



'Best Loved Leaders' - a strategic leadership programme funded by the Apprenticeship Levy

LV= (previously Liverpool Victoria), one of the UK's largest insurance companies, has been working with Corndel since July 2019. Corndel and LV= worked in partnership to create 'Best Loved Leaders' – a strategic leadership programme, funded by the Apprenticeship Levy. The impact is being felt across the business.

LV= provides a range of insurance and retirement products to more than five million customers. In 2015 LV= was ranked by the UK Institute of Customer Service Satisfaction Index as the best insurance business in the UK for customer satisfaction and seventh best across all UK businesses, with only one other insurer in the top 50.

The LV= 'Best Loved Leaders' programme

The Best Loved Leaders programme was designed to establish and embed management best practice, support the development of a business-wide peer network for mid-senior leaders, and increase personal accountability in the management population. It is a 13-month long programme, funded by LV='s Apprenticeship Levy. Utilising the core elements of Corndel's Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management, the programme has been considerably customised to meet LV='s organisational aims.

All workshops, which punctuated the programme and maintained continuous engagement, were designed and delivered by the LV= L&D Team and Corndel's Professional Development Experts (PDEs). Each learner is given a dedicated Professional Development Expert, who coaches them through the programme, meeting fortnightly to discuss, support and advise.

The importance of Senior Leadership endorsement

LV= launched the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management with a two-day event, held at Bournemouth Hilton. It was heavily supported by Senior Leadership.

A range of keynote speakers from within and outside of the organisation, presented their organisational vision and how these learners will contribute.

"It was very important for us to demonstrate the Senior Leadership commitment to this programme", explained Alice Kirby, who is responsible for managing the Apprenticeship Levy at LV=. "Line managers are encouraged to ensure that participants on the Best Loved Leaders programme are given appropriate opportunities that will support their studies. Learners are empowered to take responsibility for their own progress and work with their coach and line manager to determine the best use of time for their learning needs. As a result, we have an extremely high learner retention on the programme."

Victoria Park, Lead PDE, noted "LV='s selection process for the programme resulted in very committed and engaged learners, who as a result have all gone on to achieve amazing results. We have an impressive number of Distinctions so far."

 Alice Kirby manages LV='s Apprenticeship Levy.

Our CEO champions a learning culture at LV= and this has resonated throughout the organisation. Line managers are fully supportive of the commitment that their team members make when they embark on this Corndel leadership programme.



Learner stories



Sarah Ferguson is a Business Analyst Practice Manager, looking after a team of 30. She applied for a place on the Best Loved Leaders programme to formalise her approach to leading and developing a large team.

Sarah's role is to make sure the analysts in her team have consistent ways of working, as well as to manage resourcing effectively and ensure that change projects run smoothly across the company. Sarah is an experienced manager and since joining LV= four years ago, has increased her people management responsibility.

"I've really enjoyed the course and love the fact I'm dedicating time to my own continuous learning, which would undoubtedly otherwise have been de-prioritised. Some areas of the course cemented leadership approaches I was already taking, perhaps having not realised the theory behind it. Other modules have been totally new to me. It really has enabled me to expand my horizons and gain new perspectives on how to help my team perform."

For her work-based project element of the programme, Sarah proposed to lead an innovative project to reduce cost, time and risk for a forthcoming acquisition which would help LV= diversify. Such an acquisition would usually require a costly large-scale integration programme involving many people.

Sarah came up with the idea of running a pre-acquisition discovery project to get a focused team set up ahead to work out exactly what was needed. Led by Sarah, and drawing on frameworks learned on the course, this highly focused and highly skilled team worked for four months to agree and document what was needed. The recommendations have now been taken forward to inform integration projects such as IT build and process change, thereby streamlining a complex, costly process. By effectively managing stakeholders and keeping them fully informed about the project, when Covid-19 struck, senior leaders were able to focus on the business's response without the integration project being delayed.

Sarah recommends the programme to other leaders and highlights its relevance even for experienced managers. "I was absolutely surprised at how much I learned. With the one-to-one support of my coach throughout, I was given guidance and regularly stretched to look at things differently. The course has made me realise the value of mentorship and the benefit of having a network of peers from across the business to challenge and support."

Sophie Baker is a Digital and Marketing Manager for LV=. She was promoted to the position part way through her participation in the 13-month Best Loved Leaders programme.



Sophie says, "This course has been instrumental in getting my management skills and, importantly, my confidence to the stage where I could apply for the promotion and be successful." She attributes this to a number of components of the Level 5 Apprenticeship Diploma.

- "Having regular one-to-ones with my Professional Development Expert coach, Victoria, has been pivotal. Throughout the programme and especially during Covid-19, it has been amazing to have a dedicated, external coach with whom to reflect and bounce around ideas."
- "The 360-feedback element has led to a significant shift in how we, as a team, view feedback. As part of the course, my peers and line manager had to regularly provide constructive feedback about me, and I found it incredibly valuable in helping me grow and develop."
- "The course is highly practical and as learners, we are expected to seek opportunities to put new skills and behaviours into practice. For example, in response to feedback that my lack of confidence was holding me back, I changed my behaviour by speaking up more in meetings and taking on more responsibility in projects."
- "The work-based project gave me a chance to apply all that I learnt. My project was to launch three new adverts across TV and radio channels. Such visible brand initiatives involve working closely with senior stakeholders and this was particularly the case as my launches coincided with Covid-19 and the sensitivities around relevance and tone. My relationships with senior colleagues were key. I used content from the course including stakeholder mapping tools and project management to structure my work."

Sophie says the course has provided her with a full toolkit of management skills and a new-found confidence to apply them in her role. She concludes, "If you are selected, make the most of the one-to-one time with your coach – you may not have that unique opportunity again."

The impact of the programme

At the beginning of the programme, learners and their line managers complete a Lumus 360 Survey, ranking the learner's confidence within four key areas: Leadership; Relationships; Self-Awareness; Management.

This survey is revisited at different points in the programme to highlight growth in confidence and identify any problem areas. The July 2019 learners have reported a 15% increase across all areas, with the most improved areas being resilience, supporting others and communication styles.

In addition to the Lumus survey, Corndel sends out monthly text-based satisfaction surveys. Across all LV= cohorts we are seeing a satisfaction rate of 8.6/9. In addition, to date two of the July 2019 learners have been promoted because of the programme and an additional three learners are being considered for promotions and additional responsibilities. LV= will launch a new cohort of Managers onto the Level 5 programme shortly. This cohort is double the size of the original one.



Data Analytics skills development

Post-launch of the Management programmes, LV= worked with Corndel to grow their own data talent. The Level 4 Data Analytics programme launched in January 2020, supporting LV='s desire to keep pace with data innovation, a key part of their business success.

The first group of Data Analysts are progressing extremely well, and feedback has been very positive. Corndel and LV= are now looking at other data skills development options beyond the level of data experts, as LV= continues to cement a data-driven culture within its organisation.

Contact us

To find out more about optimising your Apprenticeship Levy to develop your leaders and drive digital transformation, contact:

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The value Corndel brings

"One of the things that appealed to us at the start of the relationship, was that the programmes Corndel offer are accredited. In the case of Leadership and Management, our learners will be awarded Foundation Chartered Manager (fCMgr) status upon completion. In our industry, the inclusion of a qualification that is meaningful, in addition to the development of skills sets that maximise our organisational impact, is a primary factor when launching a programme."

The biggest benefit from what are already excellent programmes, was the dedicated one-to-one coaching offered by Corndel's Professional Development Experts. The feedback from our learners has been that they have benefitted enormously from being able to meet regularly, one-to-one with someone who understands their issues, has experienced their industry and the type of organisation that we are, has worked at a senior level themselves and can pass on a vast amount of knowledge and experience. Ordinarily this middle level of management would not have access to this type of coaching.

We closely monitor the progress of our learners, both in terms of the learner commitment and output, and their overall impact on our business.

Corndel's proactive approach is evidenced by the additional 'lunch and learn' sessions that have been created by Lead PDE, Victoria Park, focusing on key areas that learners wished to explore in more detail. An extra session was also run at the start of the pandemic around remote working, the change curve and how manager learners could support their teams.

It's a pleasure to deal with such a professional, adaptable and caring organisation. Corndel's values align with our own. They want to deliver the best possible learning experience so that our managers can be best in class. It has been an extremely successful relationship to date, and we look forward to building upon it in the future.

Alice Kirby,
Apprenticeship Lead, LV=

