

## NONPROFIT SECTOR

# Developing Latina Business & Community Leaders

CASE STUDY



## CLIENT PROFILE & CHALLENGE

MANA de San Diego has been that city's leading Latina leadership organization for more than 30 years. Its mentoring and scholarship programs help Latina students fulfill their educational promise. Every other year, it also holds a leadership event, the Latina Success Conference.

A few years ago, MANA decided to do more to help Latinas advance in their careers and serve their communities.

Latinas are underrepresented in business, civic, and government leadership. Leadership experiences tailored to their unique needs could close the gap. Adela García, a retired Fortune 500 manager and co-chair of MANA's Latina Success Conference, says leadership development must be designed for Latinas' cultural context.

**3.9%**

Portion of managerial & professional positions held by Latinas

Source: Center for American Progress

These women are often the first in their families to pursue upward mobility. They may lack role models and mentors to help them prepare for and navigate their careers. They often put family first, she said, and play a supporting role in the background. García wants to empower Latinas to set ambitious goals, communicate more purposefully, achieve more professionally, and become business and community leaders.

"I want these women to know that they have more potential and that there are resources out there to help them," she said. That's why she started the Latina Success Leadership Program.

**CLIENT:** MANA de San Diego: A San Diego, CA-based nonprofit membership organization focused on empowering Latinas through education, leadership development, community service and advocacy; part of a national organization.

**MEMBERSHIP:** 475+



## SOLUTION & RESULTS

CCL's Coaching Talent Leader for Western North America, Dr. Rosa Grunhaus Belzer, and Leadership Solutions Partner Monserrat Auso developed a leadership development experience for MANA members called the Latina Success Leadership Program (LSLP). Though modeled on CCL's proven Women's Leadership Experience program, LSLP is tailored to meet Latinas' cultural needs.

MANA offers LSLP to members who are in management or team-leader roles. Over 4 monthly half-day Saturday sessions, participants learn about empowerment, networking and branding, resilience, and civic engagement. Accomplished Latina guest speakers share stories of overcoming related challenges.



*We say, 'You could be on a commission for the City of San Diego. You could run for elected office.' ... It gives them that confidence and that security to take a chance.*

– Sofia Salgado, MANA Executive Director

LSLP is transformational. Latinas come away with the confidence and skills to achieve more ambitious professional goals. Beyond individual successes, MANA hopes LSLP will drive social and economic well-being, as empowered Latinas become community leaders.

Participants form a growing network of peers they can tap for support and advice, with friendships forged during the leadership journey sustained afterward by online and offline networking. So far, more than 140 women have strengthened their leadership capabilities through LSLP.

Venus Molina says the program gave her the confidence and skills to ask for, and get, raises and promotions. Though already a busy volunteer, LSLP also deepened her civic engagement, challenging her to do more.

Molina chairs the MANA board of directors, works in San Diego city government, and has been appointed to the City of Chula Vista's International Friendship Commission.

LSLP also opened Molina's eyes to how leaders can effect social change. For example, she hired a young woman who failed to negotiate an appropriate salary, compared to a male peer with similar qualifications. Over a period of months, Molina gave the young woman opportunities to prove her skills, earn pay increases, and close the wage gap.

### IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

- 51% have been promoted
- 76% have been more purposeful with their goals
- 78% have taken on greater work responsibility
- 83% report being more empowered and effective leaders

Other LSLP participants report similar outcomes. Some have run for office, like one alumna who was elected to the Escondido City Council, or served on local government boards. Others have returned to school to pursue advanced degrees, launched businesses, and won greater professional responsibilities.

## PARTICIPANTS SAY

*... I asked for and received a raise but also contemplated whether the firm was a good fit for me and my values. The answer was 'No,' so I left and set up a new company of my own.*

*I transitioned into a new job right after my LSLP experience and started my doctorate. I've worked full time, completed my degree requirements and I'm currently in the process of finishing my dissertation (all in three years). I've done this while expanding my network in the academic setting by presenting my research in two conferences.*

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