

FCCI Insurance Group Case Study

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G. W. Jacobs
CEO, FCCI Insurance Group



The FCCI Story

The FCCI Insurance Group is an established leader in the commercial property and casualty industry, serving businesses in 15 contiguous states. Based in Sarasota, FL, FCCI began as a workers' compensation self-insurance fund nearly 50 years ago. The organization has grown over the years to its current workforce of close to 700 employees and has been committed to excellence to its customers and employees.

A Compelling Need

FCCI Insurance Group has had a commitment to develop the leadership skills of their managers, but had not done so consistently in the past. In addition, growth from acquisitions had resulted in cultural differences.

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In the mind and heart of CEO G.W. Jacobs, the training, development, and ongoing support of their leaders, at every level, had become paramount in achieving the business' goals, retaining strong talent, and growing the company. Jacobs held the vision of building bench strength as a key to developing strong leaders who would be able to effectively run the business, achieve increased performance, and continue to represent the strong values of FCCI. In 2005, this forward-thinking CEO and his executive team agreed that a focused, practical, and engaging leadership development initiative was critical to FCCI's future success and growth.

The Approach

Past efforts to train and develop leaders had not been strategic in nature. Christine R. Gatti M.Ed., Principal of CRG Associates, worked with FCCI to re-structure its training efforts. The Executive Leadership team had recognized the need for the development of bench strength among its emerging leaders. At a retreat in 2005, the senior leadership team determined that training must be required for supervisors, managers, and directors – but in a way that would truly 'stick'.

The goal became to craft an approach and implementation that would be positioned for long-term results and would:

- * Have a direct impact on the level of management capability
- * Be measurable through behavior changes as well as business results
- * Be sustained over the long-term

Following the assessment of skills needed, Gatti said she recommended a custom "Train-to-Ingrain" Program for senior leaders which included: skill assessment, leadership training, follow-up assessment, and re-enforcement. Because of past results gained with its programs, Vital Learning's Leadership Training was selected for the majority of the training curriculum for supervisors, directors, and managers.

A major executive and organizational goal was set for 2006. It required every person at FCCI who manages others to participate in some segment of the "Leadership/Management/Supervisory" training to begin to strengthen the infrastructure with solid leadership across the entire organization.

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The Implementation

The strategy supported by FCCI and its CRG consulting team included both a cascading approach, starting with the CEO and the Executive team, and a specially designed curriculum for each level of leadership at the Executive team level, the Director and Manager level, and the Supervisory level. It also included the use of pre and post-training skills level assessment.

The training focused around Vital Learning's Leadership Essential modules, including topics such as; **Essentials of Leadership, Essentials of Communication, Developing Performance Goals and Standards, Delegating, Effective Discipline, Resolving Conflicts, Providing Performance Feedback,** and **Supporting Change**. These were modules all focused around very practical down-to-earth areas that leaders face every day.

The training used a "phased in" approach over the course of 2006. It depended on the ongoing support and involvement of the executive team, and utilized the ongoing use of "coaching partners" to help to reinforce the skills applications and on-the-job learning of participants. There was advanced tier training in 2007, using Essential Leadership Plus courses, including topics such as **Retaining Winning Talent**, and **Developing and Coaching Others**.

Results

Chris Gatti said that a high level of participation in the training and development process and specific examples of month after month successes, back on the job, have been common to this new FCCI training program.

CEO Jacobs stated the organization had *"realized many additional outcomes beyond our expectations."*

In 2006:

- 120 leaders at every level of the FCCI organization participated in their own specialized curriculum
- A special FCCI Leadership Newsletter was initiated, led by members of the participants' groups
- There were several promotions at both the manager and director levels
- A strong emphasis on FCCI people and performance management

In 2007:

- Over 130 leaders participated in this process, moving to the next tier of leadership curriculum
- A new level of talent has been identified and is being prepared through a new "pre-supervisory" training program
- A focus on developing great talent and ongoing coaching has been put in place

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Making a Case for Leadership Training

Gatti's experience with FCCI illustrates the need for organizations to have the highest level of management involved and the importance of the top-down involvement. It also reconfirmed the need for ongoing reinforcement of the interpersonal skills needed to ensure behavior change and cultural shifts.

"It also demonstrated," Gatti said, "that a focus on every leadership level is critical for success."

Over and over we saw the power of meeting a development need and impact of positive feedback from the participants. They told us how significantly different it was for them to see their most senior leaders involved in this process along with them – that was a genuine sign of commitment and dedication from the top.

G. W. Jacobs says, *"the program has definitely impacted our business operations. The enhanced leadership focus has had a positive impact on our culture and our people."*

Testimonials from the August 2006 and March 2007 training process included:

"...I am more aware and cognizant on handling different situations..."

"...Pay more attention to causes of conflict and be more proactive in resolution..."

"...Use delegation as a tool on a more regular basis..."

"...I will focus more on coaching opportunities, motivate, build confidence and encourage my employees..."

And Gatti added, *"While we experienced some of the frustrations that are inevitable with a large implementation like this, the passion and satisfaction of truly making an impact and difference in the life of a business and the lives of their leaders and their teams was most rewarding."*

For more information about Vital Learning Leadership training,
contact CRG ASSOCIATES at 508-881-9364 or visit
www.crgassociates.com.

