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Learning Point Group

Learning Point is a full-service consulting firm that focuses on leadership, team, and organizational development. We are based in the Pacific Northwest and do work around the world. Our purpose is to enhance your success by helping you build commitment, competence, and collaboration in your workforce. You provide the leadership. We provide the tools, training, and roadmaps. Together we create success. And we help you measure that success every step of the way.

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A couple of years back, I walked into a leadership offsite that looked ideal on paper. Beautiful hotel simply outside the city. Printed programs with color coding. Icebreakers, a technique sector, a "enjoyable" activity, and a closing circle. The executive sponsor opened with, "Let's believe huge and be really open with each [leadership tools](#) other this week."

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By lunch on the first day, every conversation had drifted back to status updates. Individuals nicely shared slide decks instead of facing difficult choices. The team entrusted a list of "next actions," however nothing had really shifted. 3 months later on, the very same unsolved tension sat under the surface area, and the same choices were stuck.

That offsite did not stop working from absence of effort or budget plan. It stopped working due to the fact that it was created as a meeting with nicer scenery, not as an experience that would change how the leadership team worked together.

The distinction in between an enjoyable offsite and a transformative leadership workshop is not magic. It is a set of options, made up front, about results, structure, and nerve. When you combine thoughtful leadership development with the discipline of design, you offer your team a genuine possibility to change, not simply to talk about change.

This post unloads how to do that from a professional's point of view.

Why most leadership workshops feel excellent but change little

When leaders inform me about disappointing offsites, a few patterns appear almost every time.

First, the goals are unclear. "Align on method." "Enhance relationships." "Speak about culture." None of these are incorrect, but they are too fuzzy to guide design. If the objective is not particular, the workshop fills with whatever material is most convenient to prepare: discussions, practical updates, and recycled frameworks from generic leadership training.

Second, the genuine tensions stay off the table. Possibly the item and sales leaders are in a peaceful grass war. Possibly the CEO is avoiding a hard choice about which bets to kill. Maybe people do not trust one another adequate to confess when they are lost. You can put those people in a great room with sticky notes and white boards. If the workshop is not developed to surface and resolve that discomfort, the team will do what people always do. They will secure themselves first.

Third, ownership is unclear. Typically a chief of personnel or HR organization partner is told, "Establish a leadership workshop," with a date and budget but little else. They scramble to find a facilitator or assemble an agenda. Leaders then show up as individuals in an event, not co-owners of the work. When that happens, insight belongs to the space, not to the team.

Finally, there is no plan for what happens after. Everyone is confident, but no one defines what success will appear like 30, 60, or 180 days later on. Without that, even strong insights evaporate under functional pressure.

If you acknowledge your own company in any of that, you are not alone. Fortunately is that each of these failure modes can be attended to with intentional design.

Start with the team, not the topics

Before you consider content, think about this particular leadership team as if you were a coach dealing with a little group of athletes.

What are they actually trying to achieve together in the next 12 to 18 months? Where are they underperforming as a system, not as individuals? How do they speak with each other when something fails? How do they make choices that cut across functions?

This is where a leadership team coaching state of mind becomes invaluable. Rather of asking, "What should we teach them?", ask, "What work does this team requirement to be able to do together that it presently can not do well enough?"

When I prepare to develop a workshop, I generally interview at least a subset of the team. I listen for minutes where their voices tighten, where they speed up, or where they go vague. Typically, that is around problems like:

- conflicting top priorities in between growth and profitability
- frustration about decision rights
- lack of rely on the information or each other
- a continuously moving strategy that never ever feels real

Those geological fault inform you where the workshop genuinely requires to go.

Here is a basic diagnostic you can utilize when scoping the session with the sponsor. These concerns are not for the team; they are for you and whoever is commissioning the workshop:

1. If this team left of the workshop having altered simply one behavior in how they interact, what would really move the needle for the business?
2. Where are you presently wasting time, money, or skill since of how this team operates? Be concrete.

3. Which discussions are individuals having in smaller sub-groups, however not with the whole team in the space?
4. What has this team tried in the past that did not stick, and why?
5. What are you personally willing to put on the table as a leader throughout this workshop that you have actually not resolved directly before?

You will discover that those concerns are less about "what we must cover" and more about "who we need to become." That shift is the foundation of real leadership development.

Clarify results that you can actually feel in the room

Clear results do not imply more KPIs. They suggest calling what individuals will have the ability to do in a different way together by the end.

For example, instead of "improve cross-functional cooperation," you might specify outcomes like:

- The team settles on 3 specific choice rules for prioritizing cross-functional projects.
- Each leader can name one habits they will stop and one they will begin to lower friction with their peers.
- The team produces a one-page statement that explains the kind of leadership culture they want to good example, in their own words.

Notice that these outcomes include behavior, language, and artifacts. They specify sufficient to shape activities, and they offer you a way to check, mid-workshop, whether you are on track.



When your outcomes are clear, they end up being a style short. Every block of time need to serve those outcomes. If a segment does not assist, it belongs in a various meeting or a document sent out before people arrive.

From program to experience: design principles that alter teams

An agenda is a list of subjects. An experience is how the day actually feels and what it pulls out of individuals. Transformative leadership workshops take notice of the second, not simply the first.

Here are a number of style concepts that have shown powerful in practice.

Sequence emotional states, not just subjects

Most offsites leap from icebreaker to strategy to operational deep dive with little idea for how safe or stretched individuals feel at each moment. The outcome is uneven participation. The very same positive voices speak up on every topic.

Instead, think of the psychological arc you want. Early on, people require to feel grounded and a little disarmed. That might imply a brief personal story round about a time they took a danger as a leader, or a paired discussion about why they joined this business in the very first location. Not tacky games, however real stories that expose something human.

Only once there is a little bit of vulnerability in the room do you dive into contentious product like misaligned top priorities or damaged procedures. If you do it in the opposite order, you get defensiveness.

Near completion, individuals require a mix of focus and hope. This is when you crystallize choices, dedications, and the story of what this team is becoming.

Alternate in between reflection and action

Adults do not alter because they heard an originality. They change because they see themselves more plainly and after that attempt something various in a safe environment.

Good leadership training consists of both reflection and practice. In workshops, that may look like short solo journaling minutes followed by small group conversation, then a whole-team choice exercise where people need to put brand-new insights into play.

For example, after a conversation about choice rights, you may run a simulation: provide a fictional however sensible circumstance where spending plan, brand name risk, and customer effect clash. Ask the group to decide under time pressure utilizing the new decision rules they just went over. Debrief not just the result, but how it felt to use those rules.

This blend turns abstract leadership tools into lived habits.

Design for candor, not comfort

You can either have a comfortable offsite or a truthful one. You hardly ever get both at the exact same time.

Designing for candor indicates structuring discussions so individuals can not conceal behind slides or generic statements. Rather of asking, "What do we need from each other?", try, "Share a particular minute in the last quarter where you felt pull down by this team, and what you wish had actually occurred rather."

That kind of conversation needs strong facilitation. It assists to establish working agreements early, such as "we speak from our own experience," "we describe the effect, not assault the person," and "we presume favorable intent however do not avoid difficult facts."

The facilitator's job is not to keep things smooth. It is to keep things safe enough that the genuine problems can emerge.

When leadership team coaching satisfies workshop design

Leadership team coaching and leadership workshops are often treated as separate services. One is continuous, the other episodic. The best results come when you incorporate them.

Think of the workshop as an extreme sprint inside a longer coaching process. The coaching work before and after provides continuity and depth.

Before the workshop, coaching conversations assist clarify results, surface area concealed tensions, and build enough trust with the facilitator that individuals will take risks in the room.

During the workshop, a coaching position alters the tone. Rather of the facilitator being an expert who "delivers content," they are a partner helping the team see itself more plainly. They call patterns in the minute: who interrupts whom, who wants to the CEO before speaking, where the energy drops. They ask questions that slow the team down simply enough to select a different path.

After the workshop, regular leadership team coaching sessions help the group safeguard their new arrangements. The facilitator can gently ask three months later on, "You dedicated to deciding item priorities in this way. How are you in fact doing it, and where have you slipped back into old practices?"

This incorporated method is heavier than a one-off offsite, however it is even more most likely to produce durable change.

A practical example: inside a two-day leadership workshop

Abstract recommendations works just up to a point. Here is a simplified sketch of what a two-day workshop may look like when developed for transformation rather of entertainment. The exact structure would depend on your context, however the reasoning brings over.

Day 1: surface reality and shared ambition

Morning often starts with context from the leader who commissioned the workshop. Not a long speech, however an honest explanation of why this group is here, why now, and what is at stake. When leaders gloss over the stakes, individuals disengage. When they name the stress truthfully, individuals lean in.

Then we move into a personal workout. For example, each person interviews a peer for 5 minutes about a moment they felt pleased with the team and a minute they felt deeply annoyed. They then introduce their partner to the group using those stories. This produces both connection and data.

Mid-morning shifts to mapping the system. The team draws the significant flows of work throughout functions on a whiteboard: how a consumer need ends up being a delivered feature, how a big deal gets priced and approved, how a quality problem gets found and attended to. As we annotate that map with bottlenecks, handoffs, and sources of friction, patterns emerge. The discussion moves from "Sales never provides precise forecasts" to "Here is the precise location where our process guarantees misalignment every quarter."

Afternoon focuses on ambition. Not wordsmithing a vision declaration, however explaining concrete future behaviors. For example, "What will be significantly different in how we run our weekly leadership meeting six months from now if we prosper?" Teams often understand their goal is less about a glossy future state and more about basic disciplines such as materializing tradeoffs, telling each other the truth, and keeping commitments across functions.

We close day 1 by surfacing elephants explicitly. Individuals compose, anonymously if needed, the something they think "everybody knows but nobody is saying." We group these inputs and pick a couple of to deal with the next morning.

Day 2: decisions, contracts, and practice

The 2nd day starts with those elephants. By this point, there suffices relationship and shared language that the team can face them. Possibly one card says, "We state we are one team, but rewards and recognition benefit silo wins." Another says, "We never tell the CEO when a method is impractical."

Working through two or 3 of these in detail typically opens more change than any variety of structures. It makes noticeable the gap between espoused worths and actual incentives or behaviors.

Late morning, we move into structural choices. That might involve clarifying decision rights with something as easy as, "For each of our top 5 cross-functional choices, who is the supreme owner, who must be sought advice from, and what input is non-negotiable?" It can also include explicit arrangements on which online forums will handle which sort of concerns, to prevent every meeting ending up being a catch-all.

Afternoon focuses on embedding. We select a little set of leadership tools that this team will use regularly for the next quarter. The secret is to pick tools that line up with their real work, not fashionable models. For instance:

- a one-page decision log visible to the whole team
- a pre-read template that requires clearness on issue, choices, and suggestion
- a brief "after-action review" format for major launches or failures
- an easy behavioral contract for conferences: how they begin, how they end, how dissent is handled

The day ends with private and cumulative commitments. Each leader names, aloud, the one behavior they will practice for the next 60 days and invites their peers to hold them responsible. The team likewise captures in writing the agreements they want to review at the next check-in.

This is not theatrical. It specifies, often uncomfortable, and remarkably stimulating when done well.

Choosing leadership tools that actually stick

A typical mistake in leadership development is to introduce a lot of tools simultaneously. You do an offsite, learn 3 models, experiment with a new feedback framework, and settle on a various choice procedure. Within a month, individuals are overwhelmed and silently revert to old ways.

Instead, deal with leadership tools like software application that should be embraced by a whole team. Start with what is triggering the most friction, then evaluate a little number of tools that deal with those pain points.



If choices are sluggish and dirty, embrace one shared decision-making structure and one visible decision log. If trust is thin, concentrate on a simple approach for routine peer feedback and a ritual for addressing conflict when

it surface areas. If strategy is always fuzzy, utilize a one-page method story that you review together every quarter.

Importantly, tools need owners. For instance, you may assign a rotating "meeting steward" who is accountable for using the meeting agreement and debriefing at the end. These micro-roles make it more likely that brand-new practices really happen.

I have seen leadership teams change more through constant usage of two or 3 simple tools than through any variety of inspirational speeches.

Avoiding common traps

Even well-intended leaders fall into foreseeable traps when designing workshops.

One trap is overwhelming the program. Due to the fact that it is uncommon to have everybody together, there is a temptation to cram in every topic. The outcome is a breathless marathon without any depth. When I push back and recommend cutting material, executives often worry, "However we will miss our opportunity." The irony is that spreading out attention too thin guarantees you will miss your opportunity to alter anything meaningful.

Another trap is contracting out too much to an external facilitator. A terrific facilitator is indispensable, but they can not own the work for you. When the most senior leader in the space anticipates the facilitator to "repair the team," everybody else senses the distance. The workshop becomes an event troubled them, not a procedure they shape.

A third trap is using team-building activities as a replacement for tough conversations. I am not against shared meals or outdoor activities. They can deepen relationships. However if you go from zipline to supper to generic trust workout without ever challenging the real issues individuals awaken thinking of, it feels hollow.

Finally, there is the trap of pretending that the workshop itself is the option. It is not. It is an intervention inside a bigger system of incentives, routines, and structures. If you do not line up those, even the best workshop will ultimately lose to the gravity of the status quo.

Making the change last: the 90-day window

The essential period for leadership development is not the workshop itself; it is the 90 days that follow. That is when brand-new contracts either harden into standards or dissolve.

Design that follow-through before the workshop happens. Treat it as part of the same engagement, not an optional add-on.

An easy, disciplined approach over those 90 days may include 3 elements.

First, schedule short, focused follow-up sessions with the leadership team every four to six weeks. These are not status meetings. They exist to look at the behaviors and tools you consented to check. The agenda can be as basic as: what did we commit to, what have we actually done, what has helped, what has actually obstructed, what do we adjust?

Second, ask each leader to select one colleague as an accountability partner. They fulfill for thirty minutes every two weeks, not to discuss company jobs, but to review how they are appearing as a leader relative to their workshop commitments. Peer accountability is typically more effective than top-down check-ins.

Third, link workshop outcomes explicitly to existing rhythms such as quarterly organization reviews or performance conversations. For instance, if the team specified new choice guidelines, add a fast review of those

guidelines to the opening of each QBR. If you produced a leadership culture statement, review one line of it at each regular monthly conference and ask "Where did we live this? Where did we breach it?"

When you treat the workshop as the ignition, and the next 90 days as the engine that either captures or stalls, you develop in a different way. You focus less on one perfect agenda and more on what the team should practice together, repeatedly.

Bringing it all together

Leadership workshops can be much more than pleasant interruptions to the calendar. Made with intent, they are concentrated moments of leadership training, honest reflection, and joint choice making that modification the trajectory of a company.

The key is to begin with the genuine work of the leadership team, not a pre-fabricated curriculum. Utilize a leadership team coaching state of mind to see patterns, not simply personalities. Clarify results you can feel in the space. Design an experience that sequences emotion and action, that prioritizes candor over comfort, and that presents a small set of leadership tools the team is really prepared to use.

Most of all, deal with the workshop as one chapter in an ongoing story of leadership development. The story where a group of skilled people gradually becomes a team that trusts each other adequate to face the hardest problems in the business together, and proficient sufficient to fix them.

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Learning Point Group offers leadership training coaching learning journeys and customized development programs designed to enhance leadership skills across all levels of an organization.

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Learning Point Group improves team performance through targeted training workshops coaching and development programs that strengthen communication collaboration and accountability within teams.

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Learning Point Group provides programs such as leadership boot camps learning journeys and blended learning experiences that combine workshops coaching and on demand resources.

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Learning Point Group offers both live virtual events and in person workshops allowing organizations to choose flexible training formats that meet their needs.

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Learning Point Group services benefit emerging leaders frontline managers senior leaders and entire teams looking to improve leadership effectiveness and organizational performance.

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The Smart Pass program provides access to a variety of leadership development resources including live sessions on demand content and ongoing learning opportunities for continuous growth.

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Learning Point Group measures leadership success by evaluating behavioral changes performance improvements and the overall impact of development programs on individuals and teams.

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Learning Point Group customizes training by aligning programs with an organizations goals culture and challenges ensuring that learning solutions are relevant and impactful.

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Following a visit to [Vancouver Farmers Market](#) teams frequently focus on leadership team coaching leadership training leadership workshops leadership development and leadership tools to drive better results.