

Pivotal Labs Reinforces Learning and Development with Leadership Coaching

As a hypergrowth company, Pivotal wanted a robust coaching program aligned with their learning development program to help their leaders not only learn new skills, but to help them live those skills in their day-to-day lives.



The Challenge

Pivotal Labs, now part of VMware, was a software development consulting firm headquartered in San Francisco, with a globally distributed team of approximately 3,000 employees. Pivotal Labs partnered with Sounding Board to integrate coaching into their existing learning and development programs to address skills gaps at multiple leadership levels. Pivotal identified the following leadership skills they planned to target and develop through coaching: **Interpersonal, Time Management, Conflict Management & Resolution, Executive Presence, and Strategic Thinking.**

The Solution

Sounding Board coaching was integrated into several existing learning and development programs, including an Executive Leadership Development Program, a HIPO (high potential) leadership program and a Leadership Fundamentals Program focused on mid-level managers. Leadership coaching was also made available through an employee sponsor program with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion - and through Pivotal's professional development stipend program.

Business leaders were paired with Sounding Board's world-class coaches, meeting twice a month over a six-month period. Sounding Board's proprietary coach matching algorithm generated a 91% coaching satisfaction rating during the engagement.

The Results

Significant growth across critical leadership areas:

- » 173% improvement in interpersonal skills.
- » 83% improvement in time management skills.
- » 62% improvement in conflict management and resolution skills.
- » 71% improvement in executive presence skills.
- » 49% improvement in strategic thinking skills.

Managers saw meaningful growth in leadership skills:

- » 60% said their direct reports' ability to develop others had increased.
- » 55% said their direct reports communication skills had improved.
- » 41% said their direct reports self-awareness had increased.
- » 39% said their direct reports interpersonal skills had improved.
- » 33% said that their direct reports strategic thinking skills had improved.

The value they got out of working with the Sounding Board coaching program was clear, and from a corporate perspective, it was great to see the impact happening in a scalable and cost-effective way!

Eileen Markatos
Senior Director of People & Talent



Positive feedback led to program expansion. Different business units incorporated Sounding Board coaching to support functional and technical leaders and Sounding Board's Customer Success Team continued to collaborate with Pivotal to align coaching with their internally developed programs and business objectives.

A major goal for Pivotal was to help the organization create better professional development goals that could be tied back to the business. Coachees cited the following percentages to represent the impact coaching had on their ability to create goals, achieve them, and understand the impact on the business.

- » **78%** of coachees said their skill levels across a wide variety of leadership capabilities improved, some in as little as six months.
- » **86%** of coachees strongly agreed that coaching improved their ability to create goals to impact their business.
- » **91%** of coachees strongly agreed that coaching improved their ability to reach business goals.
- » **91%** of coachees strongly agreed that coaching helped them understand their impact on the business.
- » There was a **95%** coaching completion rate (versus the average 30% completion rate for traditional learning and development).

Sounding Board continued to support Pivotal throughout its VMware acquisition, helping them prepare for the transition and anticipate change. Sounding Board coaches served over 200 coachees across all leadership levels, from managers, to managers of managers, to directors and vice presidents. In addition, by switching from a previous coaching vendor to Sounding Board, Pivotal saved an estimated \$170,000.

"Coaching played a key role in supporting the development of our top leaders," notes Eileen Markatos, former senior director of people and talent at Pivotal. "The value they got out of working with the Sounding Board coaching program was clear, and from a corporate perspective, it was great to see the impact happening in a scalable and cost-effective way!"