

LEAD



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## What LEAD is

Good leadership can be the difference between a successful and unsuccessful business. In tough economic times, good leadership can be the difference between basic survival and continued growth.

It's about the ability to take tough decisions, to seek out new opportunities and capitalise on the skills of your staff.

It's not easy for a small business owner to take a step back and look at the bigger picture – the daily pressures decide the priorities. And yet, good leadership is every bit as important to a small business owner as it is to a director of a large corporate business. Good leadership moves a business forward, takes a business to the next level.

LEAD is a leadership development programme, developed with the small business owner in mind. It has a proven track record of delivering improved business performance for past delegates.

Many past delegates – all running businesses with up to 20 staff – were at a crossroads. They wanted to develop their business, but needed support in one sense or another. By the very nature of the 'job' as an owner, they had no one to turn to, bounce ideas off and no formal training. They were simply passionate about what they did and wanted to grow.

LEAD works by taking an integrated approach to both the development of the business and to the personal development of the owner manager. It tackles practical issues that owner managers are facing in running their business rather than focussing on theoretical concepts. This approach has a direct impact on the growth of delegates businesses and their leadership skills.

LEAD's results are impressive. Past delegates credit the course with having a significant impact on their business. In fact, 90% of delegates said they had witnessed an average £200,000 increase in turnover, with a similarly impressive rise in profit growth. Some have expanded into new markets, while others have used the lessons and experiences to become more profitable.

All owners have left the programme more confident and more able, using the experience to build the financial strength of their businesses, preparing them for the future.



## Who LEAD is aimed at?

LEAD is aimed at owners of small businesses – businesses with up to 20 staff.

LEAD brings support and knowledge to owners who find themselves so wrapped up in the day to day running of the company that they find it difficult to take a step back, and look at the bigger picture.

In the words of one delegate, “I had no one to bounce ideas off”. Others fear they had fallen into a “comfort zone” and wanted to get back on track.

Primarily, delegates arrive at the programme with specific issues they want to tackle. These issues are tackled head-on, not theoretical problems, but real life business challenges.

The programme provides structured processes to tackle these issues and gives delegates greater confidence to deal with challenges in their businesses.

### **Commitment**

For business owners to get the most out of LEAD they need to be willing to devote two to three days a month for the 10 months of the programme.



When you start making decisions based on facts and not just what you feel then that makes a difference. The more calculated the risk you take, the more likely the business is to grow

Adrian West  
Optima Control Solutions



We operate across the UK, but thanks to the LEAD programme I've been able to identify a niche market in international placements and we've signed our first deal in China

Claire Wiseman  
Hargreaves James Associates

# What LEAD involves

LEAD concentrates on the two most important areas of the business:

1. **The business itself**
2. **The personal development of the owner manager**

The programme is made up of several elements which run alongside each other throughout the 10 months:

## Overnight Experiential

For the programme to work, it is important that owners get to know each other in order to build trust and share experiences.

To build that trust, a two day group activity with an overnight stay is organised at the start. The aim of the overnight is to review each individual's current leadership style in an honest and constructive way.

The overall objective of this element is to create a personal development plan for each individual; a tailored programme for the duration of the LEAD programme.

In order to create individual development plans, there is a structured framework involving a mix of training exercises, all exploring the role of leadership. We encourage owners to be reflective and use the two days to review their specific issues and their behaviour in the workplace.

This is tackled through a combination of small group sessions and individual exercises, with the overnight also allowing delegates to speak openly in a social setting, creating bonds with like-minded owners.



**I have found it extremely valuable, as it gives you contact with other people who are facing similar challenges and it helps build your confidence. Running a small business can be isolating; meeting other people and listening to their experiences makes you realise that everybody is facing the same problems as you**

Lynn Fotheringham, Director  
InsideOut Buildings

## Masterclasses

The masterclasses have been described as “revolutionary” by participants. “I always bring back a couple of things that make a big difference” was the comment of Marian Ginesi of telephone systems firm, Linco Communications.

The masterclasses are split into two themes:

**Business Growth** – These masterclasses concentrate on business issues such as operations, marketing, financial planning and strategy development, and are designed with the needs of the small business in mind.

**Leadership** – These masterclasses are delivered by inspirational speakers who share their own leadership journeys. Past speakers include Frank Dick, Former Director of Coaching at the British Athletics Federation and Chris Bonnington, the renowned British mountaineer.

Delegates are encouraged to reflect on their own leadership style and take lessons back to their own organisation.

Typically a session would be between two to three hours.

As in the case of Rupert Gatty, Managing Director of CoolKit, delegates are encouraged to bring members of their team to these sessions. He said that after taking some of his staff to a masterclass: “They are more focussed as a result. They are certainly more accountable for themselves than before and more empowered as a result.”

Masterclasses are not typical traditional classes, but more presentations which stimulate interest and discussion on the process of leadership. This allows delegates to adapt the lessons and experiences to their own business situation.



**The Winning Difference**  
**Dr. Frank Dick OBE**

Frank Dick applies his in-depth knowledge of coaching and leadership to the leadership needs of growing businesses.



**My favourite part of the whole course was an inspirational masterclass given by Frank Dick, who was one of the Olympic coaches involved in our success in China. I will never forget Frank's closing words as they struck a real chord with me personally. I was teetering on the edge of changing my business and I was in a period of indecision and Frank said: *If not you, who? If not now, when?***

Stuart Brakewell, Managing Director  
Central Power Services

## What LEAD involves (continued)

### Action Learning Sets

Owners learn and develop by sharing experiences. The action learning sets bring together a small group of delegates to discuss the issues they face at work. The groups are carefully put together to ensure a complimentary set of delegates in each Action Learning set.

As the discussions take place in a confidential forum, every member of the group feels happy to talk openly and freely about their private business issues.

Lesley Swinn of Accrington-based estate agent, Buy The House, said they helped her explore the issues around problems in the business and find a solution: "We were all like-minded people. We were able to look at the issues without the jealousy which would otherwise arise."

Each delegate arrives with a significant business challenge, which could vary from acquiring a rival firm – and how best to integrate it – to the diversification into new markets. The issues are discussed using questioning techniques and the delegate arrives at a strategy to move forward. Opportunities and risks are taken into account, and relevant experience of other delegates help to formulate the action plan.

The delegate will then implement the strategy and report back to the other members in the action learning set, explaining how the process worked and its success.

Although the delegate at the heart of the issue takes control of the situation, implementing it, it becomes a team effort. As the team collaborated in the plan, each member of the action learning set has a genuine interest in the project's outcome.

### Coaching

To change a business and make an impact, individuals usually need to do things or view things differently.

By working with an experienced coach on a one-to-one basis, each delegate can discover new ways of approaching issues, adapting these lessons to their own particular situation.

Coaches are carefully matched to delegates and their specific issues and challenges.

By the very nature of their busy business lives, owners learn primarily through experience. The role of the coaching element within the programme is to help delegates capitalise on that experience, developing greater awareness of issues and individuals within the workplace, helping create an approach which will work for them.

It reviews how they work and interact with people, both inside and outside their business.

Coaching helps delegates identify areas of their approach which could be altered for the benefit of the business. It helps them to take action, to implement the change. In short, it improves individual and business development – helping delegates learn from themselves, their peers and others within the workplace.

Coaching begins with a 90 minute face to face session. Each delegate then has five hours worth of telephone coaching to use at their own convenience.



I was a bit dubious about coaching because I've never done anything like it before, but it was fantastic. My coach has been continuously helping me to pull away from day to day operations which is a massive achievement

Richard Baguley, Managing Director  
GDR Public Relations

## LEAD forum

### Shadowing and Exchanges

Once again, learning from and assisting others is key to the programme. Delegates are partnered for a series of shadowing visits and exchanges. The process begins with a shadowing exercise where delegates will observe and reflect on the behaviour of their chosen exchange partner in their place of work. This is followed up by a series of exchange projects which are agreed by both delegates.

This is a confidential on-line forum for programme delegates to access each other as well as the LEAD team facilitators. They can ask questions and advice in real time and there are separate forums for general discussion and one for each action learning set. The forum also contains podcasts and masterclass presentations and other course material or useful templates.



I found the shadowing process particularly valuable. My chosen partner recommended to me that I should consider generating revenue from activities closely related to those we are already doing, and made recommendations on a reorganisation of personnel, while I recommended to him that he needs to re-define process in the business

Rupert Gatty, Managing Director  
CoolKit



We have achieved a fourfold increase in turnover, with our workforce now up to 119. To grow as rapidly as we have, while also increasing profits is a difficult balancing act, but LEAD helped us to implement very effective policies

Michael Gray  
1st Stop Finance

## Next Steps

LEAD is available across the North West through a network of Providers and will be delivered from a variety of locations throughout the region:

### Provider

CXL	●
Enterprise 4 All Ltd	●
Knowledge Transfer International Ltd	● ● ●
Manchester Metropolitan University	● ●
Noguru Ltd	●
Lancaster University	●
Learning & Skills Network Ltd	●
University of Central Lancashire	●
University of Cumbria	●
University of Liverpool	●
University of Salford	●
Runshaw College	●
The Manufacturing Institute Ltd	●

- Greater Manchester
- Merseyside
- Cheshire
- Lancashire
- Cumbria

A series of FREE taster events are being held across the region where business owners can experience a taste of what LEAD can offer and where they can find out more details of how LEAD can help their business.

To attend one of these FREE events visit [www.businesslinknw.co.uk/lead](http://www.businesslinknw.co.uk/lead) and fill in a short form choosing the Provider and event you are most interested in.

The site contains more details on each of the Providers as well as detailed case studies of past delegates.

**Visit [businesslinknw.co.uk/lead](http://businesslinknw.co.uk/lead) for more information today**

**For more information on LEAD**

**[businesslinknw.co.uk/lead](http://businesslinknw.co.uk/lead)  
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Business Card area