STORIES**

Read success stories from your fellow Consumer Products managers.

**FOUNDATIONAL COURSES**

Information on strongly recommended courses for all managers including Quality Fundamentals, Foundations For Leadership and Managing Inclusion.

**OTHER LINKS**

**LLG FAQ’S**

Need help? Try finding the answer in the LLG Frequently Asked Questions.

**WHAT'S NEW**

Find out the latest updates and additions to the website.

**ASK CPLT**

Ask your questions or share your comments with the CPLT team.

**EVALUATION DATA**

Business Review: See if we’re hitting the mark.

**LEADERSHIP REPORT**

Is the class full? This link is updated every Monday to report the status of Current enrollments.

**INTERNET TUTORIAL**

Take a quick tutorial if you are new to the internet.

**BANK OF AMERICA SPIRIT**

Bank of America Spirit weaves through everything we do...take a look.
Asked Questions; What's New, Ask Your CPLT Partners; Evaluation Data; Leadership Report; Internet Tutorial; and the Bank of America Spirit link (CPTD, 2003, p. 1). A brief description of each link is given next to the link.

Leaders are encouraged to take ownership of their leadership development by visiting each link on the leadership learning web site. By following the directions to identify their leadership competencies, the leader can select a recommended pathway for their development.

Since the leadership learning guide on the Consumer Products Leadership Training web site was produced and implemented in 3rd quarter of 2002, 113 self-directed learning options were added in response to the voices of the leaders. This included 172 course sessions that were offered with an 88% enrollment rate. Multiple web site demonstration sessions were conducted resulting in qualitative feedback indicating the new web site has been valuable, easy to use, saves time, and contributes to Performance Management Training (CPLT, 2002, p. 18).

The 88% enrollment rate figures prove that the crux of effective leadership development is in self-directed learning. Self-directed learning intentionally develops or strengthens an aspect of who you are or who you want to be, or both. Such self-directed learning is most effective and sustainable when you understand the process of change and the steps to achieve it as you go through it (Goleman, 2002, p. 109).
Blended Learning Options

Bank of America defines blending learning as incorporating traditional classroom training along with alternative learning solutions such as: videotapes, audiotapes, books and e-learning to meet the learners needs (CPTD, 2003, p. 13). Blended learning is more than a mixture of celluloid, textbooks and an instructor’s lectures. Delivery methods that include desktops, CD-ROM software and the media-rich channel of the Internet have made learning an around-the-clock, self-paced proposition (Barbian, 2002, p. 26).

The question is not if we should blend, rather, the question is what are the ingredients? The Thomson Job Impact Study focused on teaching elements of Microsoft Excel to three different groups of people in order to measure the productivity differences stemming from chosen delivery methods—a blended approach and an e-learning only approach. After two years of evaluation, the Thomson study concluded that the scenario-based exercises clearly gave learners an advantage over online instruction alone. The study also found that having access to mentors within the online instruction was essential to the success of both groups (Mack, 2002, p. 187).

People learn best when placed in a stimulating environment where they are encouraged to learn and ask questions. Similarly, e-learning on its own is questionable and should be combined with instructor-led training, workshops, and even on-the-job training to ensure that the required business outcomes are delivered (Grobler, 2002, p. 1).

In order to benefit from the many learning styles and to ensure the effective transfer of learning, Bank of America adopted the blended learning approach. By using this approach, the Consumer Products leadership training team was able to provide alternative learning solutions to Consumer Product leaders on the leadership web site to
meet their developmental needs. The Consumer Products leadership learning web site offers two or more of the following six blended learning options for each of the seven leadership competency areas:

1. **Skillport** - a comprehensive library of web-delivered, self-directed learning courses and performance support tools, addressing a vast range of professional development and business skills.

2. **Books24x7.com** - an individualized professional information service that puts the power of the web’s finest technical reference library at your fingertips which gives leaders the option of reading books online or ordering/purchasing books by using this unique Bank of America link to Barnes and Noble.

3. **Books, Videotapes, Audiotapes** – using the intranet or internet to access books, videotapes and audiotapes from Bank of America libraries.

4. **Online Performance and Learning System (OPAL)** – a robust performance support system that provides both immediate answers to day-to-day challenges, and supports and guides long-term developmental training. OPAL advisors give you just-in-time advice/support tools for daily work issues. OPAL Developer contains in-depth information about each competency.

5. **Traditional classroom/facilitator directed learning** - face-to-face interaction between the facilitator and the trainee.

6. **Learn teleconferences** - facilitator-directed learning over phone lines.

These six learning options are all inclusive, thereby, providing the opportunity to tap into managers/trainee learning styles so that they learn and retain the information better and learn how to learn better (CPTD, 2003, Step 2).
Summary

Chapter II presented an overview of the Bank of America Consumer Products leadership learning web site and the blended learning options offered by Bank of America to Consumer Products leaders. Chapter III will address the methods and procedures used to collect data for this research study.
Chapter III

Methods and Procedures

To effectively complete this research study, proper and consistent methods and procedures must be followed. This study was designed to determine the effectiveness of the (CP) leadership learning web site at Bank of America and identify the most useful learning options available to Consumer Products lines of business leaders. The descriptive method was used in this study. This chapter will describe the population, the instrument, methods of data collection, procedures for statistical analysis and a summary.

Research Population

The population was composed of Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products Card Services & E-Commerce line of business in Norfolk, Virginia, who recently attended the Blended Learning Strategy training session. The training session included a brief step-by-step overview of the leader learning guide and other links on the web site. It also included a brief step-by-step demonstration of how to register for training course credits and access the Skillport, OPAL, and Books24X7 links. The population consisted of 23 leaders. These participants were new and seasoned managers.

Instrument Design

The survey was designed and administered as a follow-up to a blended learning strategy training session conducted on February 11, 2003. The survey consisted of questions formulated to answer the research goals which were:
1. Determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site for Consumer Products leaders.

2. Identify the various learning options that are most frequently used by Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products lines of business.


The first and second set of questions asked the leaders to rate the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site. The third set of multiple-selection questions allowed the leaders to identify the most useful learning options. Also, the leaders were asked to provide comments about what worked well and what needed improvement. The survey used a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire with 4 representing “very effective” and 1 representing “not effective”. The survey also used multiple-selection questions to identify the most useful learning option. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

**Data Collection Method**

A survey was administered to the leaders of the Card Services & E-Commerce blended learning strategy training session at Bank of America in Norfolk, Virginia. Three months were given to allow the trainees the time to begin using the leadership learning web site and complete their assessed competency training. Since a three-month period had passed allowing the leaders to use the web site, a survey was administered during the month of June to determine what kind of feedback the leaders had to share. The survey was hand delivered to the 23 leaders who had in fact attended the training. The training session was for new and seasoned managers in Card Services & E-
Commerce only. A cover letter accompanied the survey which explained the importance and the purpose of the study and asked that the participants take time to complete the survey. The directions asked the respondents to return the completed survey to Katherine Underwood, in order to protect and keep the respondents anonymous. A copy of the survey cover letter can be found in Appendix B. The participants were allowed to respond within 5 days from the date they received the survey. If no response was received, a follow-up survey and letter was sent after the 5 days had expired. See Appendix C for the follow-up letter. The cover letters explained that the respondents’ answers would remain anonymous and procedures were explained of how the survey would be collected.

**Statistical Analysis**

Upon receiving the responses, the researcher compiled the data from the study by specifying the mean responses to each question. Those responses will be tallied to answers the research questions. Also some options were rank ordered to determine the most preferred way to learn and to rate the various learning links.

**Summary**

In this chapter, the methods and procedures used to collect data for this study were presented. An open and closed ended survey was administered to 23 participants in the Consumer Products Card Services & E-Commerce line of business in Norfolk, Virginia, who attended the blending learning strategy training February 11, 2003. In Chapter IV, findings that resulted from the collection of data were further analyzed.
Chapter IV

Findings

The purpose of this research study was to identify the usefulness of the learning options to traditional instructor-led training that are most used by Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products lines of business. This chapter presents the results of the research and includes a summary of the chapter.

The method of collecting data for this study was by means of a survey that consisted of six questions that addressed the goals of this research study. This survey attempted to 1) determine the effectiveness of the organization and flow of the links on the web site, 2) the friendliness and understanding of the web site links, 3) the usefulness of the competency map in helping leaders assess their leadership competencies, 4) the usefulness of being able to choose from multiple learning options to develop their leadership competency areas, 5) what learning options helped leaders to best meet their development needs, and 6) what two learning options are most useful in meeting their work needs and their learning styles.

Report of the Findings

A leadership learning survey was hand delivered to twenty-three leaders in the Consumer Products line of business at Bank of America on July 3, 2003. The survey was a follow-up of the leadership learning training session they attended in February 2003. The completed surveys were received July 18, 2003, after a follow-up attempt was made on July 14, 2003. Of the twenty-three participants contacted, 21 or 91 percent
responded to the survey. The results reported in this chapter were compiled from the data collected from these respondents.

**Summary of Results by Questions**

Question 1, which was rate the organization and flow of the links on the web site had seven respondents indicating very effective (33 %) and fourteen respondents indicating effective (66 %). The median was 3.00 indicating effective. See Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1.**
 Responses to Question 1 - Rate the organization and flow of the links on the web site.

Question 2, which was rate the friendliness and understanding of the web site links had eleven respondents indicating effective (52%), nine respondents indicating very effective (43%) and one respondent indicating somewhat effective (5%). The median was 3.00 indicating effective. See Figure 4.2.
Figure 4.2.

Responses to Question 2 - Rate the friendliness and understanding of the web site links.

Question 3, which was rate the usefulness of the competency map in helping assess your leadership competencies had fourteen respondents indicating effective (66%), six respondents indicating very effective (29%) and one respondent indicating somewhat effective (5%). The median was 3.00 indicating effective. See Figure 4.3.

Question 4, which was rate the usefulness of the competency map in helping assess your leadership competencies, had fourteen respondents indicating effective (66%) and seven respondents indicating very effective (33%). The median was 3.00 indicating effective. See Figure 4.4.
Figure 4.3.

Responses to Question 3 - Rate the usefulness of the competency map in helping assess your leadership competencies.

Figure 4.4.

Responses to Question 4 - Rate the usefulness of the competency map in helping assess your leadership competencies.
Question 5, which was what learning option helped you to best meet your development needs, had seven respondents indicating Skillport (33%), five respondents indicating OPAL (24%), five respondents indicating Classroom (24%), two respondents indicating Books, Videotapes, and Audiotapes (10%) and two respondents indicating Learn Teleconferences (10%). See Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5.**

Responses to Question 5 - What learning option helped you to best meet your development needs? (circle only one)

Question 6, which was what two learning options are most useful in meeting your work needs and your learning style, had eight respondents indicating Skillport and Classroom (37%), five respondents indicating Skillport and OPAL (23%), three respondents indicating Skillport and Learn Teleconferences (15%), one respondent indicating Skillport and Books, Videotapes, Audiotapes (5%), one respondent indicating Classroom and Books, Videotapes, Audiotapes (5%), one respondent indicating Classroom and OPAL (5%), one respondent indicating OPAL and Learn Teleconferences
(5%), and one respondent indicating OPAL and Books, Videotapes, Audiotapes (5%).

See Figure 4.6.

**Figure 4.6.**

Responses to Question 6 - What two learning options are most useful in meeting your work needs and your learning style? (circle only two)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skillport &amp; Classroom</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skillport &amp; OPAL</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skillport &amp; Lrn Teleconf</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skillport &amp; BVA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrm &amp; OPAL</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrm &amp; BVA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lrn Teleconf &amp; OPAL</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPAL &amp; BVA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The chapter contained the findings of the research study. Data collected were analyzed and results tabulated to determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site and the usefulness of being able to choose from multiple learning options for leaders in the Consumer Products line of business to develop their leadership competency areas. Twenty-three participants were hand delivered a Leadership Learning survey, and of the twenty-three, twenty-one responded. This was a response rate of 91 percent. The statistics resulting from their responses were categorized and tabulated in this chapter, and those findings were then used to arrive at conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V.
Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter was to report the summary, conclusions, and recommendations to summarize the findings of the research report. Conclusions were made in relation to the research goals. Recommendations were made as a result of the findings.

Summary

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Bank of America Consumer Products leadership learning website in helping leaders to develop strong self-ownership of developing their leadership skills and to identify the most useful learning options for these leaders. The research study surveyed 23 participants from the February 2003 leadership learning web site training session to determine if the web site was effective in providing leaders in the Bank of America Consumer Products lines of business with the tools to develop their leadership competency areas and to identify the most useful learning option available to them.

The goals were to determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site for Consumer Products leaders at Bank of America, identify the various learning options that are most frequently used by Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products lines of business, and recommend web solutions to improve future leadership training of Consumer Products leaders.

The significance of this study was based on the results of Bank of America’s New Managers Initiative Study. As a result of that study, the Consumer Products Leadership
Team developed a web site that offered multiple competency-driven learning options to support the leadership development of CP leaders. This study was developed to determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site and identify the most useful learning option for leadership training.

This study showed the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site and identified the most useful learning options allowing leaders to actively take charge of their own leadership development. After collecting 21 responses from the participants, the researcher found that Bank of America Consumer Products leadership team was offered a quality leadership learning web site that allowed them to actively take charge in developing their leadership competency areas. All of the participants that used the tools on the web site were satisfied with developing their competency maps and having the choice of selecting a learning method that best fit their style.

**Conclusions**

The results of this study indicated there were certain factors that contributed toward the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site. The research goals were established to assist in solving the problem of this study. The following are the research goals and the data reported on each goal.

1. **Determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site for Consumer Products leaders at Bank of America.**

The results of the survey indicate with a median of 3.00 that the organization and flow of the links on the web site was effective in allowing leaders to feel comfortable maneuvering through the web site. These results were identified through Question 1
responses of the survey. Question 2 responses provided a median of 3.00 indicating that the friendliness and understanding of the web site links were clear to the leaders allowing them to feel at ease while using the tools on the web site. Question 3 responses provided a median of 3.00 indicating that the competency map was effective in helping leaders assess their leadership competencies.

(2) **Identify the various learning options that are most frequently used by Bank of America leaders in the Consumer Products lines of business.**

Question 4 provided a median of 3.00 indicating that the ability to choose from multiple learning options was effective in helping leaders develop their leadership competencies. Question 5 had seven respondents or 33% choose Skillport as the most selected learning option. Question 6 had eight respondents or 38% choose Skillport and Classroom learning as the two most useful learning options.

(3) **Recommend web solutions to improve future leadership training of Consumer Products leaders.**

This goal will be addressed in the recommendations section of this study.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, this researcher submits the following recommendations to improve web solutions for leadership training:

1. All leaders, both new and old, should attend the leadership learning web site training to become familiar with all the tools it has to offer.

2. There should be a built in time allotted every week for leaders to assess the leadership web site and complete any leadership training.
3. The web site and the classes offered need to be introduced to every leader and prospective leader in the Consumer Products line of business to ensure they are aware of the tools available to them.

4. Updates to the web site should be communicated periodically to all leaders to make sure it remains user friendly.

5. There should be assessments for all new leaders to make sure they receive training prior to having their teams assigned to them.
REFERENCES

Barbian, J. (2002). Blended works: here’s proof! A two-year empirical study confirms that a structured curriculum of blended learning methods will significantly boost employee productivity over single-delivery options. Online Learning, 6, 26-30.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A, Research Survey: Leadership Learning

APPENDIX B, Cover Letter

APPENDIX C, Follow-up Survey Letter
APPENDIX A

Research Survey: Leadership Learning
LEADERSHIP LEARNING SURVEY

PURPOSE: This survey is being distributed to Card Services and E-Commerce leaders who recently attended a leadership learning strategy training session to determine the effectiveness of the leadership learning web site at Bank of America and the most frequently used learning options.

Directions: Please indicate your responses by circling one of the choices below; comments can be added in the space provided.

Very Effective (4)  Effective (3)  Somewhat Effective (2)  Not Effective (1)

1. Rate the organization and flow of the links on the web site.  4  3  2  1
2. Rate the friendliness and understanding of the web site links.  4  3  2  1
3. Rate the usefulness of the competency map in helping assess your leadership competencies.  4  3  2  1
4. Rate the usefulness of being able to choose from multiple learning options to develop your leadership competency areas.  4  3  2  1

5. What learning option helped you to best meet your development needs? (circle only one)
   (a) Skillport
   (b) Books24X7.com
   (c) Books, Videotapes, Audiotapes
   (d) OPAL
   (e) Classroom
   (f) Learn Teleconferences

6. What two learning options are most useful in meeting your work needs and your learning style? (circle only two)
   (a) Skillport
   (b) Books24X7.com
   (c) Books, Videotapes, Audiotapes
   (d) OPAL
   (e) Classroom
   (f) Learn Teleconferences

Comments and/or Recommendations: (Please provide any comments about what has worked well in developing your leadership competencies and/or what areas need improvement.)

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your responses will help improve future leadership training initiatives at Bank of America.

Please return survey to Gloria D. Govan @ VA6-300-04-02
APPENDIX B

Survey Cover Letter
June 20, 2003

Dear Consumer Products Cards Services and E-Commerce Leader:

As a leader, and a previous participant in the Blended Learning Strategy (leadership learning) training session on February 11, 2003, you have the unique combination of knowledge and skills that provide the ideal population for a current research study I have undertaken. This project is part of my preparation to receive my Masters Degree in Business and Industry Training at Old Dominion University and will also contribute to the training and development of Bank of America leaders.

My goal is to determine the effectiveness of the Consumer Products leadership learning web site and identify the most useful learning option used by you. I hope to make the findings available in an effort to contribute in some way to improve future leadership training for Bank of America Consumer Product leaders. It is for this reason that I ask for your help in completing this study.

Please complete the attached six-question survey and return it by interoffice mail to Katherine Underwood at VA6-300-04-02 by June 26, 2003. Ms. Underwood will anonymously return your survey responses to me at Gloria D. Govan at VA6-300-04-02. These survey responses will only be used to complete this study and all response will be kept confidential.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in furthering my research objectives.

Sincerely,

Gloria D. Govan
Officer, Performance Improvement Coach
Consumer Products Training and Development

Enclosure
APPENDIX C

Follow-up Survey Cover Letter
FOLLOW-UP SURVEY COVER LETTER

June 27, 2003

Dear Consumer Products Cards Services and E-Commerce Leader:

As I have not received your completed survey form, I am sending a friendly reminder asking you to please complete the enclosed survey and forward it Katherine Underwood via interoffice mail at VA6-300-04-02 by June 30, 2003. Ms. Underwood will anonymously return your survey responses to me at Gloria D. Govan at VA6-300-04-02. These survey responses will only be used to complete this study.

As a leader, and a previous participant in the Blended Learning Strategy (leadership learning) training session on February 11, 2003, you have the unique combination of knowledge and skills that provide the ideal population for a current research study I have undertaken. This project is part of my preparation to receive my Masters Degree in Business and Industry Training at Old Dominion University and will also contribute to the training and development of Bank of America leaders.

My goal is to determine the effectiveness of the Consumer Products leadership learning web site and identify the most useful learning option. I hope to make the findings available in an effort to contribute in some way to improve future leadership training for Bank of America Consumer Product leaders. It is for this reason that I ask for your help in completing this study.

Your participation is greatly appreciated in helping me further my research objectives.

Sincerely,

Gloria D. Govan
Officer, Performance Improvement Coach
Consumer Products Training and Development

Enclosure