STORY OF IMPACT
Sector: Healthcare

Strategic Leadership Development Case Study
Developing People Managers to Create a Performance Culture
Novo Nordisk is a global healthcare company with more than 90 years of innovation and leadership in diabetes care. Headquartered in Denmark, Novo Nordisk employs approximately 40,000 people in 75 countries and markets its products in more than 180 countries.

As part of a global effort to create a performance-oriented culture, the company sought to create and roll-out a personalized, development program for all People Managers in Region Europe. The goal was to drive an engaged organization and create a performance culture.

Novo Nordisk needed a strategic partner that could design, develop and fully implement the customized coaching solution to approximately 500 People Managers across seven business areas in 36 countries.

The chosen partner needed to be able to provide the customized solution and related services in 13 languages. And it all needed to happen in just nine months.

Novo Nordisk partnered with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®), which took on the assignment with the commitment to help Novo Nordisk achieve its goal. This part of the People Management Excellence journey became known as “Insights for Development.”
Novo Nordisk CEO Lars Sørensen has been lauded for his leadership. *Harvard Business Review* named him the best-performing CEO of 2015.

In the highly competitive healthcare industry, it takes more than just a great CEO to drive company success. Novo Nordisk understood the importance of developing a leadership culture to drive the performance culture. Its Aspiration 2017 initiative, a set of leadership development programs, was designed to do just that. The key goal of Aspiration 2017 was to improve the people management skills of its managers. Specifically, the company wanted more than 80% of those participating in development programs to improve their skills in the area of leading and coaching.

Novo Nordisk has clearly defined what it means to be a good People Manager in Region Europe operations. The key stakeholders in People & Organisation Region Europe, led by Talent Management & OD Director Irene Hornero, defined the following five People Manager competencies as essential to success:

- Setting direction and strategy
- Leading and coaching people
- Focus on what matters
- Personal leadership
- Making things happen
In 2015, Novo Nordisk wanted to identify which areas its managers needed to develop and start advancing them toward the specified benchmarks. The company also wanted all its Region Europe managers trained in the Novo Nordisk Way of Coaching.

The challenge for Novo Nordisk was that it needed to evaluate and provide individualized developmental feedback to hundreds of managers around these core behaviors. That meant that any development instruments or coaching frameworks had to link to Novo Nordisk’s way of working.

In addition, those development instruments, coaching services and other development materials and tools would have to be applied in 36 countries and in 13 languages. Any organization the company engaged to help with its People Manager development program would have to provide coaches in multiple locations and instruments in many different languages. And with such a high-priority undertaking, Novo Nordisk executives wanted to be as certain as possible that whatever partner they turned to could deliver measurable, relevant results on time.

Novo Nordisk People & Organisational Development Region Europe has strong internal leadership development capabilities. They have also used a variety of external providers for various training and development programs. For the People Manager Development program, however, the Novo Nordisk team turned to the Center for Creative Leadership.

“It is always critical to us to ensure the best quality in our implementation of initiatives across all the European countries we support,” said Hornero. “Therefore, a global player that has the capability and expertise to partner with us was a must.”

In April 2015, after only two months of conversation with CCL, Novo Nordisk and CCL signed an agreement to provide a personalized developmental initiative, 360-degree developmental instrument and a creative coaching program to almost 500 People Managers in Region Europe. Signing the agreement was just the beginning of a dynamic journey of co-creation, alignment and collaboration.

Novo Nordisk and CCL had agreed to an ambitious timeline. They would develop and roll out the program in June of 2015, implement it in waves across Region Europe in the following weeks and months. All the development instruments and subsequent coaching sessions would be completed in December.
Insights for Development, as part of the overall People Management Excellence program, was rolled out to 370 People Managers and 111 Managers of Managers across 36 countries.

A webinar, which included Novo Nordisk Executive Vice President Region Europe Jurek Gruhn’s participation, was held to kick off the program for all participants in June 2015. It was then rolled out in five cohorts across seven business areas in the following weeks and months.

CCL had to provide translations for materials into 13 languages. CCL also recruited and onboarded 10 new coaches, including eight in Eastern Europe, to ensure complete coverage and local focus.

There were two tiers in the program, one for People Managers and one for Managers of Managers. As the program rolled out across Europe, both groups took the customized development assessment.

CCL customized a 360-degree assessment by design, drawing from CCL’s competency library and mapping to Novo Nordisk’s competencies and the Workplace Big Five Profile™. The coaching solution was customized for each management tier.

The People Managers received three hours of coaching, consisting of a two-hour face-to-face session with a CCL coach followed by a one-hour virtual alignment meeting with their boss and the coach. Development plans were captured in a customized Insights for Development Map (IDM).

The Managers of Managers received six hours of coaching, which began with a two-hour face-to-face coaching session. They then reviewed and prepared for the next session using a business scenarios packet.
After thorough preparation, the managers attended a three-hour face-to-face developmental conversation with their CCL coach. Consistent with the People Manager approach, Managers of Managers then attended a one-hour virtual alignment meeting with their bosses and coaches and linked their coaching to their individual development plan, captured in the custom Insights for Development Map (IDM).

With findings from individuals in place and a clear focus on what behaviors Novo Nordisk encourages in its managers, the individual development plans were tied to managers’ company performance plans. The follow-up sessions between coachees and their bosses also served to help get bosses’ buy-in.

The results were valuable in surfacing areas for further focus among many participants. These included:

- Communication skills
- Building collaborative relationships
- Leading employees
- Taking action

In addition, CCL provided analytics from its database to compare how Novo Nordisk People Managers scored on their initial assessments compared to healthcare sector managers who have participated in CCL programs.

These comparisons revealed that Novo Nordisk People Managers scored higher than average on measures such as “demonstrating vision,” “bringing out the best in people,” “planning and setting goals” and “taking action.” However, they were more challenged in the areas of “taking initiative,” “balance between personal and work life” and “strategic perspective.”
They had to design a development assessment and coaching solution that would map closely to the company’s key people management competencies, while taking advantage of the latest research and know-how available on creating such programs. CCL’s 40-plus year history of conducting original research and applying that to corporate leadership development was an important contributor to its ability to create an effective program for Novo Nordisk.

Because of the timeline, the number of people involved, and the pan-European scale of the program, logistics had to be tightly managed. Anja Muller, as the senior CCL project manager, closely monitored every detail of the program, from translating and distributing assessments and other materials, to recruiting and onboarding new coaches. CCL and Novo Nordisk held weekly calls to ensure the program stayed on track.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

Over the course of Insights for Development, CCL and its coaches delivered more than approximately 1,776 hours of coaching to nearly 500 People Managers. The participants who received coaching, and the Novo Nordisk executives who oversaw the program, said it produced significant value for the company.

Novo Nordisk and CCL faced two critical challenges as they implemented the program:

1. They had to design a development assessment and coaching solution that would map closely to the company’s key people management competencies, while taking advantage of the latest research and know-how available on creating such programs. CCL’s 40-plus year history of conducting original research and applying that to corporate leadership development was an important contributor to its ability to create an effective program for Novo Nordisk.

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“CCL worked closely with key stakeholders in our organization to explore and discover our needs and provided a solution that was designed and delivered within our specifications to a large population in a limited time-frame. The initiative was a success and additional efforts to sustain the impact are underway.”

— Marc van Marrewijk, Talent Attraction & Development Manager for Novo Nordisk in Europe
## Participant Ratings

### Coaching Experience

The overall session with my coach was valuable. 4.32

As a result of my feedback coaching session I have a clearer picture of how changes in my behavior could improve the impact of my leadership. 4.13

My coach challenged me to set significant goals. 4.17

My coach demonstrated a good understanding of my business context and the link to my personal leadership challenges. 4.41

I would recommend this coach to others in my organization. 4.44

### 1-5 point scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To a very great extent</td>
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### Overall Program Evaluation

<table>
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<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have received timely information when needed.</td>
<td>4.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can see the link between the program and the strategic intent/business challenges of the organization.</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have felt committed to participating in the program.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
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**1-5 point scale**

- 1: Not at all
- 5: To a very great extent
Endnote

¹ Workplace Big Five Profile used under license (http://centacs.com/).
The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) is a top-ranked, global provider of leadership development. By leveraging the power of leadership to drive results that matter most to clients, CCL transforms individual leaders, teams, organizations and society. Our array of cutting-edge solutions is steeped in extensive research and experience gained from working with hundreds of thousands of leaders at all levels. Ranked among the world’s Top 5 providers of executive education by the Financial Times and in the Top 10 by Bloomberg Businessweek, CCL has offices in Greensboro, NC; Colorado Springs, CO; San Diego, CA; Brussels, Belgium; Moscow, Russia; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Johannesburg, South Africa; Singapore; Gurgaon, India; and Shanghai, China.

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October 2016