Developing future-ready executive leaders

Client need

A multinational SaaS organization focused on search, observability, and security needed to scale following its initial public offering, but faced several obstacles.

The organization's leaders needed to:

- **Scale their go-to-market strategy**, determine how to reach key client decision makers, build strong relationships, articulate the impact of their solutions, and prepare for the next phase of SaaS growth.
- **Extend their product leadership** by improving cloud platform accessibility, maintaining technology differentiation, and both protecting and evolving the company's unique culture with every new hire.
- **Adapt to a rapidly changing market** by prioritizing activities which would enable the organization to stay ahead of its competitors, building stronger relationships internally, a distribution model externally, and expanding to new-use cases and larger deployments.

To meet these needs, the organization partnered with BTS to design an immersive learning journey that would challenge its next generation of executive leaders to define the organization's next-chapter growth.

The solution...

BTS deployed the resulting leadership development program for the organization's senior leaders both virtually and in a hybrid setting over the course of four months.

The journey was designed to address the following five core themes:

- **Being employee and customer centric:** Recognize the changing needs of both employee and customer personas to drive value, while shifting to an outside-in, customer-centric mindset.
- **The organization's "North Star":** Ensure that all leaders understand and communicate the organization's purpose and strategy well enough to inspire and empower their teams.
- **Design for the future:** Prioritize organizational growth over ten years' time, not just two.
- **Enterprise mindset:** Eliminate siloed thinking to effectively collaborate across functions.
- **Protect and evolve organizational culture:** Nurture the best aspects of the existing culture while adapting to a changing context.

The development program consisted of three workshops:

- **Driving the strategy** (leading the organization): A customized business simulation in which leaders practice decision-making in realistic scenarios, addressing specific organizational challenges and objectives.
- **Leading with purpose** (leading self): Interactive **peer coaching** sessions to help leaders better appreciate their individual strengths, then leverage them while leading their teams.
- **Change-ready leader** (leading others): Further interactive **peer coaching** sessions designed to help leaders manage the uncertainty and resistance that comes with change.

Additionally, teams selected cross-functional business challenges to explore in greater detail, conducting interviews and analysis before presenting their findings to the CEO and executive team during a capstone session.

Results

So far, two cohorts have completed the leadership development program. At the capstone session, both the CEO and CHRO appreciated the breadth and depth of team insight and initiated several immediate, large-scale changes, including an update to the company's leadership expectations and values.

The first cohort reported an improvement in scores that measure agreement with the following behavioral shifts:

+13% "I create alignment and clarity on direction among my team by connecting to our vision and strategy."

+19% "I make decisions that future-proof the organization by thinking and acting with scale in mind."

+20% "I drive functional interdependence between my team and those around me to collectively execute on our organizational objectives."

+16% "I have open and honest dialogue both downwards and upwards in service of nurturing our Source Code and growing each other, the business, and customers."

+11% "I foster a psychologically safe environment that enables experimentation, risk taking, and learning."

+19% "I step into the shoes of our customers to understand and empathize with their differing needs."

+13% "I lead customer centric conversations around enablers and barriers to customer success and satisfaction."

The second cohort reported the following:

100% reported that **"The program's learning objectives related to my job."**

93% agreed that **"My learning was enhanced by the work of the facilitator."**

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88% agreed that **"I will be able to immediately apply what I learned in my job."**

Participants rated the program 88 out of 100 when asked if they would recommend it.

> "Explicit recognition of our strengths, values, and what drives us is a powerful tool I will carry forward."
>
> "I love this concept of using the friction in change to spark debate [that enables us to] lead through the change."