

**Center for**  
**Creative Leadership**

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**LDP EUROPE IMPACT STUDY**

**Report to Participants**

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# **Impact of the Europe Leadership Development Programme**

## **I. Purpose of Research**

The specific purposes of this study were:

- To develop knowledge about the impact of LDP in Europe
- To compare participant learning and change to stated programme outcomes
- To track goal accomplishment over time
- To understand the ways in which impact in Europe is similar to and different from that of US-based programmes
- To help ensure that we are meeting the needs of our client populations in Europe

## **II. A Note on Programme Objectives**

An important aspect of this study was to view participant learning and change through the lens of intended programme objectives. For LDP, the objectives listed on the current final evaluation form are as follows:

- Increasing Self-Awareness
- Improving Leadership Capabilities
- Increasing Ability to Learn from Experience
- Valuing Differences
- Building and Maintaining Relationships
- Giving and Receiving Developmental Feedback
- Setting and Achieving Goals
- Communicating Effectively
- Developing Others
- Building Effective Teams
- Developing Strategies for Life Balance

## **III. Study Participants**

Of the 132 participants who took part in LDP training between April through November of 2002, 84 participated in this study (74 men, 10 women). All programme participants working outside of the U.S. were asked to participate in the study.

The age of the participants responding to our interviews ranged from 27 to 62 years ( $M = 40.65$  years,  $SD = 7.28$ ).

The participants originated from 25 countries, and spoke 14 different native languages. The largest group of study participants reported their current country of residence as The Netherlands or the U.K. (14% each). Many participants also resided in either France (13%), Belgium (8%), or Germany (7%). Thirty-two percent of the participants reported English as their native language. Dutch, French, and German were the next most spoken native languages.

Educational level was high, with many participants holding a Masters degree (39.3%), or a Doctoral or other Professional degree (25%). One-fourth of the group held a Bachelors degree.

Participants reported being at primarily two organisational levels. The largest group worked in upper middle management (45.2%), with executive management being the second most frequently reported level (32.1%). By far, the largest percentage of participants worked in the manufacturing industry (36.9%)

#### **IV. Research Methodology**

*30-day Interviews.* One-third of the clients from each programme were asked to participate in the 30-day interview through e-mail and then by phone. A total of thirty-five clients participated in the 30-day interview.

*120-day Interviews.* All clients were asked to participate in the 120-day interview. Sixty clients, in all, participated in this phase.

#### **V. Findings by Interview Question**

This section summarizes what we learned from each interview question (presented in *italics*, below).

*Question: What stands out for you at this point with respect to learning or insights you have had?*

The category of learning reported most often was learning about self, that is, insight into one's strengths and weaknesses, realization of blind spots, increased self-awareness, or confirmation of one's self view. Seventy-five percent of the total Europe LDP sample reported learning in this category. This is remarkably consistent with past research on the impact of the domestic U.S. LDP, and is in line with core programme objectives.

The next four categories of learning were reported by between 19 and 27% percent of respondents. These, too, have long been reported as LDP impact areas in past studies. Twenty-seven percent of respondents talked about learning that others see them differently than they see themselves or that there are a variety of ways they are seen by different groups, such as superiors, direct reports, or peers. Coming to terms with the views of others and working to make sense of these conflicting views is an important piece of developmental work (Van Velsor & Drath, 2003) for managers, and forms the basis for many of the goals they set (as reported in the following section). The third most frequently reported learning had to do with understanding what one needs to do next. Twenty-four percent of the Europe LDP sample reported gaining motivation to manage their career more intentionally, coming to terms with the realization that they needed to change jobs, or learning what their next developmental goals need to be. This learning also formed the basis of many of the goals these participants set. Next, 19% of our sample learned specifically that they needed to be more open to input. These participants expressed this as learning they needed to listen more, be more respectful of others' contributions, and not make decisions too quickly before seeking others' input. A similar percentage of respondents realized they could be more confident about their capability as a leader. This was expressed in various ways, such as "don't worry about being a good leader," "rely on who you are," or "stick to my own priorities and goals."

Categories 6-8 were reported by between 10 and 15% of respondents. These are also learnings reported by participants in past studies, domestically. Thirteen percent of the total European LDP sample reported gaining insight about the need for more balance between time and energy spent at work and in other areas of their lives. As will be seen in the goal report section of this report, balance also comprised an important area for goal setting. Thirteen percent of respondents also

**Table 1. Frequency of Participants Reporting Key Specific Learnings, by Sample Group**

Total  
(N = 75)

1. About self	56 (75%)
2. Others see me differently	20 (27%)
3. What I need to do next	18 (24%)
4. Need to be more open to input	14 (19%)
5. Can be more confident	14 (19%)
6. Need balance	10 (13%)
7. Communicate more/better	10 (13%)
8. Importance of relationships	9 (12%)
9. What leadership means	7 (9%)
10. People are different	7 (9%)
11. Value of feedback	7 (9%)
12. Can't do it all alone	7 (9%)
13. What it takes to change	5 (7%)
14. Importance of reflection	4 (5%)
15. To give feedback, coach others	3 (4%)
16. To tailor style to others' needs	3 (4%)
17. New ways of thinking	3 (4%)
18. How to be more organized	3 (4%)
19. How to manage emotions	2 (3%)
20. To influence	1 (1%)

reported specific learning about needing to communicate with others more or more effectively. This could mean being less blunt in communications, or more straightforward, or it could mean sharing more information or giving more specific instructions to direct reports. Twelve percent of respondents talked about learning more about the value of building relationships, the importance of getting to know others better, and the role of showing more interest in others and being friendlier, as ways to develop closer, more collaborative relationships.

Learning categories 9-12 were each reported by 9% of the total sample. “What leadership means” is a category about learning models of effective leadership, being able to see effective leadership in action during the course of the programme, or having one’s perspective on good leadership changed during the course. The “people are different” category is a learning we have seen reported since the first impact study of LDP, completed almost twenty years ago. This category includes insights having to do with learning that people perceive similar situations very differently, how different perceptions play out in group situations and how beneficial diverse perceptions can be.

*Question: When you think about the things you learned in LDP, how applicable would you say this learning is to your work situation on a 5-point scale?*

Applicability of learning to the participant’s work situation was assessed using a 5-point Likert type scale (1 “not at all applicable” to 5 “extremely applicable”). *On average, participants found the LDP learning to be very applicable to their work situation (M = 3.97, SD = .62, range 2.50 to 5).*

*Question: Can you tell me a little about your goals and/or development plan created at the end of the programme?*

Goals described by participants were grouped into 24 categories (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Percent of participants describing specified goals**

(Percentages total to more than one hundred because each participant set multiple goals)

<b>Goal Description</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Balance home & work life	54
Improve self-awareness, confidence	44
Improve work relationships	44
Improve family relations	28
Take better physical care of self	18
Become more efficient	18
Better or more communication, listen more	18
Change current job, location, or company)	18
Improve self - increase knowledge, take courses	15
Become more empowering, delegate	15
Increase leader skills	11
Improve decision-making	10
Improve relationship with boss	7
Help others develop	7
More community involvement	6
Improve feedback skills	6
Do more team-building	6
Improve network	6
More creativity	3
Take care of personal problems	3
Improve client relations	1
Increase spirituality	1
Provide more vision	1

Life balance and relationship issues are clearly the most frequent areas of goal focus for these participants.

*Question: In what ways have you been successful in implementing these goals?*

We found that after 30 days, participants had made the following progress on their goals:

- More than half of the participants had made progress on at least one goal
- 35.3% had fully completed at least one goal,
- 2.9% had only started thinking about their goals, and
- 8.8% had made no progress at all.

**Table 3. Percent of Participants Reporting Partial/Full Progress, by Goal**

	At 30 days		At 120 days	
	Partial	Full	Partial	Full
Balance	50	17	40	44
Self-awareness	40	10	62	29
Work relations	43	14	56	37
Family relations	33	0	60	20
Health/fitness	0	100	58	25
More efficient	0	0	70	10
Communication	0	100	67	17
Change job	100	0	42	17

*Question: What obstacles have you encountered?*

The obstacles reported by the participants were grouped into five categories:

- Environmental obstacles: perceived obstacles outside of the organisation and not of a personal nature (e.g., bad economy);
- Organisational obstacles: obstacles perceived to be within the organisation and not under the participant's control (e.g., the boss is not supportive of one's goals or the organisation's culture is not in-line with one's goals);
- Personal obstacles: extraordinary personal factors perceived to be outside of one's control (e.g., a spouse or oneself being seriously ill);
- Self obstacles: burdening doubts that one cannot change, habit of negative self talk, lack of motivation);
- Time and workload obstacles: perception that there is not enough time in the day, regular workload gets in the way of work on goals.

As can be seen here, self was the most frequently reported obstacle, and environmental obstacles the least common, for those interviewed at the 30-days interval. At 120-days, the self again was the most common obstacle, in addition to time and workload, and personal obstacles were the least frequently reported.

**Table 4. Percent of Participants Reporting Obstacles in Each Category**

	Environmental	Organizational	Personal	Self	Time & Workload
30-day	6%	29%	9%	54%	37%
120-day	12%	38%	7%	43%	43%

*Question: What kinds of support have you been able to put in place for your ongoing development?*

Post-programme support for development was grouped into six categories, based on its source:

- Superior,

- (b) Peer,
- (c) Subordinates/direct reports,
- (d) Self (initiative taken by the participant to ensure development),
- (e) Personal (family member or friend), and
- (f) Coaches (external, professional coaches or LDP classmates).

Table 5 (below) contains the various types of support participants had reported attaining. At the 30-day interview, superiors were the most frequently reported means of support and peers the least. At the 120-day interview, superiors were again the most frequently reported means of support, but only by a small margin. At 120 days, coaches (through formal coaching or informal LDP classmate support) are nearly as significant a source of support as are superiors.

**Table 5. Percent of Participants Reporting Various Types of Support for Development**

	Superior	Peer	Subordinate	Self	Personal	Coaches
30-day (n=35)	51%	9%	17%	34%	23%	26%
120 day (n=60)	35%	23%	7%	23%	28%	32%

*Question: Do you believe your leadership capacities have changed as a result of this programme? If so, how?*

At the 30-day interview:

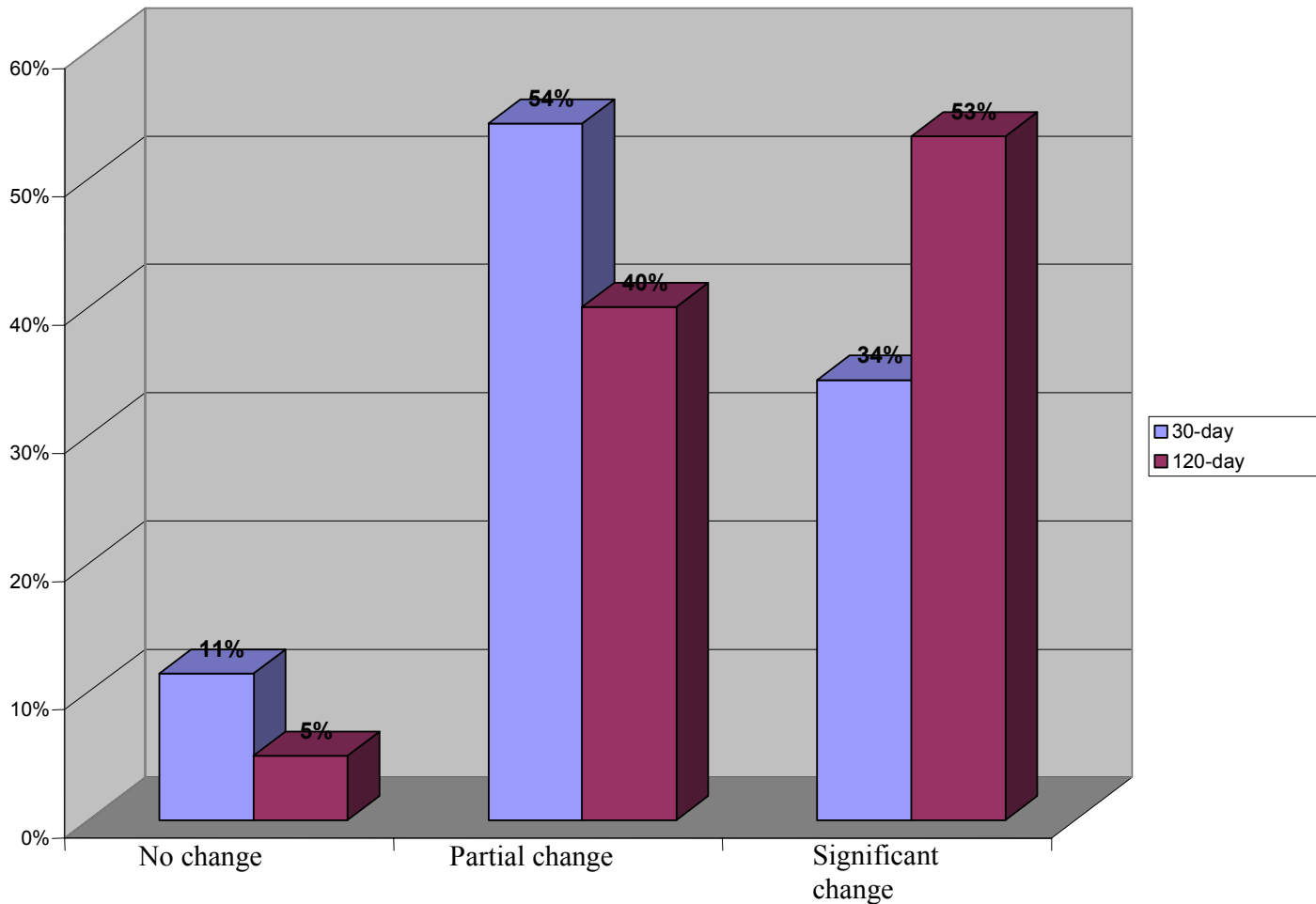
- Thirty-four percent (34.3%) perceived significant change in their leadership ability,
- The majority of participants (54.3%) perceived partial enhancement of their leadership capacity,
- The minority (11.4%) perceived no change in their leadership capacity.

A greater perception of change is indicated for those participants in the 120-day interview:

- Approximately 47% perceived significant change (over 10% more than at the 30-day interview),
- 44.4% perceived partial change, and
- Only 8.3% perceived no change in their leadership capacity.

The full results are displayed in Table 6, below.

**Table 6. Perceived enhancement of leadership capacity.**



*Question: Do you think others perceive these changes? How do you think others would describe these changes?*

Participant’s perceptions of others having perceived a change in their leadership capacity are taken from the *last* interview conducted with each client. Participants’ responses were coded as follows:

- 0 = “I don’t believe anyone perceives a change”
- 1 = “I have no idea if anyone has noticed a change.”
- 2 = “I think others have noticed a change in my abilities, but no one has told me.”
- 3 = “I have been told by at least one person that they noticed a change in my abilities”, or “I was informed through the Reflections observer report.”

The main findings are displayed in Table 7, for both the 30 and the 120-day intervals.

**Table 7. Percent of participants reporting others perceived change in their ability to lead**

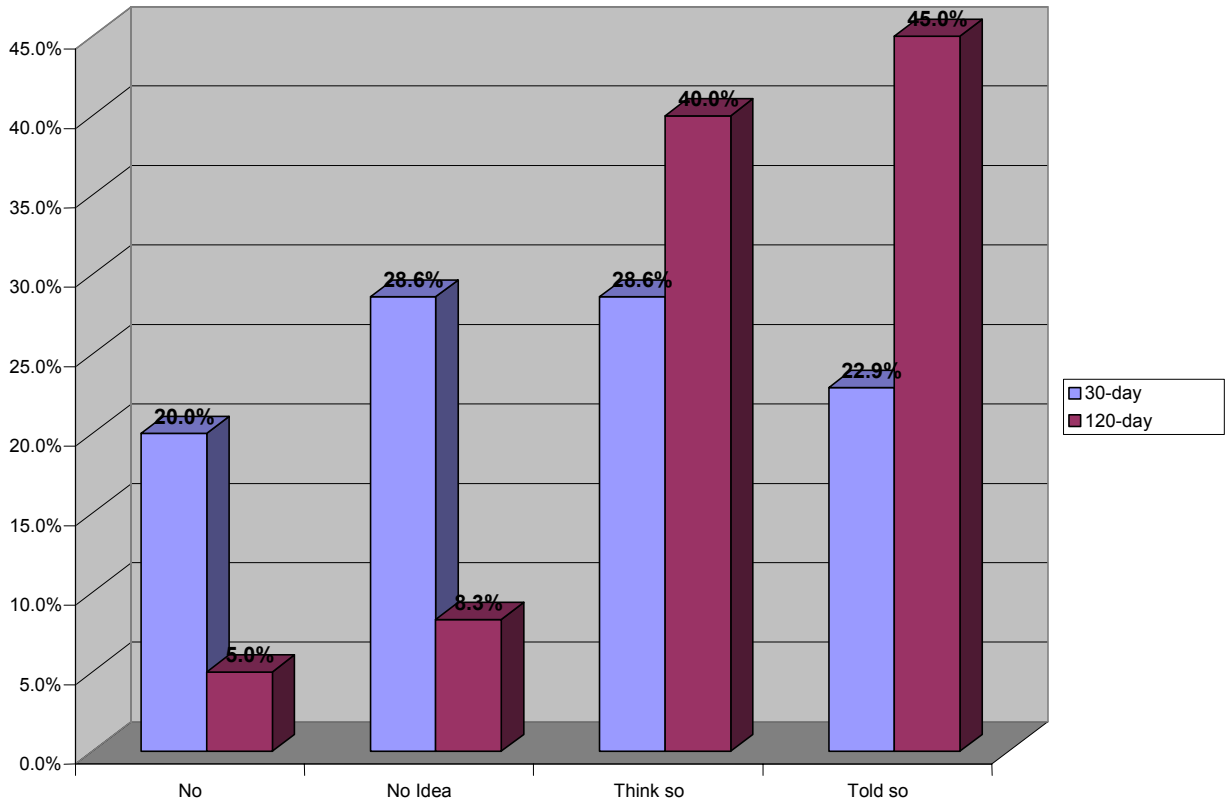


Table 8 (below) displays the top areas of specific behaviour change reported by participants at the time they were last interviewed. That these behaviour changes parallel reported learning, and are in alignment with goals, underscores the importance of these items, and the degree to which the programme is achieving its desired outcomes in a European context. For example, “noticing when I’m not behaving as a leader” is clearly the most frequent type of change participants report. While this change is not a change in behaviour in itself, participants report it is an enabler of different, more appropriate behaviours in the moment. What we know about the ability to learn from experience is that people need to be able to discern when current approaches are not working, in order to know when to modify behaviour. The ability to “catch oneself in the act” of “old” behaviour is a key component of the ability to change.

**Table 8. Specific Behaviour Changes Reported by Participants**

<u>Behaviour Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Notice when I’m not behaving “like a leader”	55
Involve others (input, delegation)	23
Take time to be available to others	23
Calmer, less confrontational	16
More skilled at communicating	13
Project more self-confidence	12
Offer better support to others	11

*Question: What benefits, if any, do you see to your work group or organisation as a result of changes you have made or work on your goals?*

Perceived benefits to the work group or organisation resulting from the changes brought about by the participant were grouped into six categories:

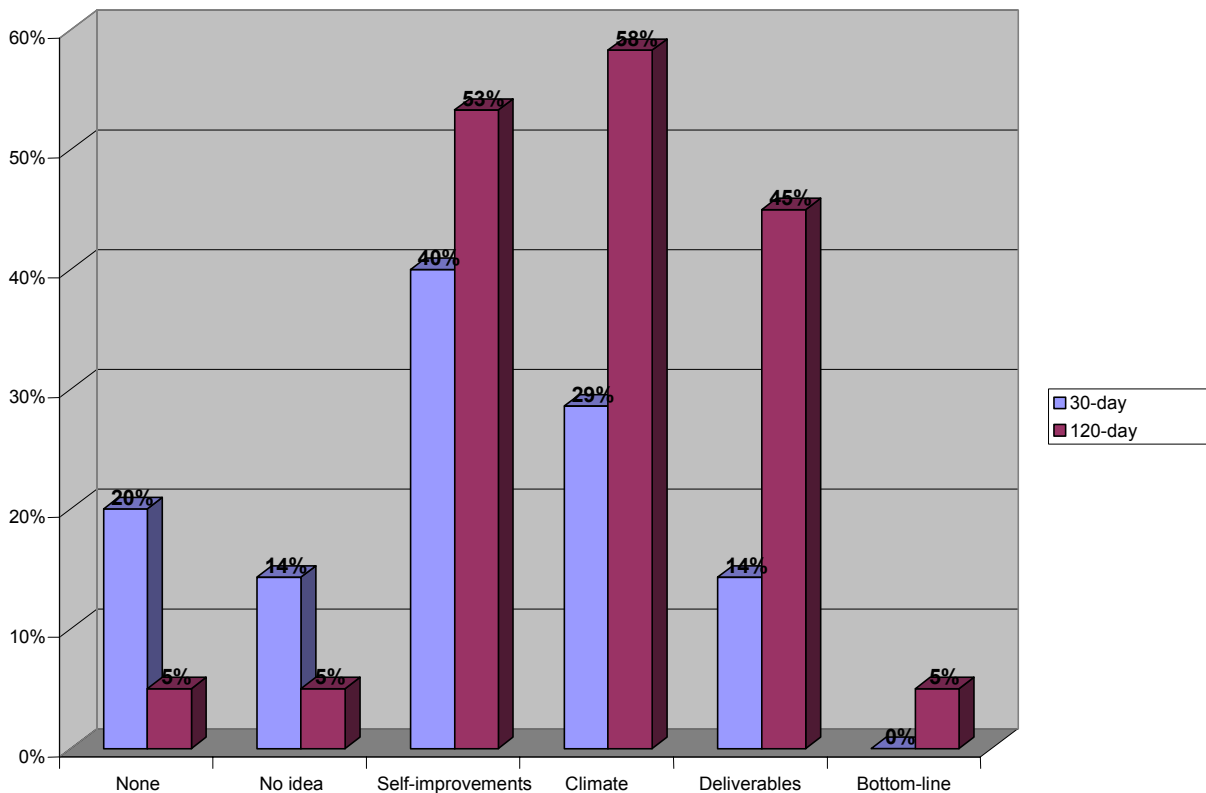
- (a) No organisational benefits;
- (b) No idea if organisational benefits have resulted;
- (c) Organisational benefits described in terms of changes to the self or self-improvements, e.g., “they have a better chief to work for”;
- (d) Improved organisational climate, such as increased group motivation, higher morale, more committed workers;
- (e) Better product or process outcomes (e.g., better quality products, better meetings); and
- (f) An increase in the bottom-line (better group financial performance).

As can be seen in Table 9, a number of the participants indicated organisational improvement in three areas

- Improved climate (29% at 30-days and 58% at 120-days),
- Self-improvement (40% at 30-days and 53% at 120-days), and
- Better products or process outcomes (14% at 30-days and 45% at 120-days).

Finally, five percent of participants believed their development, 120 days post-programme, resulted in improved financial performance for their organisation.

**Table 9. Percent of participants reporting benefits to the work group or organisation.**



## **Additional Findings and Conclusions**

The Leadership Development Programme in Europe is robust and significant in its overall impact on participants. Impact is high and in line with that documented in previous studies of LDP in the U.S. Further, the impact we have documented in this research is in line with programme objectives. Finally, Europe LDP's are perceived by many participants as culturally relevant because of the diverse mix of nationalities represented in the group, and the opportunities this provides for discussion of cultural difference.

In addition to continuing to encourage participants to connect with bosses and colleagues who can provide support for change back home, it is important to add to that our understandings about the impact of coaching and continued interaction between the participants themselves, as key sources of support. This study found that coaching and continued alumni interaction were two key factors that significantly enhance individual leadership capacity over time following the programme. This finding is in line with previous research on coaching, as well as with ongoing alumni requests for increased interaction after a programme. We are currently planning revisions to the programme format that will allow for both additional coaching opportunities and increased interaction following the classroom training event.

## **Acknowledgements**

This research would not have been possible without the cooperation of those participants who lent their time and energy to be interviewed. Many agreed to be interviewed twice, which contributed greatly to our understanding of the strength and applicability of this program. We extend our heartfelt appreciation for their assistance and wish them all the best in their efforts to make the most of their leadership development experience.

## **End Note**

The references cited in this report are to chapters in the Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2003). For information about this work, contact Ellen Van Velsor ([vanvelsor@leaders.ccl.org](mailto:vanvelsor@leaders.ccl.org)) or visit the Center's website ([www.ccl.org](http://www.ccl.org)).