# MHS®
ASSESSMENTS

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN ACTION

Randell Jones with reflections from Richard Boucher

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**DLi** Discovery Learning Intl  |  A Brand of **MHS®** ASSESSMENTS

In December of 2015, Multi-Health Systems Inc. (MHS) proudly announced the acquisition of Discovery Learning Inc. (DLI), while making the commitment that DLI's valued customers would continue to experience a high level of service. MHS has showcased a determined effort to integrate DLI and MHS assessments and services into a one-stop solution to satisfy your talent needs. With stakeholders in multiple sectors including corporate, clinical and education, MHS now adds DLI's expertise in leadership and organizational development to its continuously growing specialties. The acquisition has brought together MHS's expertise in a variety of areas including emotional intelligence and personality with DLI's focus on leadership and change management.

## "Experiential learning is a powerful educational strategy that can have immediate and lasting impact."

Rich Boucher, Motorola University , Career Consultant

We learn best from our own experiences. Businesses today are seeking to develop the leadership talents of their executives; engaging participants in life-like, relevant experiences, coupled with feedback to help them derive insights about their effective and ineffective behaviors. For years, Motorola has used this strategic approach to business education to develop leaders and managers.

Motorola U. has thousands of people working around the world to support the efforts of some 140,000 Motorolans. These learning professionals have proven time and again that the experiential approach is flexible, powerful and effective. Richard Boucher, former Senior Program Manager, College of Leadership and Transcultural Studies at Motorola University, believes in the value of experiential learning to develop leadership and management capabilities. Rich Boucher notes, "Experiential learning offers bright, talented, busy individuals the chance to get engaged quickly in learning, to get focused on the tasks at hand and to begin discovering insights about their leadership behaviors through feedback." Discovery Learning recently helped Motorola U. successfully apply experiential learning to some unique emerging challenges.

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| **Discovery of Personal Behaviors through Assessment** | **+** | **Discovery of Your Impact on Others through Simulation** | **=** | **Accelerated Learning and Improved Personal Effectiveness through Discovery** |

## The Emerging Challenge

Motorola was growing rapidly as its markets expanded around the world. They needed more managers in place quickly, especially in China and India, to handle the increased operations there. In responding to that need, Motorola chose to develop the leadership and management community among their local employees in both those countries to reduce their reliance on ex-patriot managers. They knew it made sense from a business standpoint considering the costs of supporting ex-patriots; but, they also recognized that along with this economic decision came a requisite commitment to prepare the new managers to succeed as leaders.

"In China, our first challenge in developing these leaders was to build within them a common understanding of the Motorola culture," Rich says. "We wanted to educate them on how to work with each other as well as with their Asian and Western counterparts. Added to this was the challenge that our Chinese managers had different cultural

and business experiences from other Asian managers and lacked a basis for understanding Western management practices. They had, after all, grown-up in a government-controlled economy and were not immediately familiar with Western ways." To address these issues, Motorola implemented an integrated learning and development strategy that included classroom-based programs and month-long projects requiring participants to apply their new skills and knowledge. The classroom-based programs included a three-day experiential leadership program designed and delivered by Discovery Learning.

"We knew from our own experience at Motorola University that experiential learning is a powerful educational strategy that can have immediate and lasting impact," notes Rich. "With the help of Discovery Learning, we created a special leadership development program that let us quickly develop the leadership talent we needed and also allowed our local managers to transfer their new learning immediately to the workplace."

The program involved a customized version of DLI's Discovery Leadership Program and included their simulations Paper Planes, Inc., PressTime and one of their assessment instruments, Change Style Indicator. The process created an environment where participants could focus on systems and team issues and receive feedback on their own leadership styles.

"Providing feedback is a major strategy for improving performance;" adds Rich "and, the key to the success of experiential learning is the feedback it provides the participants. That comes from the facilitators, from their fellow participants and from their own insights through reflecting on their decisions and actions."

The simulations created the opportunities for the participants to observe and be observed in making decisions and in working together. The exercises were designed to solicit from individuals the behaviors they would most likely exhibit in a real-world management situation.

Rich adds, "With experiential learning, participants get an opportunity to reflect on their behavior and what their tendencies are, what their values are and what their internal models are. The feedback is essential to the learning. The experiential process creates that feedback at multiple levels."

## Lessons Learned...

As expected, these experiential learning exercises delivered dependable results for the Motorola training. From the Paper Planes, Inc. simulation, participants learned the importance of having a common goal, the value of accurate and timely feedback, the necessity of measuring progress to achieve results and the benefits of reviewing personal decisions and reflecting on one's behavior.

From the PressTime simulation, participants gained a good overview of basic business practices and learned to build strong teams. The simulation also provided a common reference point for discussing solutions to future business problems and the challenges of problem solving across cultural boundaries. Combined with the feedback from the Change Style Indicator, these two learning exercises led the developing managers in China and India to create actionable goals with performance accountability.

As Rich concludes, " From their training at Motorola U., these managers were better prepared to take on the responsibilities of leading their organizations. From the experiential learning sessions, they learned something about themselves as leaders that you can't get out of a book.. As a result, they were better prepared to manage their behavior as leaders and to influence positively the management development of others through the examples they provided in their own leadership."

## A Closer Look

PressTime is a behavioral simulation, first used at the Center for Creative Leadership. It captures the fast-paced and diverse decisions that managers and team members

face every day. PressTime is an excellent tool for focusing on strategic and team Leadership. Management Review said, "It is unlike other computer simulations. There is a straight line in PressTime between 'people' decisions and the bottom line. The better the leadership, the bigger the bucks."

A Cross-Functional team with 6 to 8 members has to respond to a competitive crisis in their market. They must create and implement a strategy to address the challenge if their company, PressTime, is to survive. The simulation runs for one day and is followed by a half day debrief with participants receiving feedback from facilitators and other team members.

The debrief focuses on strategy, implementation, teamwork and individual contribution. On day one success is measured by market share and profit. True success comes in day two and is measured by the participants' learning from the debrief.

## Learn More

To learn more about OD solutions including the Change Leadership program implemented at Motorola University, please visit **mhs.com/odsolutions**.

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