



California Casualty Management Co.

CCL's 360 BY DESIGN® anchors a company's heart-felt investment in its future.

A thriving family-owned business since 1914, California Casualty Management Co. (CCMC) had grown to just under 1,000 employees and had enjoyed extraordinary stability among its senior executives over many years. But as a result, a majority of them – including the chairman/CEO – were edging toward retirement at the same time, and the company had no systematic plan for ensuring continuity of well-qualified leaders.

“We were looking at a relatively narrow window in which to identify and prepare successors,” said Jim Grady, senior vice president of HR and Corporate Services. “It represented a major turning point in the life cycle of our organization, and our chairman’s key strategic goal was to create a viable and sustainable process for identifying and developing new leaders capable of building on the company’s track record of success.”

Such was the challenge Grady and HR executive Marianne Jones presented to the Center for Creative Leadership’s (CCL®) Custom Solutions staff in early 2005. “Internally, we had only gotten as far as coming up with a laundry list of loosely described leadership competencies considered appropriate for our company’s success,” said Jones. “Because our executives were familiar with CCL’s research from having attended Leadership at the Peak, we began a conversation with the Center about mapping our competencies with a valid and reliable database. That’s how we got started with 360 BY DESIGN®.”

360 BY DESIGN is a 360-degree feedback and development process that can be tailored to reflect competencies important to an organization. CCL provided its competency mapping service to CCMC, which produced a set of recommended skill sets selected from the Center’s library of 94 research-based competencies and five derailment factors. Over a number of meetings, the executive team reviewed and settled on the final choice of competencies that closely matched their organization’s identified needs. “Once we got the content of the survey settled, we began working with CCL on a plan for administering 360 BY DESIGN in our organization,” Jones said.

OBJECTIVES:

- Create a leadership development process to ensure the company has a depth of talent to execute its long-term strategy
- Develop individuals with the skills, competencies and experiences necessary to the organization’s success
- Launch individual developmental plans for employees on the executive payroll

OUTCOMES:

- A valid and reliable feedback tool was introduced to assess CCMC executives and guide their development
- Individual development plans were created, featuring internal coaching and growth opportunities
- Several yardsticks of success were observed, including improved leadership behaviors, communication skills and active participation in professional development

The company chose to go for optimum impact by involving the entire executive payroll group – some 30 individuals – in the initial administration of the process. After completing the survey, the executives participated in a comprehensive review of their feedback reports with a CCL facilitator. The results of those feedback sessions “got us started on what our next step would be,” said Grady, namely the creation of individual development plans highlighted by internal coaching and growth opportunities. To support the process, the company had CCL conduct a two-day, on-site Coaching for Development program for members of the senior executive team, and Grady and Jones completed the Assessment Certification Workshop at CCL to facilitate feedback sessions going forward.

The new leadership development process driven by 360 BY DESIGN has quickly produced positive signs. “Some executives began changing their styles and behaviors just as a result of the feedback, even before their development plan was put together,” said Grady. “All of them feel like they are stakeholders in the long-term success of the business. We are already a better organization for using this tool.”