



dialogos *Working Paper #1*

First Level Leaders: Engagement & Design Story

By Dominic Emery (BP), Andreas Priestland (BP), and Robert Hanig (Dialogos); as told to Art Kleiner (Dialogos). With quotes and input from Kate Owen, Duncan Blake, and Louise Mitchell (all BP).

Preface

This paper serves two purposes. Firstly, it provides a short history of the development of the First Level Leader Programme, the key groups and players who provided direction and support. It is deliberately crafted as 'story' with some of the colour and quotes (and misquotes) from the process in which we participated. Secondly, the paper is intended as a piece of knowledge capture for other change and organizational development practitioners, providing a record of the **engagement** and **creation** of the FLL programme, which in our humble estimation has been successful. However, we do not make any claims for the impact of the programme in BP. At the time of writing, we have only run several of the 120 planned for 2002, and the real impact of FLL is unknowable at this stage. Naturally we hope the impact of the programme on our leaders and our led will be dramatically successful, but that's another story for later this year.

Contents

1. Introduction & Background
2. The First Level Leader Story
3. Summary Change Model
4. Chronology

1. Introduction & Background

"We think we know how to develop leadership at the top levels of the hierarchy. But how do we develop depth and breadth of leadership? What do we do to become an organization of bolder and more powerful leaders, from top to bottom?"

This question was posed last year by Group Vice Presidents in BP's Learning and Development Committee in response to the disappointing People Assurance Survey scores for junior leaders. It represents a significant dilemma for BP and similar enterprises. On one hand, new ways of thinking and acting will not "take" unless they are supported through the entire enterprise, worldwide. Yet anyone who tries to create an initiative at global scale runs the risk of designing a one-size-fits-all program that doesn't recognize peoples' individual jobs, cultures, aspirations,

or futures. Too many initiatives, no matter how well-intentioned, become mere programs of enforced change, sent down from the top, that fail to produce the desired results.

For the last year we have been members of a team with the mandate to design a solution to developing leadership depth and breadth. The initiative we helped to create – “First Level Leaders” – is designed to reinvigorate the training of people in leadership positions at BP’s “front lines.” FLL has begun to attract attention, both within the Group and outside: not just in its content and scale, but in the way that it was designed and (hopefully) in the impact that it will have on morale and performance.

The “First Level Leaders” at BP include team leaders up to and including Level G. There are about 10,000 of them: by far the largest population of supervisors at BP. They work in every business, stream and function of the company, managing BP’s retail activity, managing chemical plant and refinery work crews, supervising workers on drilling platforms and in commercial and control teams. Some first level leaders supervise more than ten people; others work with few subordinates in R&D, marketing, or HR. They span a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, professional education and experience credentials, and attitudes about work, the company and life.

Despite all of these differences, they have one key factor in common: their decisions, in aggregate, make an enormous difference to BP’s turnover, costs, quality, safety, innovation, and environmental performance. By definition, the FLL’s represent an extremely important source of leverage for BP; about 90,000 people report directly to them, including many of the employees who directly encounter customers. Yet while the training of FLL’s has not been ignored, their learning and development has never been organized in any comprehensive way throughout the Group.

We were fortunate: We had a mandate to think freshly not just about the FLL learning and development, but about our own process for creating it. It’s too soon to tell exactly what kind of success this program will have, but already we are hearing from others that we have created a vehicle with a great deal of power and potential value. If that turns out to be true in the long run, then the FLL project could become a model for other large-scale initiatives at BP: in the way it was sponsored, created, and implemented. The FLL experience to date shows, in our opinion, that broad change is possible at BP. And it may reveal some principles that can make it easier and more effective.

This is not a chronological history – the chronology of FLL is summarized in Section 4. Rather, it focuses on the key principles that made a difference to our initiative, identified as themes in bold throughout this narrative. We think these principles could help other large-scale initiatives be more successful at BP, and have produced a short change model after the main story as a piece of knowledge capture.

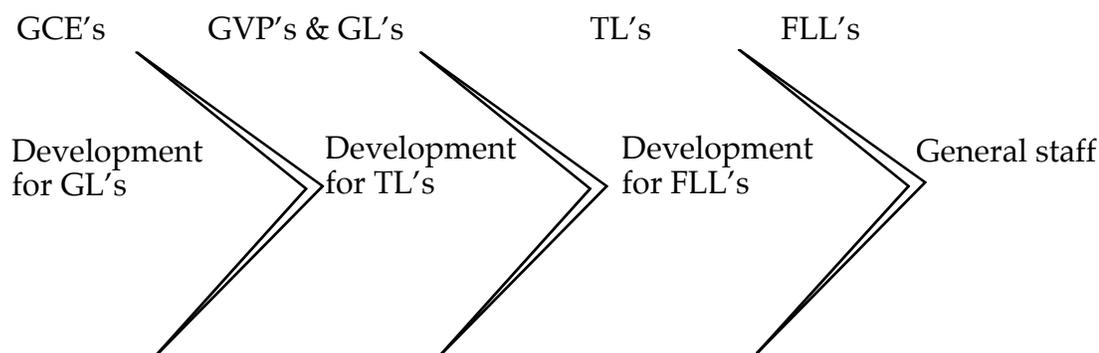
2. First Level Leader Story

“We have ignored a key group in this company.”

Start where people have been systematically under-served

Early in 2000, a “Learning and Development Committee” composed of eight Group Vice Presidents was appointed to rethink the learning and development practices and processes for BP. The BP-Amoco-Arco-Castrol transactions had taken place less than two years before, and the new BP brand was still being launched. All of this transition had taken its toll: Our annual job satisfaction survey (known as the People Assurance Survey) routinely showed that first-line supervisors and others at this level were unhappy at BP – either with their own managers, or with their career track.

As Kate Owen, Head of Organisation and Learning Development at BP, put it: “There are hundreds of thousands of people out there — and we don’t know whether they feel connected or not. We are missing a vast mass of the population.” If we wanted to truly bring the company together, we would have to develop a process to connect the first-line supervisors to the broader context of our new Group.



This diagram is an adaptation of one produced by Kate Owen. It shows how each level of the hierarchy, in practice, is responsible at BP for the education of the next-lower levels. “Our system works,” says Kate, “when leaders develop other leaders.”¹

The Learning and Development Committee was working closely with William Isaacs of Dialogos, thinking through unconventional and in-depth approaches that would get them further than simply business as usual. They decided to conduct experiments to educate not just themselves, but people throughout the company, on less obvious opportunities and challenges for learning at BP. Focusing on first-line supervisors was, as consultant Robert Mountain put it, “the real prize:” an experiment that could pay off in performance and long-term capability.

Moreover, as they talked it through, some of the GVPs on the committee saw this experiment as a moral imperative: “We have ignored a key group in this company. But they’re the backbone of the company; we depend on them. We need to embrace them.” They began to insist that this initiative would need system-wide sponsorship, and they needed to take a closer look at our work and our results.

That willingness to take a stand on behalf of the first-line leaders was critical for our success. Indeed, we would draw upon it again and again. This was the start of true sponsorship: not just the willingness to approve a project’s budget and objectives, but to “hold” its future in one’s hands, to do what must be done to see it succeed (including letting go of the desire to micromanage it), for the sake of the whole.

“I never heard of them before. But now I know I’m one of them.”

Establish a name that builds identity

When we started, the term “First Level Leaders” was not in common use. A variety of terms had evolved in the heritages and sub-systems of BP: “Front-line managers.” “Supervisors.” “Team leaders.” And so on. Each had its

¹ See Owen, Kate and Moorhouse, Chris – paper on Executive Development.

own associations (including negative associations), and most of them meant different things to different people. “Team leader” might sound senior in one country and junior in another.

In large-scale projects, a new name is useful, because it opens up conversations about the group’s identity: Who are we? What do we have in common in this system? The name must be carefully selected; once frozen, it is very difficult to change. We settled on the phrase “first-level leaders” in April 2000, in one of our first large-scale meetings with different perspectives in the room – first level leaders, mid level leaders and individual contributors.

Each part of the phrase resonated with the full group. “First” made it sound like we were putting this group foremost in the company’s consciousness, for a change. “Level” connoted the divisions in Kate’s diagram; they might be working at various positions and salary levels, but they all operate at the first-rung supervisory level – in general they “have people working for them who don’t supervise others.

The word “leader” was particularly important, because it symbolically connected this group with the corporate mainstream. BP’s model of effective leadership –space, direction, boundaries and support –had been articulated at the high levels of the organization, but never really worked its way down until now. And now we could use it as a way to design and organize the training.

In a workshop in Singapore, in March 2001, one of the attendees said, “I didn’t know what a “first-level leader” was. I’d never heard of them before. But now I know I’m one of them. I love all the attention I’m getting.”

first

first level leaders

We commissioned OnCommunications, a local graphic arts firm, to design a logo for these courses that would reinforce the identity of attendees. It was both congruent with the BP colors, and different from any other logo used in the Group.

“Who owns learning? Everyone.”

Involve diverse perspectives in every phase and iteration

“Who owns learning in this organization? Everybody thinks they do. Only about 20% of the formal training at BP comes through HR. If you go to technology functions, digital business, marketing, or finance, they will all talk passionately about it. The technology people will say, for instance, ‘The transformation of the company through technology is made possible by the learning that we promote.’ Everybody’s on the same page, but we’re all overlapping each other. And it’s not optimal. If we could all do more together, based on common principles, rather than each function having their own bit, then we’d actually get a much stronger learning culture.”

– Kate Owen

From the beginning, we recognized that our credibility would be judged by nearly everyone at BP, because each group had made its own investment in learning and development for FLL’s. We had to see our team as a “sponsorship container” – tending and nurturing the fragile opportunity to “all do more together,” as Kate put it, and gradually building our constituency piece by piece.

There is always a temptation to avoid involving people who might disagree or feel threatened by the project. We took the opposite tack: Gently but relentlessly pursuing the involvement of those who would eventually have to be

involved. This was a critical form of sponsorship for us. It was difficult at first: Some of the learning and development directors around the world suspected that we would undermine their work. But because we stuck with them, they ended up fully included.

The two internal leaders of our team, Andreas and Dominic, with their backgrounds in HR and Operations / Commercial Management respectively, were balanced deliberately to provide credibility to both the functions and the line. The external consultant whom we invited to work most closely with us, Robert Hanig from DIA*logos, had extensive experience at BP and elsewhere with innovative approaches to (and interventions for) organizational learning.

Andy Inglis, the Learning and Development Committee member who worked with us most closely, was a GVP in Upstream. This gave us both credibility and perspective. Our relationship with Andy set a tone for other relationships to come; we continually evolved ourselves into the kind of project that would draw him in more deeply. We invited him into our planning and design work, not as a judge of our efforts, but as a partner in creating them. He was an invaluable creative partner; and he also coached us, showing us how to present our ideas to *his* constituencies – senior and upstream people – more effectively.

By the time we moved into our full-scale design process, diversity of contribution had become a key ongoing principle. At each stage we sought as broad and varied a group as possible, in nationality, business background, stream, function, and location. Our own diversity – one of us with BP line experience, one from the BP staff, and one outside consultant – along with the principles articulated by **Dialogos** and by BP -- made it easier for us to do this. Even when we locked ourselves in, professionals only, to create a nuts-and-bolts design for the FLL workshops, we had people from Australia, Alaska, China, Zimbabwe, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, and the U.S. and U.K., all in a remote hotel that reminded us of Fawcett Towers. The madam had a knack for breaking in at our most intense moments and spitting at us: “It’s tea time now. The scones are on the table.” Many of the people there will remember it as one of the most creative and extraordinary four days they’ve ever spent at BP – not because of the locale, but because of the process of disagreeing, chewing it out, breaking, talking some more, reaching a mutual solution and then starting over again.

Diversity was significant at every meeting, iteration after iteration. It meant we were always exposed to ideas and perspectives that wouldn’t have occurred to us alone. For instance, we had originally planned sessions of 25-30 people. A manager from London attended some of our sessions and asked, “Why not bigger? Why not 200?” As a result, Aberdeen and Chicago have each experimented with larger sessions (100 and 75 people, respectively) and Aberdeen has chosen to stay with that number; it works well with their people.

“Get the entire system in one room”

Create a design process that represents the key stakeholders

Right at the start we talked with a large number of first-level leaders. We also arranged for an outside telephone survey firm to interview about 175 first level leaders around the world.

But we knew that these sources of information would not tell us enough. There were too many recurring “structural traps” – patterns of stuck behavior and problematic situations – that stymied managers at this level time and time again.

For example, many FLLs had problems delegating; given a difficult assignment by *their* bosses, they tended to take it on themselves. They thus found themselves overwhelmed and isolated. If we created a program for first-level leaders based only on the information we had from them, no matter how well it was designed, they would still be

isolated. Their bosses, for instance, would now be ill-equipped to deal with the new sophistication and reinvigorated ambition of the FLL's who reported to them, and the project would quickly be squashed.

A principle from the work of a **Dialogos** associate, the systems family therapist David Kantor, helped us move past the impasse: "Get the entire system in one room." In other words, our design process should include not just learning and OD professionals but FLL's themselves; and not just FLL's, but their managers and direct reports as well.²

To several members of our team, and to our sponsors on the L&D Committee, this seemed like a great deal of extra hassle and cost. Maybe it was valid in family therapy, where you need to know all the information about key groups, but did it apply in these circumstances?

Despite our reservations, we found members of all three groups – the FLLs, their bosses, and some people who reported to them – and brought them together for several workshops in early 2001. We learned far more than we could have hoped for. For example, we found significant differences in the way each group spoke about their needs:

- The FLLs themselves wanted more meaning. "How is this assignment connected to the bigger picture?" They asked. "How do our actions contribute to the whole group?"
- Their direct reports felt invisible. "We have capabilities you may be missing. You can delegate more to us. We are responsible." They wanted the first-level leader to "deal with" problems promptly, even if that meant getting rid of non-achievers who worked with them.
- The supervisors, meanwhile, spoke of power and efficiency. "How can I help you get things done?" they asked the first-level leaders in the room.

As we worked out these differences, the design improved; and as people returned from our sessions to their workplaces, a bit of buzz began to germinate around the organization.

"We're not here to teach – but to evoke from..."

Recognize the participative nature of learning

In mid-2000, after the idea of FLLs had emerged, the L&D Committee began to talk about their own conception of learning and development – and how they might judge the success or failure of this experiment. What is learning? What is development? They began to describe some of their own most powerful learning experiences, and to generalize from those into principles that might be important at BP.

"Learning is intensely personal," said David Watson. *"People learn when their experience is drawn out from them – not when they sit in a classroom being told. Particularly at this stage of their careers."* In other words, we wouldn't lecture or drill people: we would "evoke from" them by involving them in experiences that would increase their own awareness, and each other's.

In the end, the exact design of a program is not as important as the way you reach that design. If you create a genuine response to participants' requests and needs, as voiced by people who authentically speak for them, then it

² This notion was reinforced by advice from other learning and development experts, including William Isaacs and Ian Mycroft.

will work. If you create a program with exactly the same visible elements, but based on an outside assessment by consultants or high-level staff, it will not connect in a powerful way.

“You have to go slower to go faster”

Build reflection into the design process

At the Learning and Development Committee level, “reflection” became one of their guiding principles. And we adopted it in our own work, building in cycles where we would think about each step before moving on to the next one.

Traditionally, BP doesn’t make time for reflection. People always want to leap to the next action right away. But unless there is time and space for the invisible reflection part of the cycle, the action won’t be right. We wanted to teach this sort of cycle in our workshops – which meant we had to set aside time for sustained, collective reflection in our design process as well.

But even when you accept the principle of reflection, it can be hard to practice. Before long, the Committee itself asked us, in effect: “Can’t you go faster? Do you really need to bother with all of these workshops?” After all, they said, everyone already knew what the design should look like; it should look like the LEAP program, adapted for a lower level in the hierarchy.

We stood our ground, admitting it was different from standard practice, but insisting that it would pay off in a far more scale-able program. This put us in the uncomfortable position of defending a principle that our bosses had espoused against their doubts. Here, it made a difference that there were three of us, including one outsider (Robert) who understood the importance of taking a stand and had seen the effect of such a move in other organizations. It came to a head in a conference call with our chief sponsor, Andy Inglis. We explained how much we had learned in our workshops, the need to include diverse perspectives and all the layers, and the quality of the engagement and design process we were going through.

Andy listened to all of this and then said, “Great.” Then he added, “*After all, you’re trying to create a global change across all streams, and all parts of the business at the same time. That’s not the way we usually operate. Make sure you do it properly.*” And finally, he said something that became a catchphrase for the entire endeavor: “*Sometimes you have to go slow to go fast.*”

After that, we felt we could resist the pressure to cut corners. We were acting on behalf of the complexity that this project would entail. We could invest the necessary time and attention to our workshops and meetings, preparing pre-read material in advance and building up momentum over months. We were always impressed by the amount of time our participants invested as well; they read our materials and took part whole-heartedly.

Our sessions were energetic and lively. Everyone who attended them received summaries and updates of the ideas from later sessions. For our final session, we brought together representatives from all over the system who had attended those meetings, and some who had not. We consolidated the messages as a group with these people, and talked about the implications for the program’s design.

Our senior executive sponsors, who had grudgingly agreed to spend part of a day in these dialogues, became more and more intrigued. We slotted some time in each session for an executive to talk a bit about the company and about the importance of first-level leaders, and then to take questions. The response was so positive that it galvanized the executives. They were starting to see excitement, and a genuine pull from the organization – a desire to learn.

“We want one design.”

Create a single global programme for people to adapt to their own needs

Until fairly late in the process, we had assumed that local Business Units and regional collections of Business Units would retain a diversity of approaches for the main face-to-face FLL courses. We would develop materials and training that they would use as they wished, and they would pay for from their learning and development budgets.

But the FLLs, their direct reports, and their bosses disagreed – both in surveys and in the meetings we conducted. They wanted the program to be a truly global program. It could accept local variations and some flexibility in implementation, but the design would be the same.

There were several reasons for this mandate:

- Risk: The people we surveyed, and the people in the room with us, had seen cases where safety or operational problems had undermined a site’s morale or reputation. They had seen other companies’ management problems, like Texaco’s legal issues around diversity. Was BP similarly susceptible?
- Career consistency: The FLLs did not want to be given different opportunities to learn in different parts of the organization. They saw it as absurd: an FLL in Australia would move to Alaska and attend a completely different leadership development program, because “we do it differently here.” Yet they were both producing hydrocarbons in harsh conditions. Why couldn’t there be one set of standards applicable everywhere?
- Social responsibility: How should BP’s people connect, not just to the Group’s policies, but to society’s values? How could they balance social and environmental responsibility with the bottom line of business? Executives at the top might ruminate on these questions, but the guys at the “first-level” positions would have to find answers – and deliver. They needed to know that their counterparts around the world were operating with similar guidelines, or they would be vulnerable.
- Leverage. The FLLs wanted to feel part of a whole. One leader, who came from an Arco background, said, “This is fantastic. At last I feel really part of this organization.” They did not want to fear being seen as poorly trained when they moved from one part of the organization to another.
- Cost and time savings: The mandate from FLLs made it possible to eliminate other training programs, or to incorporate them within the FLL umbrella, and reduce a great deal of duplication. “How many forms of basic training do we need?” asked one participant irritably.

We had not expected this mandate, and it was very welcome. For it led directly to the next point: That we should get central funding. “Otherwise, we can tell you which sites will send people and which sites won’t.” Without central funding, they added, we would last only until the next budget cutback. We took that message to the L&D Committee, and were pleased to discover that they backed us up 100%

“I now have a stake in this.”

Engage the existing professionals as design partners

Having gained support from the FLLs themselves *and* the L&D Committee, we invited a group of BP’s learning and development professionals in for a meeting – and gained another lesson in sponsorship. We were so caught up in our own sense of momentum, that we forgot some of them had not gone through the other meetings with us.

Instead, they balked. Or so it seemed to us. Actually, they were asking the questions that were right for them to ask at the time: “What would this do to existing programs? How would it meet local needs? What would it replace?”

At first, we felt impatient and even infuriated; these people, supposedly in the vanguard of learning and organizational development, were whinging about change. Then Robert reminded us how we had helped to create this trap; we had come in as people from the center, about to do something *to* the professionals in the regions. To recoup, we returned to the sponsorship-seeking mindset, talking with them one by one, starting at the core of respect that we had for each other as colleagues and engaging with their concerns. They wanted a large role, for example, in choosing the trainers for sessions in their area – which was, from our perspective, ideal. It also helped that they were impressed with the quality of the modules we had developed.

Doug Riach, a senior L&OD colleague who has worked in upstream in Aberdeen, Alaska and Houston, was perhaps the first to sign on whole-heartedly. He is a well-respected individual, and when he said, “I now have a stake in this,” we knew we were on track again. David Nicolson, the head of Learning and Development in Melbourne, offered to organize a session to develop the main leadership face-to-face training, which we encouraged and which made a big difference. He brought in people from Zimbabwe and China, for example, whom we would otherwise have missed. Pat Aguglia, the head of Learning and Development for Chemicals in the US volunteered to arrange a final programme ‘test run’ session in Chicago, which became known as ‘kick the tyres’.

From there, we developed six pilot programs to follow ‘kick the tyres’, one each in Trinidad, Houston, Chicago, Cape Town, Aberdeen and Milton Keynes (outside London). After those were held, we held another reflection session, and then began to go to scale. Some of the participants in our early sessions had now come together in an informal Sponsorship Group, consisting of several FLLs, some of their bosses and direct reports, and some coordinating people from functions like HR. This group will, in effect, “own” the FLL; it will ultimately determine how the program changes and evolves. Through quarterly reflection sessions, we will bring new people in to the Sponsorship Group, and evaluate and revitalize the program as a whole.

Many learning and change initiatives become competitive with existing OD and learning departments. If we had fallen into that trap, the FLL programs would have become overlaid on top of existing programs. They would have been cost centers, instead of savings for everyone, and we would not have been able to sustain them.

“We’ll show that it’s possible and you go and sell it (The deal).”

Enlist senior management in strategic endorsement

By September 2001, we were ready to present our approach to the Learning and Development Committee, to request the central funding that we now knew we needed. We described the infrastructure the initiative would require, and presented a website prototype, a design for the workshops, the results from our pilot workshops, a budget, a set of efficiency measures, and a schedule for moving forward. Committee member David Fitzsimmons said, “This looks like a very substantial intervention; it’s grown considerably from where I thought it was.”

They weren't only concerned about cost savings, but they keenly saw how the program would sustain itself with 70% efficiency gains over the existing programs for first level leaders around the world. Could we actually 'train three people for the price of one,' as we seemed to be promising?

We said we could, but only because of the time and attention we had paid to bringing people into the design process with us. Those savings would be realized only if they remained committed to the FLL series, and didn't return to competing with it. Therefore, we proposed a deal to the L&D committee: "We'll show that it's possible, and you go and sell it to the organization." As GVPs, they would have to thoroughly sponsor the FLL initiative, so that people throughout the company knew that it had deep support. They would have to make sure that the message got through to cancel or cut off existing programs; we could not accomplish this without them.

The L&D Committee members in effect said, "We must do this." And the conversation turned to the ways in which they could help provide "air cover" and commitment. The attack on the World Trade Center had taken place only two weeks before, and travel had been cut back. We had worried that the organization would react to terrorism and postpone this global program, but they were prepared instead to back it up.

This deal would not have been possible without the months we had spent building alignment. We think the same would be true for any major change initiative, such as a reengineering effort.

"Get yourself a good marketer"

Use the organization's capability to bring the project to scale

At the September meeting, David Fitzsimmons said, "Get yourself a good marketer. That's what you really need."

We were skeptical. Why couldn't we continue bringing people on board in our pleasantly amateurish fashion? But we took his advice and brought Duncan Blake, who had been involved with the new brand campaign, onto our team. It turned out to be crucially important, not just for establishing a professional large-scale presence, but for continually deepening our awareness of the FLL population. The program needed to be marketed not just to FLL's, but to everyone. This would help predispose the organization as a whole towards sponsorship – to take a stand, where necessary, on behalf of the first level leaders' making time and space for this new approach.

Getting one brochure out to the entire organization turned out to be more of a challenge than we expected. There is no distribution list that covers the 10,000 people who work for BP – or even a list of sites. We had to develop our own contact list. We could not simply use the internet, because people in remote parts of the world, or people on offshore oil rigs, don't necessarily have email. Nor do some of our retail staff.

"This is big stuff"

A deeper level of sponsorship

We have now begun to operate at an unprecedented level of scale; we have moved beyond prototype. We have an extensive and polished body of materials, and a growing website that allows people to sign up for the training online. Some of the most senior executives in the Group, including Rodney Chase, are now lending their enthusiastic sponsorship. We are now beginning to look at the leadership development process for "mid-level leaders: " the FLL's bosses, who must be able to interact and manage in more sophisticated ways as well.

During the first year of the Learning and Development Committee, John Manzoni and Kate Owen proposed a diagnostic for organizational learning. If people can answer yes to the following four questions, then learning is probably ingrained in the business here:

1. Do I have enough awareness of the context and direction of this organization?
2. Do I have the skills and support to deal with the current challenges of my immediate business?
3. If I'm a leader, do I have the skills and support to deal with the leadership challenges that I face now?
4. Do I have enough support and feedback from my workplace to make the right personal choices about my life and work?

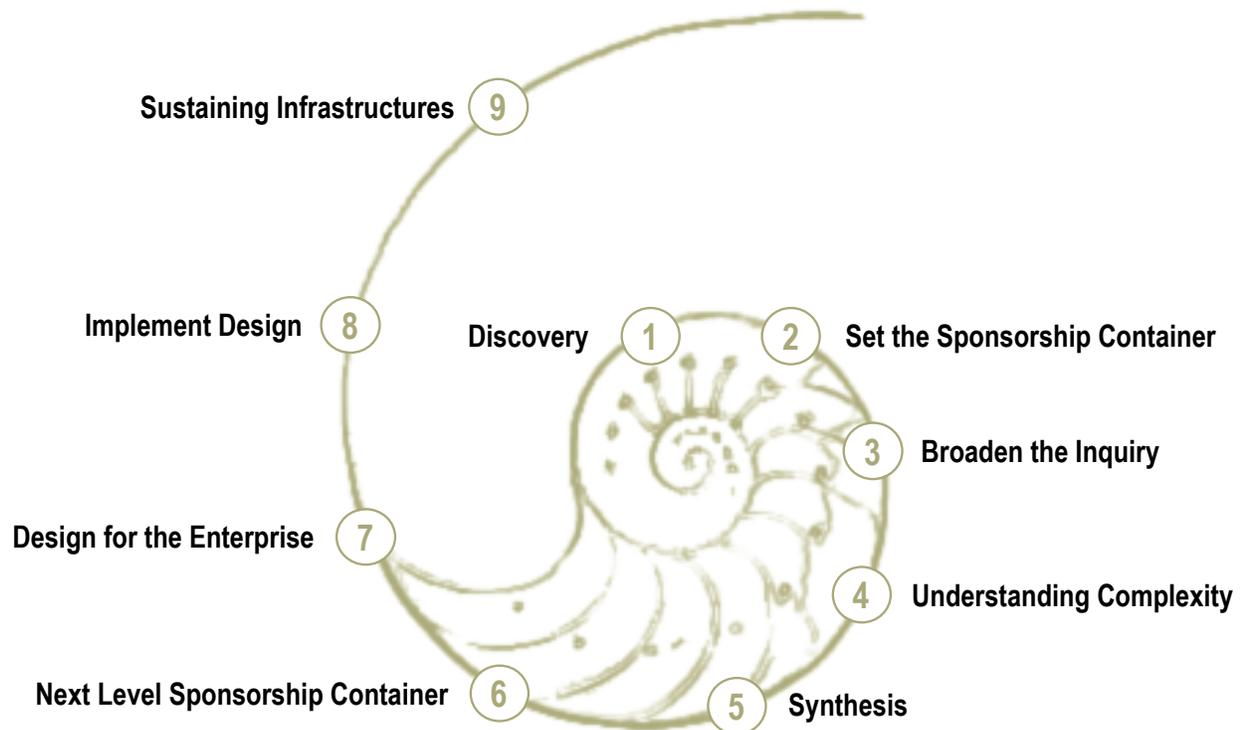
The FLL program, over time, has become a place where people can ask these four questions – and look together for ways to answer them affirmatively. At heart, they are questions of awareness: Do people see the organization clearly? And do they feel confident that the organization recognizes them, and is willing to invest in them? If FLL succeeds, this sort of investment will ripple further through the organization, and become one of BP's sources of competitive –and collaborative –advantage.

3. Summary Change Model

Based on the foregoing story and chronology in Section 4, we have recognized several steps in our process, which may be instructive as a way forward for other change practitioners. This is certainly not a cookbook; indeed the steps are not represented as a linear progression. Rather, we have found the “Spiral Growth Process” model developed by **Dialogos** as a valuable template for large-scale projects like this. In the Spiral Model, each stage of activity is a prerequisite for the next, and yet the work in each stage is ongoing and multi-dimensional. One can always loop backwards as appropriate.

One matter is clear, however. Missing out any or several of these steps will reduce the probability of success of a change process. In BP we have a tendency to move ‘straight to the answer’, getting into action without taking the time to understand complexity or to engage widely. Thus, on the Spiral Model there is a strong temptation to move directly from ‘Discovery’ straight to ‘Pilot & Test’, missing out intermediate engagement steps. If there is one lesson learned from our experience it is this – slow down to speed up, take the time to broaden the inquiry process and embrace the diversity of stakeholders and complexity of issues.

The 'Spiral' Model

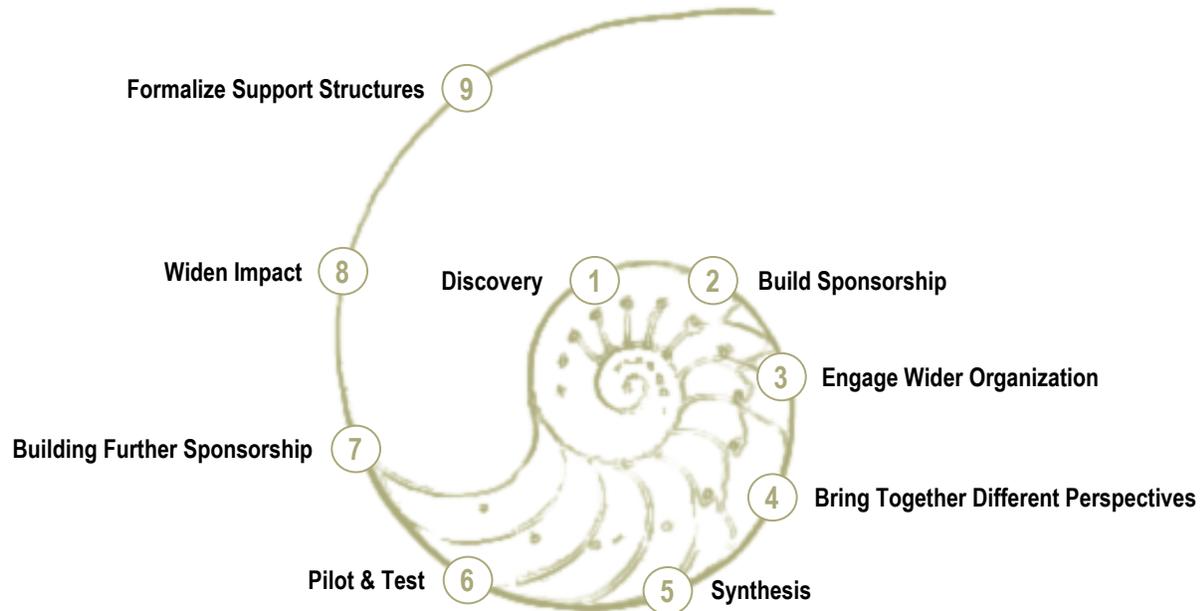


This rendition of the "Spiral Growth Model" shows the progression of an initiative from "Discovery" (the initial stage) through the formalization of infrastructures for learning. Each stage continues to develop even after the next stage has begun; the important lesson is that each stage is important and should not be skipped; the "action" will move much more smoothly and effectively if time is made for reflective stages as well.

This Spiral Model diagram and description are copyright ©2002, Dialogos.

Spiral Model - Elements, Themes, Actions and Data

Using the Spiral Model elements above, we recognized the following themes (as identified in the FLL story), data & actions, tabulated below:



Spiral Model Element	Theme	Data & Actions
Discovery	<i>"We have ignored a key group in this company."</i>	People Assurance Survey Results.
Build Sponsorship	<i>"Who Owns Learning? Everyone." "You have to go slower to go faster."</i>	Creation of 6 Learning & Development Committee Projects. Andy Inglis GVP Sponsor for FLL.
Engage Wider Organisation	<i>"I've never heard of FLL before. But now I know I'm one of them."</i>	Telephone Survey of 175 FLL. Regular emails and conference calls with L&OD colleagues, 12 Global workshops with 300 FLL, MLL and individual contributors.

<p>Bringing Different Perspectives Together</p>	<p><i>“Get the entire system in one room.”</i></p> <p><i>“We’re not here to teach – but to evoke from...”</i></p>	<p>Ongoing L&D Committee Meetings.</p> <p>Petty France Leadership Event Design Meeting.</p> <p>April 2001 consolidation session.</p>
<p>Synthesize & Consolidate</p>	<p><i>“We want one design.”</i></p>	<p>April 2001 consolidation session - creation of outline programme.</p>
<p>Pilot & Test</p>	<p><i>“I now have a stake in this.”</i></p>	<p>6 pilot events August – October 2001.</p>
<p>Building Further Sponsorship</p>	<p><i>“We’ll show you that it’s possible and you go and sell it.”</i></p> <p><i>“This is big stuff.”</i></p>	<p>L&D Committee Meeting – 70% efficiency gains from programme & global scope.</p> <p>FLL performance measures created – 4000 participants, 3% improvement in PAS.</p> <p>Briefing of Senior Leadership.</p> <p>Begin design of Sponsorship Group.</p>
<p>Widen Impact</p>	<p><i>“Get yourself a good marketer.”</i></p>	<p>L&D Committee advise appointment of Internal Marketing expert</p> <p>Start conversation with other parts of BP – Mid Level Leaders, Group Technology etc.</p>
<p>1. Formalise Support Structures</p>	<p><i>Ongoing development of support structures with internal & external bodies.</i></p>	<p>Creation of Regional & Local Leads for FLL. Partnerships with Exult, Accenture, OnCommunications and several external facilitator groups.</p>

4. Chronology of the First Level Leaders Initiative to date

June 2000	<p><i>"We have ignored a key group in this company."</i> First Level Leaders opportunity raised at Learning and O.D. Network meeting at St. Anne's.</p> <p>Learning & Development Committee and William Isaacs of Dialogos begin "collective leadership" work. The idea of "evoking from" gains currency.</p>
Sept-Oct 2000	As part of that work, the L&D Committee formally chooses six experiments, of which FLL is one.
Nov 2000	Project team assembled for FLL, including the authors of this paper.
Dec 2000	Andy Inglis signs on as L&D Committee sponsor for FLL
Dec 2000-Jan 2001	Telephone survey reveals key concerns by first-level leaders throughout BP.
Jan 2001	<p>FLL team decides to "put the whole system in the room," engaging not just FLL's but their bosses and direct reports. Design workshops and conferences begin.</p> <p>The L&D Committee urges the team to "go faster."</p>
Feb, 2001	<p>"First Level Leaders" term emerges.</p> <p>At a teleconference, Andy Inglis says: "You have to go slower to go faster."</p>
April 2001	<p>At a St. Anne's "Consolidation" meeting, the team agrees to move toward "one programme" with central funding.</p> <p>A few days later, the Learning and Development Committee approves the identity, framework, overall content, and timetable of the project.</p>
May, 2001	A refinement meeting with L & OD professionals turns into an engagement exercise. "I now have a stake in this."

June 2001	Leadership event design finalized at intensive five-day session.
July 2001	We “kick the tyres” by presenting the design to FLLs and learning and development people at two sessions in Chicago.
Aug 2001	Continued engagement with the L&D Committee and with L & OD professionals. Facilitator training begins at a “dry run” in London.
Sept-Oct 2001	Pilot sessions conducted in Capetown, Milton Keynes, Houston, and Trinidad. A pilot scheduled for Indonesia is postponed after September 11, but the general commitment to the FLL initiative is reaffirmed.
Oct 2001	“We’ll show that it’s possible and you go and sell it.” The Learning and Development Committee accepts “the deal.”
Nov 2001	Rodney Chase endorses the FLL initiative. The initiative is officially launched on November 27.
Jan 2001	First programmes are conducted.
Summer 2002	The initiative is awarded the prestigious Helios Award.